

In This Issue

Removing Obstacles.....1-3
Missionary Profile: Tom Wood.....3-4
Prayer Points and Ministry Opportunities.....4

Obstacles of Discipleship Training

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In many parts of the world, learning is a challenge. And sometimes a major challenge! Regardless of their strong desire to be trained, students can face several obstacles. But what can go wrong?

The Bible says in Mark 2:4 (ESV): “And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.” In this passage of Scripture, men removed the obstacle for the paralytic man to see Jesus and be healed. As disciple-makers, we must do our best to remove obstacles that may prevent people from coming to Jesus.

iTEE Global trains students in many parts of the world. We know the many obstacles they face as they try to access the courses. As a ministry, we are doing our best to help remove those obstacles.

Removing Obstacles of Electricity

In the slums on the side of a mountain in Freetown, Sierra Leone, Pastor Francis and his church lack a consistent electricity supply. In the evenings, his face-to-face training is lit by cellphone lights.



The students use their cell phones to download a Moodle app and join courses. A recent partnership between iTEE Global and SonSet Solutions may help these students with their power needs. SonSet Solutions, a ministry that equips its partners with technical tools, information, and support services, began a pilot project with Pastor Francis; the

generosity of a church sponsor made it possible. In August, SonSet Solutions will provide his church in Freetown with a solar ministry kit to provide electricity for projection, microphones, lighting, and a cell phone charging station.

iTEE Global would love to equip more ministry leaders around the world with one of these kits. If you would like further information, please contact beverlyd@iteeg.org.

Removing Obstacles of Security

Many of our students live in areas where other religions predominate or in countries that are at war; sometimes it can be unsafe to travel especially as a Christian. A few months ago in Myanmar, a predominately Buddhist country, one pastor went to his church in the morning and the church building was missing; the military had carried it off in the middle of the night. The government has used several tactics to intimidate the citizens and is even drafting young people into war, and many of them are dying. Training has become a challenge for their community.



Similarly, in countries where the government controls access to the Internet and limits global viewership because of poverty, war, or political climate, we are removing obstacles to train our students. They download lessons sent securely by

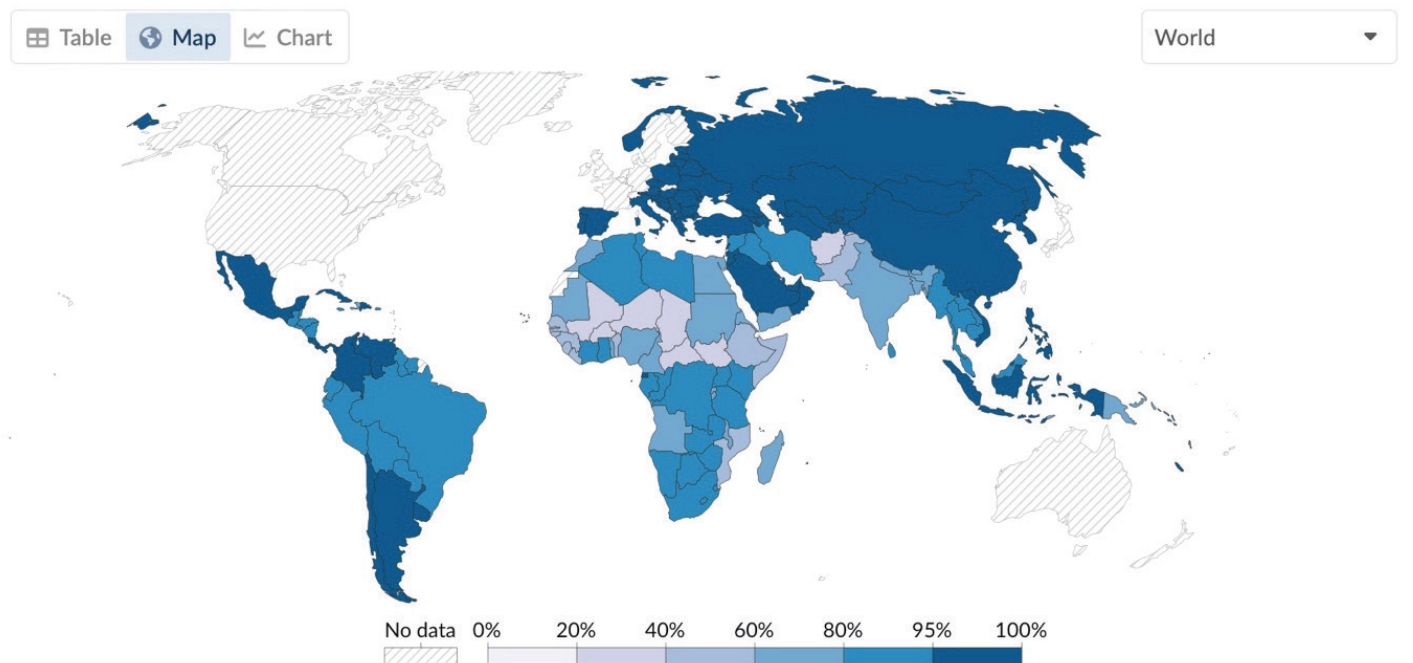
a facilitator, take pictures of their written answers, and return them to the facilitator. This is an innovative way that iTEE Global is using to train students in those settings.

