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ON THE AIR



Rejoicing in God Who Causes the Growth!

Insight for Living Ministries Training Pastors in Ethiopia

I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.
(1 Corinthians 3:6 NASB)



Jesus commands His people to go into all the world and teach what He instructs. So His command is IFLM's vision, which we call *Vision 195*.

— Pastor Charles R. Swindoll



INSIGHT FOR LIVING
MINISTRIES

The Great Commission: Christ's Command, Our Vision

by Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Few things bring me joy quite like watching God at work! For more than forty years, Insight for Living Ministries has been proclaiming God's Word and God has been causing the growth of His people. It is such a privilege for us to be among His workers in His vineyard. We plant new seeds, water dry ground, or cultivate fertile soil wherever and whenever He leads us. Then, we marvel with thanksgiving as He produces beautiful and abundant fruit.

In His Great Commission, Jesus commands His people to go into all the world and teach what He instructs. So His command is IFLM's vision . . . **Vision 195:** to teach the truths of Scripture and the person of Jesus Christ in a clear, accurate, and practical manner in every nation and, eventually, in every language. That means we keep our hands open and feet ready for new places He might want to send us—and in 2022, it was Ethiopia!

All of us at IFLM are eager to share how God led us to equip hundreds of pastors in this special country with its rich Christian heritage. It began, in fact, with Philip instructing the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. God's people in Ethiopia thirst for God's truth and God's ways. Many pastors long to receive deeper training, and it is our high honor to come alongside them and provide it.

Let's rejoice in this marvelous work God is doing even as we earnestly anticipate a bountiful harvest in the months, in the years, and in the decades ahead!

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Continued inside



The first pastor-training seminar was held June 13–17, 2022, at the Gudina Tumsa Conference Center in Ethiopia’s capital city, Addis Ababa. Each day began with prayer and worship.

Joining God’s Laborers

by StacieNicole Simmons



StacieNicole Simmons

As we wrapped up the launch of our *Searching the Scriptures* (STS) pastor-training program in 2020, Insight for Living Ministries never imagined—much less strategized about—launching this program in Ethiopia so soon. But there we were in Addis Ababa and Debre Zeyit in June 2022. For two weeks, IFLM equipped hundreds of church leaders with Pastor

Chuck Swindoll’s principles for studying and teaching the Bible using our STS pastor-training curriculum.

Walking into the large, sun-drenched room that first day of the conference, who would have known that the balcony would soon be brimming with pastoral leaders from the far reaches of Ethiopia? While 120 preregistered for the first seminar, we soon had more than 200 by the second day.

They just . . . kept . . . coming!

Some traveled from southwestern Bonga (282 miles away) while others came from as far as eastern Harar (322 miles away).

Reflecting on that first day, three words come to mind: **excited**, **hopeful**, and **grateful**.

Excited. From that very first morning, a palpable sense of excitement hung in the air. This eagerness heightened as we began each training day worshipping our God together—in different languages but with one voice.

Hopeful. Each session began with prayer as we committed our hearts and hands to God’s service. This set the tone for the teaching sessions led by Terry Boyle, our IFLM United Kingdom pastor and IFLM’s STS pastor-training curriculum developer.

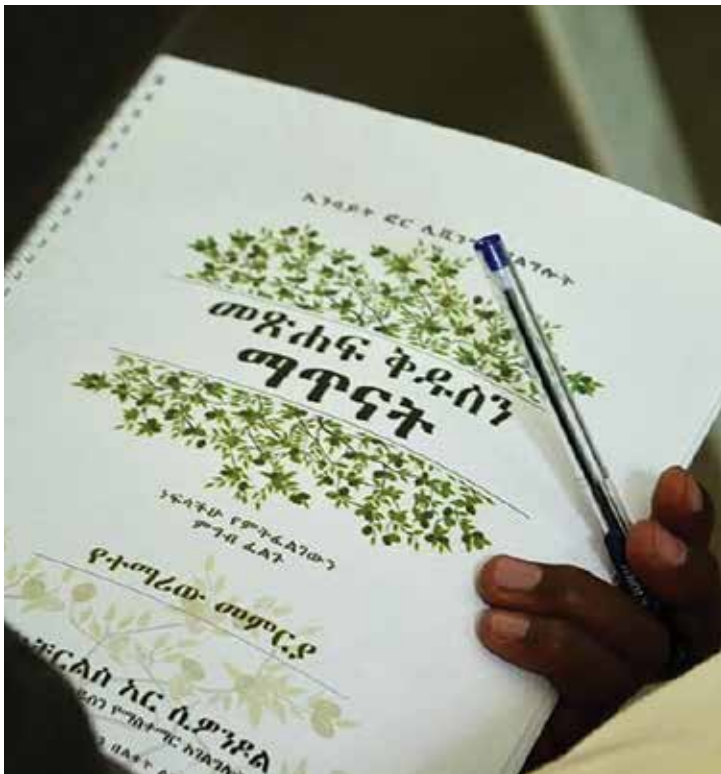
Grateful. During traditional tea breaks and lunches, we shared testimonies and rejoiced in God’s faithfulness for the many ways He is teaching and equipping His servants.

