



When the clock struck midnight and the calendar flipped to January 1, 2020 no one had any idea of what the New Year would bring. To call this a crazy year is a colossal understatement. It seems like each month brought a new crisis. Now, here in December we're just tired. We want life to return to normal, but no one seems to know what normal will look like.

Some of us have even questioned God about all this. "Why have you allowed these things to happen?" "Why haven't you intervened?" "Where are you?" Throughout human history, great men and women of faith have asked these same questions. The Scriptures are filled with people who experienced the greatness of God and His powerful intervention in their lives. During difficult times, even they questioned.

Those living around the time of Jesus' birth were asking the same questions. After all, it had been centuries since the prophets had spoken about the birth of the Messiah. In fact, during the telling of the creation narrative, Moses spoke of the coming of Jesus (Gen. 3: 15). In writing his Psalms, David talked of the promise. Isaiah prophesied about it. Malachi spoke of the promise and then there was 400 years of silence. The Romans conquered Israel and Palestine in 67 BC and still no Messiah.

People were beginning to think that the Messiah would never come. Even Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, when confronted by the angel, Gabriel, expressed disbelief. His response was basically, "It's been too long." Despite the prevailing sentiment there was good news. Paul expressed it this way. *If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is* (II Tim. 2:13 NLT).

We sometimes forget that God's time is not necessarily ours. *But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children* (Gal. 4: 4-5).

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The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

Isaiah 9:2 NLT

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On Thursday evening Oct. 8th, Evangel held its 4th annual fundraising Dessert Banquet, but this year's event was vastly different than any previous banquet. We had already cancelled our annual spring Benefit Golf Tournament and with all the complexities of Covid 19 swirling around, we were not sure how we could hold a Dessert Banquet safely and responsibly. However, we knew we

simply couldn't cancel this event as well. That is when the idea for a "virtual" banquet began to take shape, with this year's theme "Impacting Generations".

Planning began in earnest by early August. Although we had a huge learning curve in front of us, we were blessed to have the extraordinary and generous support of the Tech Team of Grace Covenant Church. Leveraging the power of technology with their help, we were able to pull the various elements of the Banquet together for our first ever "live stream" event over the internet using Evangel's Facebook page. Quite frankly, it was an amazing evening!

Over 600 people from here in the U.S. and overseas joined us at some point during the hour long "live stream." Those viewing heard compelling testimonies from international students who have gone through the SOPM program, they were treated to a powerful and strategic message from John Kisamwa, Evangel's ministry partner in Kenya, they enjoyed special worship music and a good deal more.



Bob (L) sharing the story of Evangel's School of Practical Ministry with Tom

If you were unable to watch the Banquet live that evening, we hope you will take the opportunity to access the video recording by simply going to our Facebook page: facebook.com/evangelseminaryva. We truly believe you will be enriched and encouraged as you hear firsthand how God is using the SOPM training in other areas of the world to build His church.

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What fantastic news! Despite what the people thought, God wasn't late fulfilling His promise. Those who were looking forward with expectancy were able to experience God's blessing firsthand. Mary and Joseph did. The shepherds did. The Magi did. Simeon and Anna did. How many babies had they seen come into the temple and wondered if this would be the day they saw God's promise. Luke tells us that Simeon was filled with the Holy Spirit and God had promised that he wouldn't die until he saw the Messiah. Led by the Holy Spirit, Simeon went to the temple and saw Jesus. He immediately recognized this baby was different. He was the one (Luke 2:25-38).

During this Christmas season, it would be easy to look back at all the chaos and confusion this year has brought and become angry, discouraged, or even faithless. God has given us everything we need. Paul described his situation with a thorn in his side. *Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness"* (II Cor. 12:8,9).

