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**THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
CULMINATING IN EFFECTIVE SERVICE**

Ephesians 4:12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful

schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

This passage of Scripture continues to guide the efforts of our organization, and in particular the aspect of it that is an Educational Institution. Let's take a quick look at the text and make some observations.

Verse 12.

The task of equipping belongs to the leadership formerly mentioned in verse 11, and it is the saints who are to be equipped. The word 'saint' is the New Testament equivalent to the Hebrew concept of 'holy ones.' In fact, the Greek word translated 'saint' (*hagios*), can be interpreted as a holy one. In that case, the holy community of God is to be equipped by leadership for the purpose of "the work of ministry." The Greek word for ministry, and even the word ministry in English, both mean service. The word is often translated as 'ministry' to highlight the ministerial aspect of the service effort. Note that this equipping is not solely to enhance intellectual capacities, but is to culminate in a practical service effort. The second half of verse 12 then emphasizes the development ("building up") of the body of Christ, as a result of such equipping.

According to verse 12 then, education should be aimed at those set apart (holy) for God's ministerial purposes in such a way it develops their cor-

porate (*body*) presence, and effectuates practical ministerial service to the world around them.

Verse 13.

The task of equipping the saints must continue with the aim of bringing about the unity of faith concerning a "knowledge of the Son of God." This is explicitly Christocentric Theological Education. It's not just theological, because the context carries that Jesus is the Son of God, and in that case, it's Christocentric. The verse continues to teach that maturity comes as a result of receiving this theological education within the context of community because it anticipates a unity of faith and the corporate development of the

Verse 15.

Learning to be communicators of truth, with love as the approach, becomes a major aim within the maturation process of growing in Christ. All members of the body must learn to be subject to his rule, his Word, as he is the only head in the body--yet another emphasis on Christocentric Theological Education.

Verse 16.

This verse makes explicit that the body and its individual parts only work properly when they are effectively connected to the head through proper organization, which hinges on that previously mentioned unity of faith, where the body builds itself up to stronger covenant and commitment keeping, based on love.

These 5 verses reveal that the health of a body of believers, subject to the rule of Christ, is directly connected to a Christocentric Theological Education that brings about a unified effort to serve others and to build up a covenanting, connected, community of love.

In this edition of *The Global Voice* you will read more about our organization as an Educational Institution and the paramount importance of a theological education prior to any kind of service effort as to ensure the actions are a result of God's direction, and not our limited, cultural perspectives. In order to serve effectively, a renewing of the mind must take place.

Thanks for all your support and I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter!



THOUGHTS

BY GREGG D. GARNER

group to experience the "full stature of Christ."

Verse 14.

Via metaphor, the verse shows that theological education leads to the kind of maturation that does away with the common issues related to youth, that unfortunately sometimes carry over into adulthood: childishness ("be children"), fickleness ("tossed by waves"), easily manipulated ("carried about by wind of doctrine"), undiscerning (deceived by "human cunning"), and swept away by fleeting trends ("deceitful schemes").

The health of a body of believers, subject to the rule of Christ, is directly connected to a Christocentric Theological Education that brings about a unified effort to serve others and to build up a covenanting, connected, community of love.

Equipped to Approach the World Biblically

How a Biblical Education Equips Saints for Service

Written by Jeff Sherrod

During the summer of 2005, I sat in a small rural church in Uganda and wept. Even though I had been abroad before and seen poverty, for the first time in my life I really saw it.

So what changed?

I remember thinking that my tears would not satisfy the hunger pains of any the children, and I felt completely powerless to do anything. A dozen years later, I still see poverty, but I no longer feel powerless to do something about it.

What changed?

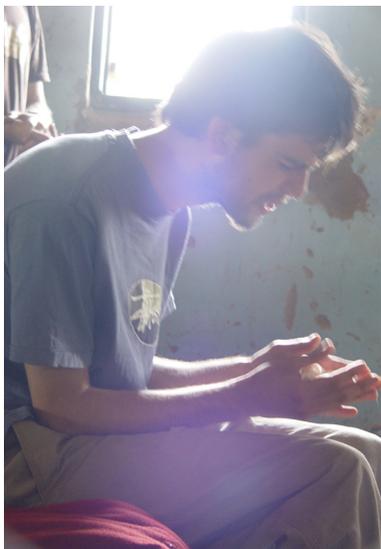
Why could I see the reality of poverty I had until then overlooked?

It was God's Word.