The first weeklong seminar ended June 17. *Everyone left feeling inspired and strengthened—eager to encourage and equip*

others that they, too, would be “rooted,” “built up,” and “established” in the faith (Colossians 2:7 NASB). The following week, Terry taught a second seminar with a smaller group of professors and church leaders eager to equip others with the same STS Bible-study method.

Much more work remains, and it would not be possible had God not established vital partnerships between IFLM and God’s laborers in Ethiopia.

Looking back, it is amazing how it all started. We received an unexpected e-mail from a ministry partner with a heart for Ethiopia and enthusiasm for **Vision 195**. One conversation led to another, and then another, leading us to our inaugural visit to Addis Ababa in April 2021.



Pastors received their own Amharic copy of Terry Boyle’s *Searching the Scriptures* pastor-training curriculum. Frew Tamrat oversaw the translation and publication of the workbook into Amharic. Amharic is Ethiopia’s official national language.



Our STS pastor-training seminars include instruction from the teacher, homework exercises for practice, and breakout discussion sessions between the participants.

Charged with introducing ministry leaders, theological educators, and pastors to IFLM’s **Vision 195** and our STS pastor-training program, I headed to Ethiopia—excited, hopeful, and grateful.

First, we met the Evangelical Theological College (ETC) principal, Frew Tamrat, and his colleagues. After my presentation and some discussion, all agreed IFLM’s curriculum would benefit the ETC community of professors, students, alumni, church leaders, and pastors.

Then, we met with Reverend Dereje, Pastor Seneshat, and Pastor Getu of the Ethiopian Council of Gospel Believers’ Churches. This council is charged with uniting, training, equipping, and serving the more than 40,000 evangelical churches throughout Ethiopia. The representatives were delighted to learn about IFLM’s desire to lock arms with them and help equip their leaders across the country.

Lastly, we met with leaders from the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church, including denominational leader Ermias Mamo, who oversees 10,000 churches comprising 10,000,000 members. Everyone we met was eager to learn more about Pastor Chuck’s STS

Bible-study method and was grateful for the opportunity to join together in God’s work in Ethiopia.

After that visit, my husband, Evan, and I helped structure a plan with these leaders to implement the first STS pastor-training seminar in Addis Ababa. Today, we stand in awe of all the Lord has done.

The conferences in June were only the beginning! In September 2022, Terry began training pastors online. Our next in-person conference is scheduled for January 2023 in Addis Ababa.

Praise God! He is truly the Lord of the harvest who granted us the joy of joining God’s laborers in Ethiopia—with excitement, hope, and overflowing gratitude.



Ethiopian pastors pray to prepare their hearts for what God would teach them through the STS pastor-training session.

Abiding in The True Vine

by Austin Swindoll-Thompson



Austin Swindoll-Thompson

I captured media for IFLM’s pastor-training conferences in Ethiopia, and I found far more than simple stories and vibrant visuals . . . I found a vision. A vision from the heart of one man gripped by the gospel and desirous to see seeds of unity mature into the fruit of grace, peace, and brotherhood.

The man, Haileyesus, Terry’s Amharic interpreter, lives in a small home alongside a shadowed hillside of Addis Ababa. Haileyesus is a man who is faithful to God’s Word and dedicated to the redemption found only in Christ, so it seemed fitting to interview him.

He shared that many Ethiopians “don’t have the right attitude when it comes to brotherhood.” Brotherhood is often tainted by tribalism in Ethiopia, and a temptation within Ethiopia’s communal culture is to elevate one’s family and ethnic group (of which, there are more than 80 different tribes) above spiritual unity. “The strife our country is going through right now is mostly ethnic. . . . People fight for position and power . . . for how they can benefit their own group. It’s even among the church,” he said. Tribal tension is deeply rooted in Ethiopia’s long history.

Haileyesus knows that this tribal tension, felt nationally and seen internationally, can only be remedied by the Lord. He affirmed that Christ is the Vine who sustains our lives and that by abiding in Him we can produce fruit (John 15:1–6). He especially longs for the fruit of Christ-centered unity.



The participants of our STS pastor-training seminar were always quick to turn to God in prayer, to praise Him for His goodness, and to request His strength and blessing each day.

We saw reaffirming aspects of unity during our pastor-training conference. Haileyesus said, *“This kind of training helps us understand and discover the meaning of the Bible. It helps us live the life we are expected to live and to*

have a solution for the country, for Africa, and for the world.” To quell tribalism anywhere, the unifying factor must be found in Christ. Just as Paul emphasized . . . Christ Himself is our peace who unites people to Himself and kills root diseases such as tribalism (Ephesians 2:14).

