

East Africa

Leaders Conference

Uniting Nationals with a Common Vision

Story and photos by Ed Compean

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Upturned faces, upraised hands, uplifted songs. More than 200 voices blended in a rich chorus of praise that resonated through a church located in what was recently a battleground of tribal warfare and ethnic cleansing. Most of these young pastors and church leaders journeyed many difficult miles to reach the East Africa Pastors and Leaders Conference in Nairobi this past autumn. As Pastor Trent Douglass of CC Saving Grace, CA, took the pulpit, an expectant hush fell on the attendees.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God!” Trent declared in the opening session, looking out over a sea of eager faces.

Raising his voice even louder, he continued, “That means God breathed this, and it applies to all Scripture!” Trent, who oversees the Calvary Chapel affiliation process for East Africa, went on to explain that the theme of the conference would be “Preach the Word” and that conference speakers would model verse-by-verse teaching beginning with 2 Timothy 3:16.

The African pastors and leaders anxiously leaned forward, taking notes and calling out words of praise, agreement, and encouragement. These men are ministering to people in poverty-stricken cities throughout Nairobi and in other parts of Kenya and Uganda. Representatives from Congo, Burundi, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Sudan also attended. Trent understood that the Africans’ backgrounds made the notion of simply teaching through the Bible verse by verse unfamiliar.

Later, in a breakout session, the African pastors politely confronted Trent about teaching through the Bible. “How can we,



Pastors and church leaders began the 2008 Calvary Chapel East Africa Pastor and Leaders Conference with worship and praise in Swahili and English.



Pastor Trent Douglass, left, prays with a Kenyan pastor. Trent leads Saving Grace World Missions and oversees the CC affiliation process for East Africa.



Pastors and other church leaders focus on Trent as he teaches a breakout session on the role of a pastor and models how to teach verse by verse through the Bible. He shared how his battle with dyslexia has sharpened his ability to study God’s Word as well as how to teach it chapter by chapter without extensive notes.

without Bible schools or commentaries, teach through a book of the Bible?” Trent smiled and offered to give them a practical demonstration. He challenged them to pick any book of the Bible, and the men chose Ephesians.

Opening his Bible to Ephesians 1:1, Trent began to teach. “First, Paul identifies himself as both the author of this letter and as an apostle of Jesus Christ. If we examine verses 3 through 14, we see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the Trinity—in the work of our salvation. In verse 5, Paul shows that Christ has adopted us as sons to Himself. Back up to verse 4, we see that we were chosen to be His people before the world began. Think about how incredible a statement that is! Most importantly, in verse 7, we learn that we have forgiveness and redemption through Jesus’ shed blood.”

Eyes widened as Trent continued teaching verse by verse in a narrative style through the entire first chapter of Ephesians, expounding on key points. The men in the room were in awe, furiously scribbling notes as Trent marched through the first chapters of Philippians, Colossians, and any other book the men called out. The men committed to begin teaching verse by verse through each book of the Bible upon returning to their congregations.

Continuing with the theme “Preach the Word” and taking up the passage where Trent had left off, Pastor Bill Welsh began



Trent closes the conference with prayer and a call to repentance for all the national pastors. Many said that the time together helped them understand the importance of clearly teaching through the Bible verse by verse.



Rob Douglass, pastor of a Calvary Chapel outreach in Colombo, Sri Lanka, chats with ministry leaders after his session on spiritual warfare. Rob spent almost five years as a missionary in Uganda several years ago. Rob is Trent’s brother.

the second session, saying, “Don’t you love the phrase ‘God’s Word?’” Then, holding up his Bible, the pastor from Refuge CC, Huntington Beach, CA, said, “It means it is God’s Word to you and your people.”

Calvary Chapel Nairobi, Kenya, straddles the border of some of the most notorious slums in Africa. While the four-year-old church meets in a business building with running water, padded seats, and a booming sound system, the sights and smells coming through the windows never allowed the visitors to forget they were ministering on the edge of very desperate communities.

The conference succeeded in bringing God’s own encouragement to Christian leaders who deal with disease and destitution on a daily basis. