



September-
October 2023



GLOBAL TRAINING
NETWORK

Our Itinerary

- Sept 17: Floris Baptist Church, Floris, Iowa**
- Sept 28-Oct 29: Rwanda Ministry**
- Nov 20-27: Bob Edmondson Birth Week**
- Nov 30-Dec 17: Nepal Ministry**
- Jan 11-Feb 3: Philippines Ministry**

Unseen Realities: Part I

This is the first in a four-part series exploring truths which, while unseen, never-the-less represent the most 'real' and significant aspects of our lives.

Recently, I saw a poster much like the one pictured below. I pondered the physical truth so graphically displayed. We are tiny. It is estimated that in our galaxy there may be as many as 100 billion stars like our sun and in the universe as many as two trillion galaxies. In all of that, and perhaps more, we exist briefly on one small planet orbiting one small star on the outskirts of one small galaxy. Physically, you and I are insignificant specks existing for a flicker of time on a miniscule rock floating somewhere in this incomprehensibly vast the universe.

This leads to a humble question. Why would God who created all of this enormous universe, and who Himself goes far beyond it, have any interest at all in us? The psalmist, David, also wondered, *"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for*

him?" (Psalm 8:4) We have to admit that if we are merely physical beings there is NO reason for God to take any special notice of us in all the enormity of His creation. It is true that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. The physical complexity and functions of our bodies are only partially understood by our best science. Yet there are many wonders in the universe. We cannot compete and win in that race. Fortunately there is a better explanation for God's interest in us: We are NOT merely physical beings. In all that God has made everywhere, humans stand alone as the only beings made in the image of God



(Genesis 2:27). That image is mostly non-physical, yet it is absolutely real. The image of God is a finite imprint of His spiritual nature stamped on our souls. It involves our ability to conceive of (though not fully understand)

Getting Ready for Rwanda

In a few short weeks we will once again begin a month of ministry in Rwanda. We are asking for special prayer due to unusual circumstances on this trip. Ordinarily in Rwanda we work in partnership with another trainer(s). This lessens the workload and reduces the cost of each training event. Recently my long-scheduled partner for three of the four training events in Rwanda was forced to cancel. Our best efforts have (so far) failed to produce a replacement. This means that for three of the four weeks I will be the sole trainer at our events doing all the teaching and bearing the entire cost. We have one colleague who is praying about coming to help for one week. However, his participation depends on his raising the needed funds. For now I am working with the assumption



that I will be on my own. In Gisenyi, Rwanda, I plan to teach both sections of a two part course on theology. The students will be well served by this. In Gatsibo (a refugee training where our time has been a bit limited in the past), I plan to take the extra time afforded by the absence of a partner to teach my pastoral care course a bit more thoroughly. In Bihembe (one of our most productive groups) I plan to teach two entire courses instead of one. These will be very busy weeks. I am thankful that Eileen will be with me. Not only will her participation lessen my workload significantly, but I will not be alone and that means a lot to me. For the next few weeks as we get ready for Rwanda, please pray that God will "send forth workers" into this particular harvest field. I could really use the help. In October, please pray that God will enable us to step up, communicate clearly, remain healthy and energetic, and serve with real joy! Please pray also that God will continue to provide the needed funds as He has in the past. To Him be the Glory!



Unseen Realities: Part I (cont'd)

eternity. It involves our innate moral sense, a pre-programmed morality strong enough that even those with no written moral code have some understanding of right and wrong, of justice and injustice (Romans 2:14). We have a conception of a higher being than ourselves and an ability to interact with Him through prayer. The complexity of our languages, our endless creativity, our ability to love unselfishly and to sacrifice altruistically—all these are part of God's image in us. These things reflect our creator. THIS is what we are that God is mindful of us: creatures made to reflect His spiritual nature. We are absolutely unique in this place of spiritual honor and trust. While it is true that we exist in temporary physical bodies, our bodies are given to us as instruments to serve and reflect God in real time. We are designed to serve God by serving others in a thousand different ways. Physical acts take on a huge spiritual significance when they reflect the nature of the God who made us for this.




Unfortunately, God's image has been damaged and darkened by our rebellion against God. In our current sinful state, the attributes of God's image in each of us are turned to a thousand different paths, some of which are downright destructive and all of which fall far short of the glory of God we were meant to reveal (Rom 3:23).

All of this demonstrates that our significance as human beings, whether for good or for evil, goes well beyond the physical. Our ultimate nature and reality is spiritual. There is no other way to explain why a God who goes beyond the vastness of space and time would notice us as more than specks on a tiny floating rock in space. How else can you explain His revealing Himself to us over thousands of years through the writings of the prophets and apostles, His

personal interaction with individual people like Moses, and David, or His sending His Son to die for us all?

God's interest in us means that our spiritual choices are much more important than we often realize. Matters like how we love, our small moral decisions, our generosity (or lack thereof), honesty, humility, and a hundred other spiritual issues do not matter merely because of their effect on our physical lives. They matter deeply to God quite apart from any consequence they may have in the physical world. They have *intrinsic* value. In the short term, the heart matters because it

affects our actions (Proverbs 4:23). However, in the long term our actions matter because they reflect our hearts (Matt 15:18-19). Our heart (a term almost synonymous with 'soul') will live forever (either with God in heaven or separated from Him in hell), while our bodies are merely

temporary. It is your soul for which Jesus died. God clearly desires that you live with "soul-values" at the fore in your thinking. *"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."* (Colossians 3:1-3) My friends, we are more than physical and our interests should reflect this reality. God never intended us to shuffle through life looking only at what is right in front of us. The spiritual realm is where the action is! The longer view, the higher values and the person of God should occupy our thoughts continually for that is where our lives really are! The unseen reality IS reality! 



Our Praises & Prayer Requests



- Praise God for productive and safe ministry to 5 different groups of leaders in the Philippines during August.
- Praise God for an opportunity to rest afterward.
- Praise God for new opportunities awaiting us in Rwanda in late September/October.
- Please pray for God's provision for our Rwanda ministry. We lack a partner for 3 of the 4 weeks after our colleague had to cancel. This doubles our financial burden for those weeks.
- Please pray that we can make the most of the opportunities for extended teaching (in case no partner materializes).
- Please pray that we can make the best use of our limited time in the U.S. before we leave for Rwanda.

Ministry Partnership

Your financial partnership is essential as we carry out our God given ministry. Please follow the instructions below or on the enclosed response card (US mail version).

"Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account... And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:17, 19)

You may give online at:

gtn.org/edmondson

Under "Ministry Designation" select "Bob and Eileen Edmondson (435)" or "Books for Kurdistan (43503)."



Support also accepted at:

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