Removing Obstacles of Cost

According to worldpoverty.io, 7.8% of the world's population lives in extreme poverty. That is approximately 627,119,097 people. Jesus proclaimed in Luke 4:18 (NIV), "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free." Jesus was anointed to do his work and to be like Jesus, we must try to remove the obstacle of cost for pastors who desire to receive theological training but currently live in poverty. iTEE Global sets appropriate tuition costs for each country based on the learners' ability to pay. For the students in the Maasai tribe in Kenya for example, training is done face-to-face by volunteers. Volunteers' dedication and service become a factor in reducing the cost of education and training. iTEE Global uses digital formats for all online training, therefore reducing overhead, printing, and mailing costs. A collaborative effort with local leaders ensures the delivery of quality educational materials to train pastoral leaders to become self-sustaining disciple-makers. Regardless of the financial situation of many of these pastors, iTEE Global provides them with excellent theological training.

Literacy rate, 2022

The share of adults aged 15 and older who can both read and write.



source: World Bank 2023

Removing Obstacles of Basic Education

In North America, we take literacy for granted. But in many parts of the world illiteracy rates remain high. Millions of people lack formal education or written language. Several students of iTEE Global cannot read, and many others do not have a high school diploma. So how do we train them? Often, this obstacle is removed by local leaders who conduct face-to-face training or use audio files. When one person in a village understands English or another language for which we have training materials, it becomes possible to teach the entire village in their heart language. One of our students who is a pastor in Pakistan translates materials into Urdu to train others.

Removing Obstacles to Study

Students who are bi-vocational pastors, work full or part-time, and juggle church, family, and community responsibilities. In areas where they live, the daily commutes between various locations for different activities limit their time to study. iTEE Global offers online programs allowing them to study on a flexible schedule.

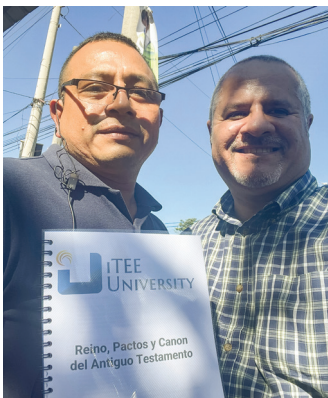
To close the gap with the community of learners who have disabilities, audio files were produced to help our students who are blind. Students with other learning disabilities or learning challenges also benefit from these audio files. This feature can

be made available to all students to make training more flexible in multiple ways and environments. They can listen to the lessons and increase their multisensory learning capacity. It is through these innovative and flexible approaches of tailored training that iTEE Global receives referrals from students who are attending the programs.

Overcoming Sociopolitical Situations

THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

A Salvadorean experience



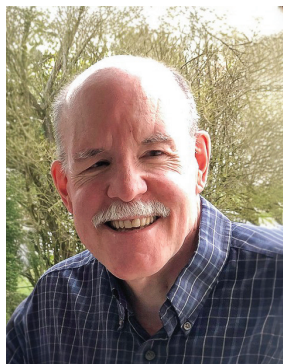
For the last 30 years, El Salvador, a country in Central America, has been known because of the gang issues that affect the sociopolitical situation. A major concern had been how the gangs organize, operate and even negotiate with the national government. The president was re-elected

a few months ago. He decided to retake control of the “barrios” (neighborhoods) which were gang territories.

This is a challenging endeavor, and the government expressed the need for the support and help of the citizens to be successful.

