



**A LOOK AT THE PARTNER SCHOOLS
AND LEADERS BEING REACHED**



JOHN BERNARD
PRESIDENT, UNITED WORLD MISSION

The global church needs few things more urgently than its own well-trained leaders, and they're needed at every level. Church planters and house church pastors need biblical training accessible where they're serving, and at their level of education. At the same time, the Church in every region of the world needs thought leaders educated at the highest academic levels. United World Mission seeks to equip leaders from the grassroots to the seminary classroom. Thank you for partnering with our Overseas Council ministry and seminaries around the world. Together, we're confronting the Global Leadership Challenge!

As John notes, confronting the Global Leadership Challenge is critical. Nine out of ten churches in the Majority World are led by individuals without formal training. Closing the gap has motivated the Overseas Council's ministry for more than 40 years. We partner with more than 100 strategically selected seminaries located where the Church is growing the fastest, or the needs are the greatest.

We carry out this mission with you because of our shared vision for flourishing churches around the world led by well-equipped leaders.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought government restrictions on in-person teaching, in turn creating financial and emotional stresses. In the stories that follow, you'll learn the challenges our partner seminaries have faced, and the innovative ways they have persevered and overcome. For instance, the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon halted in-person teaching, shifting the program permanently from residential to online. ABTS is now offering several short, on-campus sessions each year. This new approach is more financially sustainable and will allow ABTS to reach more students who might have been hindered from coming for a full-time residential program. Some seminary leaders wrote to say that enrollment actually increased because of the accessibility of innovative online programming.

You'll also read inspiring student testimonies expressing gratitude for your scholarship support, and stories of alumni who are now fruitfully serving

and multiplying. These students are among the 88,000 students who are being equipped each year by OC partner schools, and together their global impact is staggering.

Our Regional Directors' important ministries of walking alongside seminary partners have also recalibrated due to travel restrictions. They're conducting virtual workshops for faculty who are learning how to teach in an online environment. They and their seminary leaders are encouraging each other, praying for one another, and learning together. Their ability to adapt has been extraordinary!

Friends, this is why you and I invest in OC's Kingdom work. I trust you'll be informed and inspired as you read. And on behalf of our seminary partners and their students, thank you for your critical part in confronting the Global Leadership Challenge.



SCOTT CUNNINGHAM
DIRECTOR, OVERSEAS COUNCIL

AFRICA



REGIONAL UPDATES FROM JOHN JUSU REGIONAL DIRECTOR, AFRICA

This year started with several great ministry expectations. One of these expectations was for our partner seminaries to further explore new and alternative ways of providing theological education, so that they can more effectively confront the Global Leadership Challenge. I thank God that this expectation was actually accelerated by the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

For instance, this year I've worked with a number of seminaries specifically to prepare them for technology-mediated learning, as schools have closed in-person classes and shifted to online training. I've conducted several webinars with schools, including several with International Leadership University (ILU) in Kenya, about responding to the pandemic in the training of pastors. My webinars with ILU attracted over 15 seminary faculty members and 60 church leaders from across the globe. As a result of this consultation, ILU developed a renewed, integrated curriculum that will outlive the pandemic, and the church leaders deepened their connections with their congregations by using several alternative ways of "keeping church alive during the pandemic" which they learned during the webinars. I not only led the webinar sessions, but I also trained two other pastors to



help other churches with the same training. Each of these pastors have since led webinar trainings reaching over 120 church leaders.

I am grateful to our friends and partners who continually give to support the work in Africa. The work is immense, but through your support to me as Regional Director, a lot has been done in raising leaders and disciple makers for the Kingdom during this pandemic. I pray that God will bless our mutual efforts in raising workers for His ever-growing harvest. My family and I will covet your prayers for us for good health and for break times of deep reflection and intentional soul care.

FROM MARDOCHEE NADOUNGAR REGIONAL DIRECTOR, FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

The pandemic hit our partner schools in Francophone Africa badly. In March, by government orders, schools around the region closed their doors to in-person teaching. A few remained without any educational activities for two to three months. However, others were able to more quickly resume classes by shifting to online courses. For this new paradigm, teachers and students both had to be trained in the use of online tools. Efforts to organize online courses allowed schools to finish the 2019-20 academic year and then to prepare to open for the 2020-21 academic year.

Anticipating that I would be called upon by our partner seminaries to help them through the challenges brought about by the pandemic, I trained myself through tutorials and short courses on the use of Zoom and Moodle, as well as online pedagogy. I was then able to organize virtual consultations with school leaders to encourage them and to point them in the direction of learning how to effectively use online tools.

The pandemic not only disrupted education, but all the schools in my region also experienced financial difficulties. Typically, their financial support came from local churches, school fees and income generating activities (such as renting out their guesthouses and classrooms for



seminars etc.). The closure of churches, schools, and guesthouses made the financial condition very precarious, leading to difficulty in paying salaries as well as utility bills. In these conditions, the Stabilization Funds we sent to these schools were received as a breath of fresh air for which presidents of these schools express their deep gratitude and appreciation to the donors.

As you pray for schools in my region, remember: Teacher training for online courses; ongoing financial challenges that schools are facing; provision of high-speed Internet bandwidth for offering more online courses.

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (AIU) KENYA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Diploma in Theology
- Bachelor of Theology
- Post Graduate Diploma in Theology
- Master of Arts
- Master of Divinity
- Doctor of Philosophy

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

1,500 Students

WITH THE COMING OF THE PANDEMIC, WE STOPPED ALL IN-PERSON TEACHING. MOST STUDENTS AND STAFF RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES, PER GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE. HOWEVER, OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES REMAINED ON CAMPUS.

We smoothly transitioned over 65% of our students to remote learning. Some, however, did not have access to Internet connectivity because of their locations. In September 2020, we began a new semester with orientation happening remotely.

Since March, we have initiated various ways of both providing support and continuing our mission in the wake of the pandemic. We . . .

provided basic needs to deserving students • allocated campus land to international students to use as gardens to enable them to grow their own vegetables • made faculty available to give expert opinion on education in light of Covid • organized counseling webinars to support families in the area • partnered with Internet service providers to provide data to faculty and students at a subsidized cost • reduced fees to make education more accessible • provided spiritual support through online chapel services, virtual Christian Union meetings and Bible study.

We continue to navigate the various challenges to ensure we fulfil our mandate of raising Christ-centered leaders in this generation.

We thank you for your generous contributions towards supporting our students, who rely on us for help.

Continue in your prayers for us:

Capital campaign that kicked off October 5. Pray that the Lord will guide us in tapping into His resources • For new projects: mentorship programs both in high schools and universities, construction of new buildings on campus, and upgrading of clinic services • Commit an upcoming stakeholders meeting to the Lord – that it will be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit • Pray for our students who are studying remotely; some are struggling to connect • Commit faculty to the Lord as they continue adjusting to new ways of teaching, and for supporting staff • Our leadership – it is not easy for them during this period of uncertainty • Pray for new self-supporting students to enroll and also for those struggling with fees • Pray for both Governing Council and Trustee members - that the Lord will guide them.

BANGUI EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (BEST) CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Bachelor in Theology
- Professional Master in Leadership and Management
- Professional Master in Missiology and Practical Theology
- Master of Research in Biblical Studies
- D.Min in Practical Theology
- PhD in Biblical Studies

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

188 students

UNCERTAINTIES FILLED THIS ACADEMIC YEAR. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THE PANDEMIC PUT ON HOLD OUR ABILITY TO COMPLETE THE SCHOOL YEAR. ALTHOUGH THE PANDEMIC IS STILL WITH US, WE CAN SAY LIKE THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL: “THUS FAR HAS THE LORD HELPED US.”

Since March when the pandemic was detected in Central African Republic, there has not been a single person infected at BEST. We took aggressive measures to avoid infection, and we believe God worked through these efforts to keep the campus community safe.

The government shut down BEST’s educational programs for almost four months. Yet, by the end of August, we were able to complete the academic year. More than 1,000 people, gathered for our graduation for 28 men and women, now ready to take up their ministries in five African countries.