On that particular trip, God's Word had been taught in such a way that brought clarity to the world around me. Theological education has both opened my eyes to need and taught me how to address those needs.

Theological education is what opened my heart to the needs of the poor, and it is theological education that has given me the tools to respond to it effectively. For theological education to be effective, we believe that it must happen in a way that closely connects us to the world. It's a strong bond. God's Word opens our eyes to the needs of the world, and the needs of the world keep sending us back into the Bible for answers and closeness to the God who can empower us to do something about it.

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Jeff Sherrod, who once felt powerless to do something about the poverty he experienced in Uganda (top left), now serves as our Academic Director of the Institute for G.O.D. where he passionately educates other students in THE text for individual and communal transformation--God's Word (right)! He also serves abroad in India where he contributes towards teacher training (bottom photo) at a primary school near our headquarters.

The Institute for G.O.D. is teaching a generation of students to not feel powerless when confronted by incredible need. Our confidence doesn't come from the latest trend in development work or access to funding, but a deep knowledge of God's Word.

Effective theological education and effective service do not sit on opposite sides of a spectrum. Rather, our theology is filtered through the example of Jesus who selflessly set aside his own agenda to serve others. We want students to both become aware of the needs around them, and be educated so they can effectively meet those needs. Thus, in our Community Development classes, students work on practical projects that meet real needs. In Bible courses, students are taught to have a spirit of love and compassion so they can meet needs with the spirit of Christ.

Over the course of their studies, students go on three "Immersion" trips abroad. An Immersion is a plunge into the culture, language, and lives of people living in 3rd world country. On these trips, students are asked to serve and meet real needs. These trips are part of a biblical education because proper theological education results in effective service to the "least of these."

In the following pages you'll read some highlights from our past summer, where students from the Institute put their theological education to use all over the world. These are the servants we are proud to produce--those trained for effective service to the marginalized, informed by the very transformative power of God's Word that makes empowers us to do something in this world of need.

Equipped to Teach, Ready to Empower

Institute Students-turned-Academy Teachers Build Up teachers Around the World

Written by Brynn Buchanan

Ah. The beloved-by-teachers 3-month summer break. Well, back-to-school in the US is just around the corner, and while many teachers are getting back to work, ours didn't stop. In fact, 5 of the teachers at the Academy for G.O.D. went on mission to educate teachers at impoverished schools in the developing world. Less than a month after the Academy school year ended, they were on the field in Uganda and India for their own immersion experiences as students of the Institute for G.O.D.

Their investment in the Word gave them the capacity for this culminating service effort. They went, not just as experienced teachers, but as students of the Bible, learning how to obey God's Word in life everyday, both here and abroad. Their knowledge of the Word allowed them to take what they've been equipped to do, that is to teach, and use it to empower others.

Rachel Hartnell spent 5 weeks in Uganda training teachers at St. John's Primary. She conducted seminars on creative and interactive Language Arts lessons, bringing fun and games into the classroom, which is always more memorable for children. She also introduced a system for incentivizing positive behavior among the students to the teachers. She was even able to be with them in classes with their students to see them implement their training. As a result, she helped cultivated greater unity among the teachers.

In India, Corey Foster, Stephany Dailey, Rachel Nowlin, and Rebekah Davis served (and continue to serve, as

Rachel is staying for the year!) the teachers at Aquatic Public School (APS). Each of them brought both themselves as Bible students and their gifts and strengths as educators to their service, making for a dynamic training experience for APS teachers. They taught them how to manage negative behaviors and moti-

been seeing the light coming on inside of the St. John's teachers. Together, we have danced with the students in the field, laughed over meals and worshipped the Lord. One particular teacher, Madame Joyce, is progressively losing her eyesight because of some abuse she suffered at the hands of her late husband. Josephine said, "I can see her spirit being lifted up." We even captured her on video dancing for her students. The Lord is so faithful!

Our mission, which we received from Jesus, is to serve the poor and marginalized through education, advocacy, and empowerment, demonstrating unconditional love. This was the agenda of these women this summer, what they've learned to do through their biblical education, and what their experiences here have equipped them for--to love and empower teachers and students there.



Rachel Hartnell, top left, gave teachers at St. John's Primary a gift they didn't know was coming. They recounted, "We knew it'd be good, but we didn't know it'd be this good!" Their smiles (bottom) bear witness to burdens lifted and gifts strengthened. We give them our best, knowing that what a teacher needs is not just a checklist of to-dos, but an example of a teacher who pours out their life for their students.

vate positive ones, encourage participation and working together, and troubleshoot a variety of classroom issues. They too were able to see the teachers use their new tools in the classroom, which is ultimately a win for the students!