César, a student of iTEE University, lives and works in El Salvador. He works for the National Police Force. About five years ago, they hired civil forces to investigate who was related to the gangs, their leaders, or even their sympathizers. This brother was one of them, assigned to investigate in his church. Is this spying or doing a greater good? The result of his findings remains uncertain. But this is what he said about the experience: “I used to be an elder at my former church, and I had a tough assignment to do. At that time, I resigned and moved to another church. Despite the work I had to do, my fellow students are still in contact with me”. César also said, “In our country, we live safer now than before. The situation is still difficult, but we are learning to help one another. Thanks to this Learning Community at iTEE University, I have found a family that prays and stays connected to me. I now lead devotions with my fellow workers and my family and I pray with them.” He said he wanted to sponsor another student. “Hopefully, it will be very soon”, he added.

Missionary Profile: Tom Wood



Tom Wood and his twin brother, Rick, were born prematurely; they came to the world with several obstacles – literally. They were underweight and without a sense of smell. The excessive oxygen levels in the incubator damaged their eye retinas to varying degrees of severity, later causing permanent visual impairments.

If these physical challenges weren’t bad enough, Tom shares how the biggest challenge has come from society’s response to disabilities. Education was a considerable barrier; it still is, and discrimination against those needing extra help is rampant. By the time he was 21 years old, Tom concluded that life was too difficult – too painful – to keep trying to prove himself to be worthy of love and respect. He called out to God, saying, “If you

exist, show yourself to me or kill me – because I am done trying to make this life work. I don’t want to live anymore.” God did show up. Through a series of events, Tom met Debbie (Tom’s future wife) at a Tupperware party. She invited him and his brother to attend a Bible study. This was the first step for the twin brothers to learn about Jesus. In the coming months, though at separate times, Tom and Rick made Jesus their Lord and Savior.

A few years later, in 1980 – the same year he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in business administration – Tom and Debbie were married. Soon, when Tom heard about people groups who had no witness for Christ, he was moved with compassion. He was working at the Boeing Company as a financial analyst, but he dedicated his life to missions and joined Debbie to lead the mission program at their church.

They took the year off in 1986 to serve in the Philippines. By 1996, they began serving as full-

time missionaries, focusing on Unreached People Groups. At the turn of the millennium, Tom joined BEE World. For the next 12 years, he served in several areas, including curriculum and the Internet Seminary training platform.

Tom was involved with iTEE Global at its inception in 2014. Although still challenged by his visual impairments, Tom received a master's degree in 2015, focusing on pastoral studies. He is currently serving as Human Resources Director for iTEE Global, and is very passionate about encouraging others to become a part of the Great Commission. He tells everyone not to look at the obstacles in front of them, but to trust God. He has been in full-time ministry for 28 years. God is very faithful to provide for their family. Matthew 9:37 says: "For the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." If God can use Tom with the obstacles he faces, he can use you also. Please pray about trusting God to use you in the Great Commission by serving through iTEE Global.



Tom and Debbie have now been married for 43 years. They have two daughters, Allison and Meredith, and seven grandchildren. Pray for Tom and Debbie as they both face a life-threatening battle with cancer.

If you would like to learn more about Tom's story, please watch this video:
<https://vimeo.com/702394896/4b737c0d7b>



Prayer Points

In recent months, many of our facilitators have faced obstacles affecting their housing, health, and ability to work. Please pray that the Lord will intervene in these situations.

Please pray for upcoming Nehemiah workshops and face-to-face training.

Please pray for the removal of obstacles that limit translation and course migration.

Pray that the people of God would humble themselves and pray, seek God's face and turn from their wicked ways so God can heal our land and bring restoration where it is needed.

Send your personal prayer requests to pray@iteeg.org

Ministry Opportunities

Course Migration Specialist

When we began iTEE Global, we thought we would only make courses available online. However, we quickly discovered that many pastoral leaders live in rural areas with poor Internet and a lack of electricity, smartphones, and computers. As a result, with the help of migration specialists, we are moving (migrating text) from online platforms to other digital and print-based platforms. We invite those attentive to detail and possess basic computer skills (copying, pasting, and formatting font/size for text) to apply as volunteer Course Migration Specialists. We provide all training, and you work from home at times convenient for you **as a volunteer**.

HRinfo@iteeg.org

<https://iteeg.org/preliminary-application/>

Global iNSIGHT in your e-mail:

https://iteeg.org/gi_subscription.html



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