The schools we operate for children and youth (pre-school, primary school and secondary school) were also closed, but they are now all open again. Parents are surprisingly confident, sending their children to BEST to complete their school year. By the end of September, the students will be able to move on to their next grade, with the new school year for children beginning in October.

The pandemic has made BEST’s financial situation fragile. When schools were closed, we laid off a significant number of campus workers and reduced the salaries of others. With schools now reopened, many of those laid off will gradually return to work. These personnel decisions have been difficult for everyone. People need employment, and BEST needs financial stability in order to carry out its mission. We would like to thank you for your prayers and for your financial support of the ministry of BEST during this time of crisis. We are now looking forward to the next academic year in October.

Please pray for us as we are:

Preparing a safe environment for opening the new academic year • Receiving and helping new students who desire to be equipped for ministry • Preserving peace during the presidential elections coming in December • Protecting the seminary’s financial health in the midst of the pandemic.

ETHIOPIAN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (EGST)

ETHIOPIA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Post Graduate Diploma in Biblical and Theological Studies
- Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies
- Master of Arts in Leadership and Management
- Master of Arts in Development Studies Management
- Master of Theology
- Doctor of Philosophy Management

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

200 students

GREETINGS TO YOU FROM THE ETHIOPIAN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (EGST). FIRST OF ALL, WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO OVERSEAS COUNCIL FOR SHARING OUR STORY TO OTHERS WHO WOULD STAND BY OUR SIDE, WHICH, AS YOU INDICATED, IS THE REFLECTION OF OUR LONGSTANDING RELATIONSHIP. WE VALUE THE RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE WITH OC SINCE EGST'S ESTABLISHMENT! THE FRUIT OF OUR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS ARE HONORED IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, AS A NUMBER OF OUR GRADUATES HOLD KEY MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS.

Though we are known for our on-campus programs, we were forced to resort to e-learning since April 2020. This has been a challenge for both our faculty and students, most of whom have little or no experience in e-learning. We thank God for the agility and resilience they have shown!

For the academic year of 2020-2021, we are planning to hold hybrid classes, where much of the classes will be held on campus with few weeks of online learning. We are confident that our faculty and students will have a smoother experience than before.

To ensure institutional stability and growth, we are in the process of revising the current strategic plan and developing a new one for the period 2021-2025. The revision process is being carried out by our faculty and staff with the right skill set and experience.

Though our graduation was delayed, 56 students graduated in November, 2020.

Please, pray for us:

That the teaching-learning process may not be interrupted due to the pandemic • That our faculty, staff, and students remain healthy and strong • That we may be able to equip ministers serving in regional cities and towns • That our graduates continue to labor for the betterment of churches and society • That we would have sufficient finances to support needy students • That we may secure a reliable online learning platform to expand the horizon of our ministry • That Ethiopia would be stable from sociopolitical tensions.

Thank you again and God bless you abundantly!

STUDENT PROFILE

STEVEN NJERU WAMBUGU

MASTER'S IN THEOLOGY AND MISSIONS STUDIES



I was a wild kind of boy who often got into trouble. It was a miserable adventure, and only by God's grace did I live to confess my sins. My parents were not good role models, and their separation deeply affected us children. I lost interest in school and gained interest in drinking alcohol and a wild lifestyle. My mother's business went from bad to worse and so did her depression and drinking. We lost everything, and I abandoned my mum and stayed with my dad in his rural home. I blamed my parents for everything, and I contemplated suicide. I got kicked out of my dad's home and left for Nairobi.

I asked a friend to take me to a church I had once visited. The moment I entered I experienced a real sense of my sinful life. That day, with tears, I accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. I discovered God in the next weeks and committed my life to serve Him. I got involved in church outreach and children's and marriage ministries. For the next twenty years, my wife and I served in full-time ministry with Life Ministry Kenya (Cru).

