

April-May
2024



GLOBAL TRAINING
NETWORK

Our Itinerary



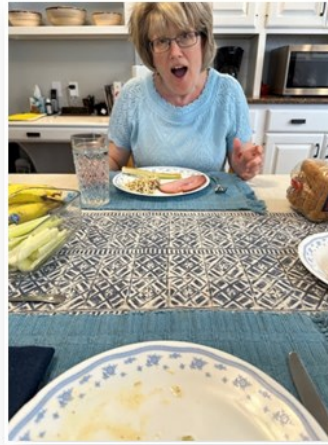
- April 14:** Floris Baptist Church, Floris, IA
- April 25-May 19:** Rwanda Ministry
- May 31:** Matching Challenge concludes
- June 19-July 11:** Philippines Ministry
- July 12-20:** Kurdistan Ministry



Old Dog—New Tricks

"You can't teach an old dog new tricks," goes the old saying. I've said it myself, mostly in response to my lovely wife's attempts to change one of my bad habits like eating too fast. "I guess you can't teach an old dog new tricks," I comment wryly as Eileen eyes my now empty plate opposite her still-full one. She is clearly mulling alternative teaching techniques like feeding the old dog actual kibbles. "Hmm," she mulls, "that would slow him down." Of course all this is just a joke between us—at least I think it is. The truth is, we both love learning new things. Three years ago I had the honor to write three courses on basic theology for use by the Global Training Network staff. At the same time, I wrote two integrative theology courses for my students in the Philippines. I loved it! However, since then I've been teaching established material repeatedly to different classes. Once I taught the same course to three different groups consecutively. These are good courses, but teaching them repeatedly becomes...episodic. That's why I was glad to accept the challenge of preparing new curriculum this year. Next month in Rwanda I

will be teaching the Gospel of Matthew for the first time. I've studied a lot in Matthew, but this is the first time I've studied the whole book. I was amazed at the dozens (or more) of prophecies fulfilled in perfect detail by Jesus. He is Israel's rightful Messiah/King as Matthew masterfully demonstrates. More rewarding still has been my work on two 'World Views' courses. One involves abbreviated lessons on Western world views as part of a larger class in Manila. The other is a more complete survey of world views for use by the GTN staff. I enjoy reading the source material, organizing my thoughts, and creating notes, slides and handouts. Eileen and I find that when either of us is learning something new through a Bible study, a good book, or through curriculum research, it gives us new things to talk about as a couple. We've spent many hours at the dinner table discussing such subjects. This adds a rich dynamic to our lives and relationship.



Now, I realize that research and writing is not everyone's cup of tea. We all have different gifts and different roles to play. One set of gifts is no

(Continued on page 2)



Where in the World Are Bob and Eileen THIS Month?

Eileen and I spent the greater part of March in Arizona visiting many of our supporting churches and ministry partners. We are especially thankful to those who provided lodging and hospitality along the way. Our ministry partners and friends are very important to us. We could not do this work without you. Since returning to Iowa, we have divided our time between preparation for upcoming classes in Rwanda, Kurdistan and the Philippines, and catching up on maintenance of our property. We have removed nearly 20 trees due to winter storm damage and to prevent future threats to nearby power lines. I now have a lot of brush to remove and logs to cut and split for firewood. My daily routine involves studying through the morning hours before working outside in the afternoons. I am preparing materials for classes that I have never taught before. This feeds my soul, and then I get to go use a chain saw. As I said to Eileen, "I am living the dream!" For her part, Eileen has been working hard on the administrative prep for various upcoming ministry trips and helping outdoors when she can. One challenge of near-constant travel is maintaining a daily

routine with regular meals, rest, and exercise. These create a sense of "normalcy," something we have come to value! Being at home has provided this for us, and it has been highly restorative. Our spirits are renewed as we prepare to head out for more ministry—in Rwanda.





Matching Challenge Update

We are extremely grateful for your response so far to our 2024 Matching Challenge. Two generous partners have given a total of \$12,500 to our matching fund with a challenge to the rest of us to match it or more during the months of March, April and May. At the half way point, the matching fund has reached \$28,610, putting us squarely in the "or more" category. This is a tremendous response, and if the pattern continues you may just set a record. We are thankful for your giving since, due to inflation, our ministry expenses are also in record territory. But God remains true. He is using you all to provide for the ongoing training of Christian leaders around the world. There is no better investment. May God bless you as you are blessing others!



Our Praises & Prayer Requests



- Praise God for some time at home before heading out again.
- Praise God for a wonderful visit to many of our Arizona partners.
- Praise God for a great first month in our annual Matching Challenge.
- Please pray for my course preparation now in progress.
- Please pray for a strong Matching Challenge response (March through May).
- Please pray for our upcoming training events in Rwanda.

Old Dog—New Tricks *(Cont'd)*

better than another. Rather, all of our various gifts are needed in the body of Christ. That said, I believe that learning is lifelong—for all of us. We have a God-given hunger to learn. A small child learns every minute of every day. Whether playing, eating, crying, laughing, or exploring on hands and knees, no one needs to tell that child to discover things. All our lives we all take in new information daily. Our experiences teach us, and we are happy to have learned even if some of the lessons were painful. Nor will it stop when we die. I'm convinced that one of the great joys of eternity will be a nearly infinite universe to explore and understand with newly strengthened minds, and an infinite God to get to know in ways impossible to us now.



Unfortunately, our capacity to learn often goes neglected. I was saddened when I read recently that 80% of American families did not buy or read a book last year; 42% of college graduates never read another book ever! I maintain that one way or another we DO continue to learn.

We can't *not* learn, but too many of us have passively allowed ourselves to be schooled through television, movies, and social media—a dubious education at best. It is also ironic that here in America we have an average of more than four Bibles in every home. Multiple versions are available. Yet Biblical illiteracy is rampant—including among Christians. The results are obvious all around us. We have been given so much! How will we answer God when He asks why we did so little with these good gifts?

We are capable of so much more! My challenge to you is to take charge of feeding yourself! Don't be passive about it! Read a good non-fiction book. Study a concept in the Bible about which you have always been curious. Read a New Testament letter in one sitting. Read it again and take note of the flow of thought. Write down your questions and pursue answers. Never stop learning! Find a way! You will enrich your own life, and the things you learn provide a means by which you can bless others. Even when you get to be an old dog, you will still be learning new tricks! ∞

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:

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