

The Seeker

“Seeking the Souls of Men and Pointing Them to Christ”

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International College of the Bible

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Dear brethren,

Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a joy it is to be a worker in the Kingdom of God and to see the spread of New Testament Christianity in so many different parts of the world. I am thankful to the Lord for the continued improvement in my health. I can see improvement in strength in my legs each month. Please continue to pray for my full recovery.

As I write these words 2017 is almost gone. The Lord has greatly blessed our work around the world, but especially in Africa. In this past year alone we have seen many souls added to the Lord with about 875 baptized and over 200 restored in Africa. Also 12 new congregations were established and 2 new preacher schools were started. We helped to build 2 new preacher schools and 5 new church buildings. We had 36 preachers to graduate from the preacher schools we are currently working with and 24 graduated from our distance learning school ICOTB, making a total of 60 to graduate from preacher schools in 2017. Our work at IBTM continues to grow at a very fast pace.

2018 will see a change in our work that we have been planning for during the past few years. Our work takes me away from my preaching responsibilities at Rock Valley about 20 Sundays per year. A mutual decision was made recently that starting the first of the year I will no longer be the pulpit minister at Rock Valley. I will however continue to work with this good congregation as their missionary. Our work at IBTM will not change but will still be sponsored by the Rock Valley congregation. Not being the pulpit minister will give me full time to devote to our mission work and allow me to travel more to raise funds, to report on our work and even do more trips to the mission field as they are needed. I will greatly miss being the pulpit preacher at Rock Valley, a position I have held for the past 19 years. However, I also believe this change will allow our work to grow even more. Please keep us in prayer as we make this change in our work for the Lord.

We are hoping to find several new congregations who will add our work to their monthly budget for 2018 or make a onetime donation to our work for 2018. Last week we wired funds to 6 preacher schools in Africa for school funds for January through March 2018 and that amount was \$13,770.00 leaving a balance in the account of around \$600.00. We need to increase our funds that are coming in so we can do extra things such as shipping text books to these schools.

We are currently in need of 10 each of the following books for a total of 60 books to be sent to different preacher schools in Africa:

Essentials of New Testament Greek by *Ray Summers* -10 needed

Baker's Bible Atlas by *Charles F. Pfeiffer* -10 needed

The Eternal Kingdom by *F. W. Mattox* -10 needed

Hermeneutics by *D. R. Dungan* -10 needed

Sermon Design & Delivery by *Tom Holland* -10 needed

If you have one or more of these books that you could donate, please mail them to me at IBTM, PO Box 49494, Cookeville, TN. 38506 and we will get them to Africa.

The new preacher school at Solwezi, Zambia will start in March 2018 if all goes well. We are in need of another \$15,000.00 to finish the school building. If you or your congregation can help with this new building please make your checks to IBTM and mark for “*School building at Solwezi*” and send to IBTM, PO Box 49494 Cookeville, TN. 38506. There is a great need for this school in the Copper Belt of North-Western Zambia. Currently the school is meeting in a church building. We plan to build a building with dorms for the men to have a place to sleep and classrooms, a library and bathrooms, also a kitchen and a dining area for the students to eat each day. I asked someone who lived in Africa for several years to write something for us concerning the best approach in training African preachers. Please read this good article from Rod Rutherford and see his wisdom on training African preachers in Africa.

Thank you for keeping our work in your prayers and helping us to take the precious Gospel of Christ “*into all the world.*”

In Christ,

Ronald D. Gilbert, Director of **IBTM**

Sponsored by *Rock Valley church of Christ*

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TRAINING WORKERS FOR AFRICAN CHURCHES IN AFRICA

Growing, expanding churches in Africa must have trained men to preach the Gospel and ground them in the faith. They also need mature men to serve as elders who know the Bible. How are such men to receive the training they need?

One solution has been to select the most promising young men, especially those fluent in English, and support them to attend a Christian college or school of preaching in the USA. Some good men have been trained in this way and have returned to Africa to serve well. However, many others have not turned out so well. Some have been spoiled by the great affluence in America compared to the poverty and harsh living conditions at home. They have chosen to stay in the US. Thus the needy mission field is robbed of its best talents. Others have returned home only to find that their college education opens the door to many higher paying jobs. They forsake preaching for a place in the commercial world.

The most sensible way to train workers for African churches is to train them in Africa. This is far less expensive than raising money for transportation, living expenses, and tuition at an American school or college. The student who remains in his homeland will not have to struggle to learn a foreign culture. He will not be removed from his family and friends and therefore subject to loneliness, temptation and homesickness. Those trained in their homeland by teachers who speak their language and understand their native culture will be more effective workers than those trained by instructors in America who teach in English and instruct them in methods of work with American churches and how to cope with problems confronting Christians living in a modern, highly developed nation such as the United States.

Years ago, a veteran missionary in a Southern African nation told me he had helped send about two dozen of their most promising young men to the US to attend Christian colleges. Approximately half of these young men remained in this country. Of those who returned, some fell away. Others forsook preaching for more lucrative careers and fewer than a fourth of them became successful preachers. When one considers the large amount of money necessary to send and sustain them, it was not good stewardship. This same

missionary became a strong advocate of training men as workers in their own country. He helped to develop a fine preacher training program which has trained scores of capable workers in Africa and for Africa.

We must learn from our mistakes and those of others. It is not only unwise but a lack of good stewardship to continue unproductive methods of training men to serve in the kingdom. Let us develop leadership training programs in Africa to produce the leaders needed by the rapidly growing African churches!

Rod Rutherford

Things You Helped to Accomplish

Baptisms	8,621
Restorations	8,284
Congregations Established	171
Schools of Preaching Begun	7
BCC Students	36,515
ICOTB Students	430
Preachers Graduated	354

Jimmie B. Hill Memorial Library

Ronald & Carolyn Gilbert added books in memory
of *Stan Morgan*

Donations to this library should be sent to:

**New Hope Road Church of Christ
PO Box 1334 • Dacula, GA 30019**

Office News

2017 has turned out to be an incredible year. Naturally, Ronald D. Gilbert getting Guillain-Barre Syndrome was a major bump in the road, but surprisingly it did not really slow down the work. Plus, we now have more instructors for ICOTB and more online teachers for the BCC program, and those are a tremendous blessing.

On behalf of everyone at IBTM – Thank you for being a part of this work! Whether you are a financial contributor, volunteer teacher, prayer warrior, or just support us with interest and good thoughts we appreciate it. We look forward to more wonderful things in 2018!

Linda Hill