

March 2024

GLOBAL TRAINING
NETWORK

Our Itinerary

**March 3:** Maranatha Baptist Church, Globe, AZ**March 10:** First Baptist Church, Duncan, AZ**March 17:** Grace Church, Chino Valley, AZ**April 14:** Floris Baptist Church, Floris, IA**April 25-May 19:** Rwanda Ministry

2024 'March Madness' With Our Matching Challenge

March has arrived and, with it, our own kind of 'March Madness!' It's the 2024 IN HIS GRIP Matching Challenge! Two generous partners have offered a total of \$12,500 with a challenge to the rest of us to match (or more) these gifts within the next three months!

Our goal is to raise at least \$25,000 BEYOND regular giving to help defray the increasing costs of training leaders in the countries we serve! *Last year the 344 leaders we trained used their training to lead more than 1100 souls to Christ, and to launch 29 regular churches and house churches. They also trained 1036 additional leaders. We estimate that these leaders have in some way influenced more than 34,000 lives.* The effect of training leaders in the majority world is so profound that this is one of the greatest ministry investments *in existence!* This is a challenge to **all of us**, but especially to those of you who cannot give regularly but want to give *something!* There are many of you. March is a great time to jump in with a one-time gift to the Edmondson Matching Fund! The instructions are on the bottom of page 2. *Thank you in advance!* ∞

'WANT TO's and 'OUGHT TO's

During my college days (right after the earth's crust cooled) I heard a sermon I will never forget. I don't remember it because of its insight or inspirational content, but because it was so awful and...well, wrong. The sermon was called "Do What You Ought To Do, Not What You Want To Do!" The speaker repeated that phrase 138 times (approximately). He began by holding up a Bible in one hand and a 'Sports Illustrated' in the other. He asked us which one we were going to read. "You may WANT to read the Sports Illustrated, but you OUGHT to read your Bible! Do what you OUGHT to do, NOT what you WANT to do!" That was the essence of the entire message. The sermon twisted the biblical concept of self-denial, reducing Christian living to a mere series of *outward behaviors* done by a person with no *inner transformation* of one's desires whatsoever. Virtuous things needed to be done completely against one's own will. A series of illustrations seemed to make the point that if you find joy in something, you should be suspicious of it. Probably you ought to be doing something else. Your desire for the more joyful thing is probably sinful. He yelled a lot as preachers sometimes do when their points are weak. The audience, as near as I could tell, remained unconvinced. Good for them.

The Bible does say that if we want to follow Jesus, we must take up

our cross and follow Him (Matt 16:24, et al). But what motivates a person to do such a thing? Surely it cannot be that we must deny ALL of our inner-most desires, be suspicious of joy, and simply do our Christian duty grim-faced and stalwart, continuously acting against our own will for as long as we live. This is *inherently impossible*. There has to be some kind of motivation for obedience to the Savior. Moreover, where such motivation exists, there is necessarily an inner satisfaction resulting from



acting on it. A better way to understand self-denial is to realize that we have conflicting desires. Some are fanciful, passing, or unimportant. Others are deep seated with great intrinsic value. The 'Sports Illustrated' temptation has now passed into history; but, for the sake of illustration, I may wish to read 'SI', but I have a deeper desire to know my Savior and understand


His ways. So I choose to read the Bible. I do what I OUGHT to do, and because I am a new person deep down inside this is *also* what I WANT to do.

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'WANT TO's and 'OUGHT TO's (cont'd)

Our motivational model of self-denial is Jesus, who "...for the *JOY SET BEFORE HIM* endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus *CHOSE* the cross, scorning its shame, because He desired the inevitable outcome of His suffering: *the JOY of eternity at the right hand of the Father with the redeemed populating a New Earth*. He chose what He ought to do, but in the final analysis, even though it involved unimaginable suffering, it was also what He wanted to do.

In a smaller example, right now Eileen and I are away from home, away from our family, away from our church. We are homesick. We find great peace there. I want to start on some important projects there. But we are

here in Arizona visiting our supporting churches and individual partners. This is what we ought to do. It is also what we *WANT* to do. We chose to prioritize this and are acting on that choice. There is joy and satisfaction in this choice even though it involves a little self-denial. As believers, God treats us like adults. We must make decisions. We must prioritize. Having regard for the values God has placed in our hearts, we must decide which desires must be denied or delayed and which must be pursued. We are not saying 'no' to what we love in order to embrace what we don't. We say 'no' to something we want in order to say 'YES' to something we *want more*. Happy is the believer whose *WANT TO's* align with God's *OUGHT TO's*. 

**Our Praises & Prayer Requests**

- Praise God for a wonderful GTN Leadership Gathering.
- Praise God our entire 2024 training schedule is in place.
- Praise God for a good launch to our 2024 Matching Fund Challenge.
- Please pray for our ongoing ministry in Arizona.
- Please pray for a strong Matching Fund response (March through May).
- Please pray for our upcoming training events in Rwanda next month.
- Please pray for one of our training partners whose health may prevent him from being able to join us in Rwanda.

Where in the World Are Bob and Eileen THIS Month?

After returning from the Philippines on February 2 (Groundhog Day), we both quickly packed up and headed for Arizona where we spent the rest of February visiting some of our churches and a good number of our other partners. We also attended the annual GTN Leadership Gathering where I conducted one of the workshops. This year my brother Bill and his wife were able to join us. As we speak, they are in Kurdistan teaching in the Hope Bible Institute in Sulaymaniyah. While time has flown by, we



did manage to visit folks in Chandler, Gilbert, Queen Creek, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Sonoita, Nogales, Globe, Quartzsite, Payson, and Palm Springs, California. We will continue visiting our friends and partners here in the Southwest through the first half of March. We apologize that we have not been able to see everyone, but we will be back. In addition to seeing people in the above locales, we plan to visit with folks in Duncan, Chino Valley, Prescott, and Gallup, New Mexico, before making our way back to our Iowa home where some winter storm damage awaits my attention. It's a busy life, but where would we be without our wonderful partners and partner churches? 

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 "Edmondson Matching Gift (43502)" (type in "Matching" and that selection will appear), or "Books for Kurdistan (43503)."



Support also accepted at:

Global Training Network
PO Box 6507
Peoria, AZ 85385

Please include a note indicating that your gift is preferred for the Edmondsons #435, or "Edmondson Matching Gift #43502," or "Books for Kurdistan #43503".

Please call GTN at 623-217-3867 if you need any assistance.

**Please visit our
website:**

www.inhispriponline.org