I felt encouraged by Haileyesus and his honesty about the value of IFLM’s pastor-training conferences and His Christ-centered vision for the church. *Pray for the church in Ethiopia—that its attachment to the Vine would strengthen and would result in the beautiful and fragrant fruit of Christian harmony. Please pray for IFLM’s STS training, that we can help them in their pursuit of richly abiding in the True Vine.*



StacieNicole led a team of ten IFLM representatives during the June 2022 trip, including, from left: Tom Hayes, Austin Swindoll-Thompson, Peter and Sylvia Simwanza, Terry and Rosie Boyle, Evan and StacieNicole Simmons, and Subhadheer and Usha Vempati.

Continued on back

Watering Fertile Soil for Homegrown Ministry

by Terry Boyle



Terry Boyle serves as IFLM's regional pastor in the United Kingdom, chief STS officer, and lead curriculum developer and trainer for IFLM's international pastor-training program. IFLM launched this program to equip church leaders who desire advanced training for pastoral ministry but lack easy access to formal education. Terry's wife, Rosie, also serves with IFLM UK as listener representative.

Entoto Park sits high over Addis Ababa—above the haze, above the traffic's blare, above the press of the city's ceaseless industry. It's a lofty and tranquil place dominated by a great forest of eucalyptus. Transplanted from Australia around a century ago, the eucalyptus became famous for making straight and strong building spars. But it's also famous for its thirst, blotting dry the soil wherever it sets its roots. These foreign trees have shouldered aside countless acres of Ethiopia's native junipers and acacias.

That's a powerful image, and one that translates easily into our ministry goals in so many parts of the world. Insight for Living Ministries doesn't want to be an invasive foreign import. Our desire

is to water the native seeds of faith already planted that God may cause natural and indigenous growth. That aim demands that we be careful in the work we do—training with sensitivity to local cultural habits and distinctives.

Of course, I was thrilled about leading an STS training seminar in Ethiopia. Prior to this trip, I had taught our program only a few times online because we launched it just as the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Now, I would be in the same room with the participants, face-to-face!

Then came the hesitations. I fretted like Moses before God at the burning bush. We have no office in Ethiopia, no IFLM pastor in place. No one on the IFLM team even speaks Amharic. Are we committing to too much? What if the program is of little use there? Despite these doubts, God's leading remained certain, so we submitted our plans into His hands and purchased the plane tickets.



Church leaders enjoy singing and expressing themselves, making a joyful noise to their Creator and Redeemer!



In a breakout session, attendees discuss different passages of Scripture using Pastor Chuck's STS Bible-study method.

Our airplane touched down, and Rosie and I walked under African skies for the first time—much to our delight. Ethiopians smile readily and help eagerly. Last-minute details settled into place as we began day one of our first conference.

I really enjoyed rubbing shoulders with these men and women of God. The attendees were from all parts of Ethiopia. Most serve the church in their spare time in small towns and rural communities. For this STS seminar, they committed to four intense days of on-site training to learn how to study the Bible carefully for themselves and then to turn the fruits of their work into strong and effective sermons. In other words, they were tapping into the method Pastor Chuck has cultivated and used during his 60 years of pulpit ministry.

Before the trip, we wondered what kind of atmosphere we would have, given the wide spectrum of denominations represented. Disagreements over minor doctrinal points can all too often turn sour. In a breathtaking

sweep of grace, however, God did more than merely keep us together. A buzzing camaraderie soon filled us all as we gathered around Christ's Word to see what He has said to all of us. One breakout session wrestled with a particularly thorny question: *What exactly is the unforgivable sin?* Harsh and abiding division could have easily erupted. But, even though the discussions got lively, we all came back to the same room—unified by the same Spirit with respect for each other, worshiping and honoring the same Lord.

IFLM's collaboration with Ethiopian church leaders is flourishing as we focus on watering with the pure Word of Christ that God might cause an abundance of native growth. He

did it right before our eyes while we were there! Rejoice with us and pray that He will continue nourishing His people, making them like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season, prospering in all they do (Psalm 1:3).



During the first conference, Terry Boyle teaches the group of attendees with the help of Amharic interpreter, Haileyesus.



IFLM is grateful to work with Christ's church in Ethiopia. These enthusiastic leaders soaked in every word from Terry and now are using what they learned to spiritually nourish themselves and their flocks.

Ethiopia STS Pastor-Training Conference Testimonials

I adored everything about this training, especially understanding that Christ is central to the Bible and how to read Bible passages within their context.

—Pastor Siltanu Shiferaw, Wolayita

**Scan to see a
brief overview
of our time in
Ethiopia**



For Ethiopians, the greatest spiritual need is the knowledge of Scripture. Ethiopia has one of the fastest-growing evangelical communities. So, our churches are growing in number and size, but the majority of church leaders are concerned about how deeply those believers are rooted in biblical knowledge. And the council's focus is on developing church leaders who are really knowledgeable about what to preach and how to preach.

**— Pastor Seneshat Teka
Director of Spiritual Department
Ethiopian Council of Gospel Believers'
Churches**

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