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Global
iNSIGHT

The Suffering Church

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase, “the Suffering Church”? Often, it’s a description of churches suffering from persecution in places like Nigeria, India, China, or the Middle East. For some, it means parts of the world where believers suffer due to war, famine, natural disasters, or severe economic hardships. In many regions, the church also suffers from a lack of biblically grounded leadership.

There are still many unreached people groups around the world. According to the Joshua Project, there are 7,120 unreached people groups (with 2% or fewer evangelicals). While these statistics are very discouraging, the presence of some believers in many of these groups should be a reason for celebration.

iTEE Global has already been working in countries where members of unreached people groups live. But only this year did we realize that over the past ten years, we have trained and disciplined students in countries where 25 of the 50 largest unreached people groups reside. We are excited because we have already seen our students who live in or near these people groups reaching out and sharing the Gospel, as well as beginning to teach and train a new generation of believers to do the same.

The suffering church exists even here in North America. Sadly, many churches lack pastors. Some have pastors, but not enough well-trained spiritual leaders to disciple the next generation of disciple makers.

For this upcoming year, Global Insight will take a closer look at the suffering church globally. We will strive to share with you what is happening through the perspectives of our trainers, leaders, students, and global church leaders.

Why is this important? Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12 that “if one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.” While Paul’s message about suffering was directed at individual Corinthian believers, the principle that the body of Christ consists of all believers serves as a reminder for each of us to care for the suffering church, whether here or abroad.

This issue will explore the suffering church of West Africa, focusing on Togo, Ghana, and Sierra Leone. Many years of false teachings, poverty, and lack of opportunities to study God’s Word have shaped the church in that region. Read on to learn how God is using iTEE Global to bring spiritual healing to the suffering church in West Africa.



West Africa

In West Africa, the legacy of colonialism, poverty, and unbiblical teaching has left deep marks on the Church. Recently, an iTEE staff member traveled there for a six-week ministry trip through Ghana, Togo, and Sierra Leone, conducting pastors' seminars and meeting with iTEE students and ministry partners.

During this trip, iTEE's facilitator met with ten pastors in Ghana who had learned faulty methods of Bible interpretation from a religious group located outside the country. This group forbade its members from reading books written by anyone outside the group, and imposed other restrictions. They taught these Ghanaian pastors that all preaching should focus solely on the gospel of Jesus Christ, regardless of the Scripture passage being used.

To accomplish this, they employed an allegorical method of biblical interpretation. For example, one of these pastors said that they were taught to interpret the parable of the Good Samaritan with each detail representing some spiritual truth. For example, Jericho



represented the world, Jerusalem represented heaven, the robbers were the Law of Moses, the victim was a sinner, and the two denarii represented 2,000 years till Christ's return.

These pastors were hungry to learn how to properly interpret the

Bible, and how to do the work of ministry. Our staff member gave an impromptu two-hour lesson on hermeneutics, showing them solid, clear principles which they could use to understand the Bible as it was intended. These ten pastors had been following this group's teachings for the last twenty years, but had recently decided to leave it. They were impressed and very grateful for the teaching they received from iTEE Global.

Afterwards, one wrote, "We are praying that in the future you and iTEE will play an immense role in the execution of what we are hoping for. Since I started studying with iTEE, I have developed a heart for establishing a Bible Learning Centre where sound Bible doctrine is taught. I prayed to the Lord, and have by God's grace, through the help of our association of pastors, purchased a plot of land as a starting point for this purpose. All our teachers and trainers will come from iTEE Global, and will include other tech gadgets for learning as well as books for our library, if God



This is the word of the Lord... saying: Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.

— Zechariah 4:6

graces us. We hope to produce disciple makers through your help here in Ghana. God bless you.”

Our staff member plans to return in 2026 to continue to teach pastors in West Africa, bringing another iTEE teacher with him. He is also eager to see how many students from Sierra Leone, Togo and Ghana will be studying with us online in the near future (we had several in Term 3 of 2025), and hopes to see that number grow. We will be sharing more stories from his fruitful journey in issues to come!

The pain of the church in West Africa is our pain too—but so is its victory. When a pastor in Togo discovers biblical truth, when believers in Sierra Leone are equipped to teach others, when leaders in Ghana break free from deception and desire to start Training Centers—the entire body of Christ rejoices.