I left Kenya to plant a church in Malawi in 2014. We returned to Kenya after handing over the church to a local pastor, and I enrolled in AIU to complete my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Theology and Missions, even at this late stage in life (I am in my late fifties)! I realized that most churches have not prioritized the

Great Commission, focusing instead on programs for the 'containment' of believers, rather than equipping and sending them out. My major goal is to develop a discipleship model for Africa that can be contextualized and adapted for other cultures. My aim is to never "retire" but continue doing, to quote Bill Bright, "the greatest job on earth": introducing others to Christ and establishing them in God's Word as the only way of transforming the world for God.

"MY MAJOR GOAL IS TO DEVELOP A DISCIPLESHIP MODEL FOR AFRICA THAT CAN BE CONTEXTUALIZED AND ADAPTED FOR OTHER CULTURES."



*STUDENT PROFILE***DJENOUDJI PARMINASSE**

**BANGUI EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (BEST)
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

Last year I came from my country of Chad to be a student in the BEST extension center in Cameroon.

**“MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED
FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE;
BECAUSE YOU HAVE
REJECTED KNOWLEDGE,
I REJECT YOU FROM BEING A
PRIEST TO ME.” HOSEA 4:6**

This passage motivated me to gain knowledge of the Word of God through the theological training offered by BEST. I resolved to acquire the necessary tools to impact my region and bring more souls to the kingdom of God. In this I have followed another passage, Ezra 7:10: “For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to do it and teach the statutes and ordinances of Israel.” Like Ezra, I have applied my heart to study, to practice, and then to teach the Word of God.

I am so grateful for the scholarship we received from Overseas Council during the last academic term. The scholarship helped us to overcome challenges we were facing. As a foreigner, it helped me complete my first year in the masters program. I really appreciate the donors that are sacrificing during this period

of Covid-19. Without this support I would have gone back to my home country.

Before coming to BEST I was just preaching, but with no evidence to explain the mind of God through his Word. Now I am preaching with a focus. It is now that I realize that my preaching was empty. The courses of hermeneutics and exegesis have helped me to have a clearer understanding of the Scriptures. In a local church where I am doing an internship I recently conducted a seminar on the topic, “Divine Protection” based on Psalm 91. People were so amazed at the teaching of God’s Word.

Our prayer is that God continues to sustain your work in His vineyard. I would also like for you to pray for BEST during this period of hardship. Be blessed in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.



*STUDENT PROFILE***AYANSA OBSI***MA IN BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES*

My name is Pastor Ayansa Obsi. I am married with four children. I first came to the Lord when I was nineteen. After two years of professional service, I sensed God's call to a full-time ministry and began to pastor local churches. To prepare myself better for my pastoral ministry, I earned a Bachelor's degree in Bible and Theology at Addis Ababa Bible College.