Because of God's all sufficient grace, we can rejoice in uncertain times. Immanuel, God with us, is here. Isaiah tells us that Jesus came to bring good news, to comfort the brokenhearted, proclaim freedom and release for those imprisoned, a crown of beauty for ashes, blessing instead of mourning, and praise instead of despair (Is. 61:1-3). We have been entrusted with the answer to all of life's circumstances. To those who are discouraged, Jesus is here. To those who are hopeless, Jesus is here. To those who are battling disease, Jesus is here. To those who have lost their jobs, Jesus is here. To those who are overwhelmed and lost, Jesus is here. This year, let's not miss our God-given opportunity and boldly proclaim the answer, JESUS IS HERE!

On behalf of the Evangel family I want to wish all of you a blessed Christmas season filled with joy and hope.

Grace & Peace,

Bob Reichard, III



School of Practical Ministry - Student Testimonies



♦ This program has been very timely enriching and challenging. This has left a mark in my life that I will never ever regret for being part of. I have experienced and learned a lot and I actually do not know (how) to express my joy. I was touched with the sacrifice of time, money and other resources; may God bless all of those who have contributed to the success of this program. (student from Cameroon)

♦ I am extending my gratitude to the Evangel family for seeing the need to train pastors and leaders, especially in Africa. I want to be honest with you that the teaching actually opened my understanding to the truth and also strengthened me from all my weaknesses. (pastor from Liberia)

♦ Through this (SOPM) program, many blind spots in my life were exposed and revealed. This program has brought revival to my life, my marriage and ministry. I am grateful!

(pastor from Sierra Leone)

Moving Forward

As we close out a year that has been full of unexpected twists and turns, we are simultaneously looking forward to next year and like many of you, wondering what it will hold. In many ways this year has felt like an immense spiritual battle, yet we have experienced God's grace and have seen His faithfulness on display.

If we have learned anything this year it is that we can't take relationships for granted. We have also learned that now more than ever, we must seize every opportunity to proclaim Christ to people who are lost and feel hopeless.

For Evangel, that means caring about our ministry partners in developing nations who are going through an even more difficult time than we are here in the U.S. These partner ministries have their hands full right now just trying to help people with the most basic needs of food, clothing and housing.

At the right time, it also means continuing to press into training this next generation of pastors and church leaders who in turn will proclaim His Kingdom in their nations. These men and women need the tools that Evangel offers through the School of Practical Ministry! They have no other options for training; nowhere else to turn.

Graduates of the SOPM are establishing new churches, they are offering practical help in their communities and they are pushing back the gates of hell. Here are some high level statistics.

SINCE 2009
**DID YOU KNOW THAT EVANGEL'S
SCHOOL OF PRACTICAL MINISTRY**

Has Trained over
1300 Pastors / Leaders

In Seven Developing Nations
in Africa

The infographic features a background of a group of people in a classroom setting. On the right side, there is a vertical stack of flags representing the seven developing nations mentioned: Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, India, Nigeria, and the United States.

SINCE 2009
**DID YOU KNOW THAT THROUGH
SOPM GRADUATES**

More than **2000+ Churches**
were created in these nations.

And they have reached
more than **100,000+ People**
through their ministries.

*Approximate numbers are used based on information provided by graduates from the SOPM program.

The infographic features a background of a group of people in a classroom setting. On the right side, there is a vertical stack of flags representing the seven developing nations mentioned: Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, India, Nigeria, and the United States.

SINCE 2009
**DID YOU KNOW THAT THROUGH
SOPM GRADUATES**

More than **4000+**
Community Ministry Programs
were created.

In the areas of **Agriculture, Aids/HIV,
Education, Economic Development**
and much more.

*Approximate numbers are used based on information provided by graduates from the SOPM program.

The infographic features a background of a group of people in a classroom setting. On the right side, there is a vertical stack of flags representing the seven developing nations mentioned: Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, India, Nigeria, and the United States.

So YES, your gifts to Evangel are actually an investment in brothers and sisters who in turn are having a significant impact in their communities and nations.

Would you prayerfully consider a year end gift to Evangel so when the doors of opportunity swing open we can immediately step through to train man and women to more effectively proclaim God's WORD to those who are waiting to hear!

Even distant lands beyond the sea, will wait for His instruction. Isa. 42:4