This is why iTEE Global exists: to serve the suffering church by equipping leaders who lack access to solid biblical teaching that will multiply disciples. Through your partnership, the gospel is taking root in hearts, classrooms, and communities that once struggled in darkness.

Yes, the suffering church still groans. But in West Africa, through faithful training and the power of God’s Word, it will stand—and shine.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we recognize that this is your work, Lord. This is your church learning to stand and to shine. Strengthen iTEE Global and every partner who serves this mission.

Sustain every pastor who longs to grow.

Multiply every seed of truth planted through training and discipleship.

And may West Africa continue to rise—not by human strength, but by the power of Your Word. Amen

Training for Illiterate Pastors in West Africa

Pastor Francis in West Africa, one of iTEE Global’s most accomplished online students, shared his most significant challenge for iTEE training for pastors in Sierra Leone: the language barrier.

Twenty-three languages are spoken in that West African nation. The official language is English; however, Francis’ mother tongue is Kriol, which is difficult to read. Although he has a Bible in Kriol, he never reads it because it is too challenging, and he is the only person he knows who has one in that language.

When he visits other villages, they speak different languages, so Francis depends on translators for oral instruction. However, he faces a familiar problem with written instruction: most people can’t read, even in their native language. The latest UNESCO data from 2019



places the nation's literacy rate at just 44%. Francis said that the people who can read, commonly do so in English.

His efforts to train these future leaders of God's people are further complicated by limited teaching resources, widespread poverty, and a significant Muslim population.

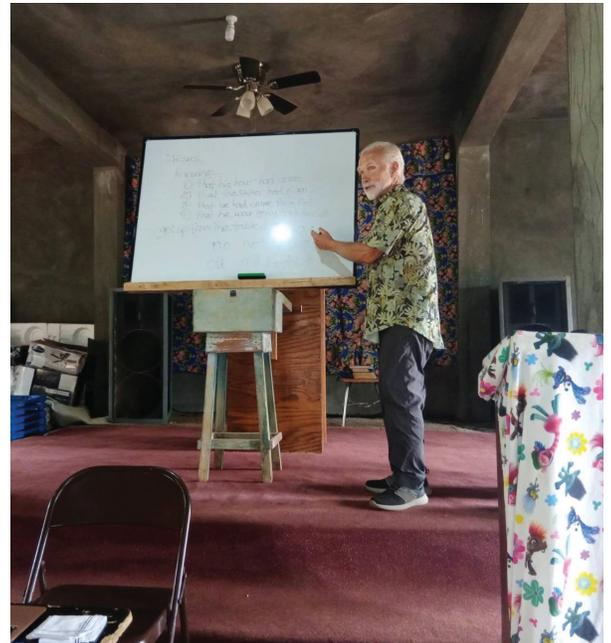
The Holy Spirit's power is evident in situations where resources seem insufficient, much like the story of the loaves and fishes. This gives all the glory to God. In these circumstances, God's Spirit works through individuals who are committed to His mission. Francis breaks down the communication barriers by using iTEE resources and audio Bibles to conduct face-to-face teaching. He is also guiding twelve leaders in his church through iTEE's **Ministry Leadership** course. By God's grace, through faithful men like Francis, and iTEE's resources, illiterate pastors are being trained in Sierra Leone. Your partnership enables pastoral training in this low-literacy, poverty-stricken country.

Prayer

Lord, we pray that Your breath continues to move across Sierra Leone—through faithful men and women, through simple tools, through iTEE Global's training—until pastors once hindered by illiteracy become leaders who carry Your truth with confidence.

*Father, let Your Spirit break every barrier.
Let Your Word take root in every heart.
Let Your glory shine in every village where human strength fails, and Your power prevails.*

In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.



Ministry Opportunities

We are always looking for those who want to serve with us. You do not need to leave home to be a missionary.

Global Trainers

Global Trainers play a crucial role in our ministry. They teach classes to our students online and face-to-face, depending on the need, and have the privilege of interacting with pastors worldwide. Without trainers, we could not fulfill our mission to provide biblical training to those lacking access to it.

Writers & Editors

We need writers & editors who can assist in writing and editing courses, produce materials for communicating iTEE Global's mission, create resources for funding development, and more. If you enjoy working with words, we can use your help!

For a detailed list of opportunities, please see iteeg.org/opportunities

Interested? Contact: HRinfo@iteeg.org



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