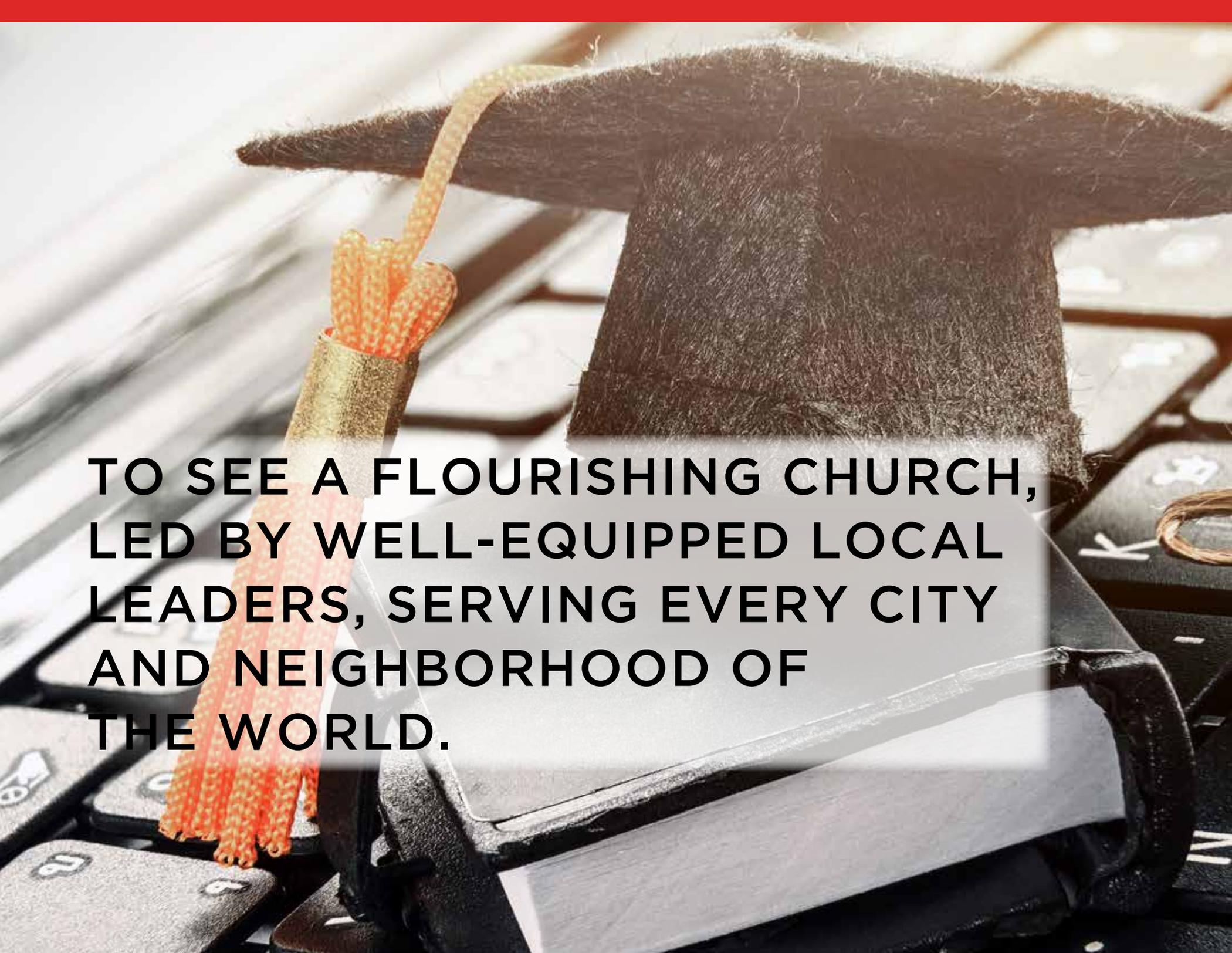
Then, I realized that an in-depth theological study is important for my ministry and came to EGST for further training. Studying at EGST is a joy and a privilege. My experience during these two years have surpassed my expectations. The education has strengthened my faith, opened my eyes to see the Bible with a fresh perspective, and enhanced my motivation for preaching and teaching. God willing, I will graduate in July 2021.

I would like to thank EGST for granting me a scholarship that covered my entire tuition fee. The scholarship I received from EGST has eased my financial burden and allowed me to focus on my studies, so that I would fulfill God's will for my life. Had it not been for your financial support, I and my family would have suffered a lot, since we would not be able to cover for our children's school fees and basic necessities as food. Thank you so much for your support, and God bless you richly!

I have recently been appointed in a leadership role overseeing approximately 400 local churches across the country. I now have opportunity and responsibility to train and empower thousands of our church ministers. Your investment in my studies has not been in vain. The knowledge, wisdom, and inspiration I am receiving at EGST hones my life and my ministry in a way that glorifies God!

“HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT, I AND MY FAMILY WOULD HAVE SUFFERED A LOT, SINCE WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO COVER FOR OUR CHILDREN'S SCHOOL FEES AND BASIC NECESSITIES AS FOOD.”





**TO SEE A FLOURISHING CHURCH,
LED BY WELL-EQUIPPED LOCAL
LEADERS, SERVING EVERY CITY
AND NEIGHBORHOOD OF
THE WORLD.**

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR PARTNERSHIP.
WE COULDN'T DO
THIS WITHOUT YOU.**



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