Rachel Hartnell reflected: "The greatest blessing has

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Empowering Youth takes Mature Believers

Institute Student Projects Establish More than a Trend

Written by Brett Madron

Maturity is what we're after.

We put a lot of energy into youth and children's programming and pray that we can empower them to do useful things with their abundant energy while they learn what it is that God wants

from them. But all of that work is only possible if our own students, who carry out this programming, are no longer immature.

According to Paul, a theological education leads to maturation, and makes someone eligible to invest into those younger, or newer to the faith, than they are. The test of this maturity then, comes through the quality of our care for youth. It's going to be steady (not 'tossed by the waves'), utilize discernment of what they actually need, and not just exist as a trendy thing to talk about on Instagram.

In the regions where we work, extracurricular venues to foster youth in their development in character and virtue simply do not exist. So, we create them! This task is not for the faint of heart. Starting from scratch to create kids camps or sports leagues is no simple task.

One of the first questions our students ask is, "if someone gets hurt, what do we do, considering the lack of medical care in the area?" The rural areas where we minister in Latin America and East Africa are not primed and ready for kids camps, but that doesn't mean that the kids there don't deserve the gift.

"My education at the Institute has helped me think through every aspect of my project to ensure that it is culturally appropriate and will empower the youth to continue, even after I leave. I want to ensure that the projects teach values found in the Bible. My teachers and classmates helped so much in preparing me for this project for our friends here in Uganda."



Immersion students prepared their immersion projects throughout an entire semester, getting cultural, biblical and practical feedback from experienced development workers in the region.

In El Salvador, Anna Hastings is also hosting the second season of a soccer league on our campus. "It has been such a blessing to be able to interact with so many precious children, coming from different communities but yet finding unity on our campus."

For both Ben and Anna, running sports leagues isn't new. Alongside their Institute studies they work for Mid-State Sports Leagues, a business partner of G.O.D. Int'l and the fastest growing sports league in Nashville. Integrating their work and their study allows them to grow spiritually, without duality. The rigor of our program's biblical studies and the strenuousness of their work schedule is producing the kind of maturity in Ben and Anna that ensures that they'll be able to minister to youth--because they're mature enough in the Lord to do so.

Jessica Woody, another Immersion student, spent her summer facilitating kids camps for children in rural El Salvador, a parallel experience to her job in the States--where she works for the Parents Day Out program at G.O.D. Int'l. Likewise,

Ben Young, on his second immersion to Uganda this summer, formed a 5-team soccer league for fifty 8-10 year olds from St. John's Primary School. He built bamboo soccer goals, organized game and practice schedules, and trained coaches, who are all students at the Institute for G.O.D. East Africa, in practice management. He empowered them to do more than just teach soccer to the children, but to teach them lessons in character along the way.

Jessica is growing in maturity as she sees that the person she is at work is the same person she is at school, or with her friends, or in rural El Salvador. That person has been equipped by God's Word to look outside of herself and invest into children. She says, "Last semester, one of the main lessons I walked away with from studying the Apostle Paul is the importance of being a demonstration of Christ to others. This isn't just for adults--it's for kids. The sooner we give them a proper representation of the Lord, the better." But this requires maturity--the kind that we are intent on developing at our Institute.

My education at the Institute has helped me think through every aspect of my project to ensure that it is culturally appropriate and will empower the youth to continue, even after I leave.

Following the Jesus who Feeds

Theological Education Includes Knowledge of Food Production

Laurie Germeraad Kagay

As early as a 100-level class, Institute students are introduced to God's ideal environment: a garden, where He installed an irrigation system, planted trees, and supplied food for the first family. They'll learn about the first occupations: a gardener and a shepherd, and some ancient well-diggers, Abraham and Isaac. When your school also trains you for third world development work, these lessons come

alive as students consider what is required to order chaotic environments to look like places that God deems "good." By their final semester, they'll do a group project detailing the future plans for our organization in a 3rd world environment, thinking through everything from electrical and wifi access to quality schools, medical facilities to entrepreneurial endeavors.

In between those bookend courses, students put their hand to the plow, literally. Students all receive the opportunity to work in our community garden, learning the ins-and-outs of food production. When our students go around the world and visit farmers in their fields, they are not shocked by what they're seeing. They're actually able to assist them with innovative methods, tools, or processes to give greater efficiency and productivity to their work.

That's exactly what took place this summer, in various ways depending on each of our regions' distinct settings.

In Latin America, students Michael Watkins, Ethan Harris and Kyle Becker were able to help troubleshoot reasons behind crops that weren't performing optimally. They were able to witness the empowerment that has taken place among our cooperatives in Latin America as they worked together to pinpoint issues and restore soil health.

In India, Jameson Parker and Ryan McAlister were able to kick off our very first garden in the region--on the roof! With our headquarters located in the National Capital Region, these students were able to initiate team goals for food production. Jameson explains, "We were able to give our cooperatives a way to create their own source of food. Whether it's a lack of time, money, or space, urban growing is too easily shrugged off for another day. But

Zach Hartnell spearheaded an impressive processing station that will allow for all food grown to be well-washed before distribution. This is completely unknown in the region.

But students at our Institute are not just learning that God created the earth to grow food, they're learning about Jesus, who had compassion on the hungry crowd and was unwilling to send them home without food (Mt. 15:32-29). We are doing our best to teach our Institute students what he taught his disciples--that no environment is too desolate for food. By having faith and breaking down the need--region by region, small garden by small garden--we've found there's enough to feed a crowd.



Whether our agricultural efforts are just beginning or feeding a crowd, it's a priority in every region, because it's a need and not a trend. The crowd is hungry, and we've got to do something about it! Due to our food production efforts in East Africa, we were able to feed more than 400 children a nutritious meal at St. John's school--a great preview of what is to come.

we set up a garden on the roof! Our cooperatives were excited to have opportunity to do it."

In East Africa, our food production methods are thriving with the help of two wells installed this year and four men hired specifically for farming. Growing more food than our immediate community can eat means learning how to properly process it for distribution and sale.

Matthew 15:32 Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

33 And the disciples said to him, "Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?" 34 And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish."

35 And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground, 36 he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 37 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over. 38 Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.

Communicators of Truth in the Workplace

Bible Students-turned-Bosses Lead with Love

Written by Rosemary Sherrod

Opportunity Now, an initiative of Nashville's Mayor Megan Barry, was started May 2017 in an effort to provide summer jobs for youth, and, more importantly, help develop the skills associated with successful employment. In addition to finding eligible youth, the Mayor's office also looked for employers who would take on the responsibility of recruiting, hiring, and training 14 and 15-year-olds. Each employer would be required to hire a 'near peer coach' to manage a team of six youth. This was just what we did! We created jobs for 24 youth and employed four students from the Institute of G.O.D. as near peer coaches or as the youth considered each of them: their boss.

Youthful employees often think the work of being the employer or boss is to be envied: "Wish I could just tell everyone what to do instead of having to be told what to do." If any of our Institute students had that thought before they assumed the role of 'boss,' they dismissed it quickly. They discovered that the work of managing employees is not an easy task. Our students sat through hours of training, prepared daily work schedules, managed quality control, established and maintained work protocols, enforced appropriate workplace behaviors, and educated the youth at every turn. Regardless of the job, whether working in the community garden, or conducting a basketball camp for children or working at a kids' summer camp or creating and performing a dramatic presentation for an elderly community, the Institute-students-turned-bosses took advantage of every opportunity to teach or demonstrate a lesson

on good work ethics. Perhaps some think this kind of education doesn't sound like enough. We consider it critical to youth development. Our Institute students were choosing to love employees who self-admittedly "didn't have a chance" in the world, and giving them the

'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.' (John 13:12-15)



The WorkWell Near-Peer tutors led this summer the way they've been led by their leaders, who also position themselves as servants who speak the truth in love.

skills they needed to make a way. They taught through example, the kind of example that Jesus exhibited:

"After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them,

The 'bosses' were those who served the employees. It was an example of service that made a lasting impression on their youthful employees. "The bonds I've made here are so strong, that I just want to come back even if I don't get paid," one of them said.

The bonds I've made here are so strong, that I just want to come back even if I don't get paid.

At the end of the summer, the youth took stock of their experience and discovered that they had learned from their near peer coaches' example. The Institute students taught them the value of hard work, listening to directions, performing to the best of their ability, and having a good attitude. Summer was over and they were different. Their 'bosses' had equipped them with the confidence and ability to enter the workplace and succeed. And they did it by allowing love to be their motivation in managing these young people. That love was felt as the young employees noted "the bonds I've made here are just so strong," and "We've really got to perform well, because this could be our way out. I can't believe what they're giving us."



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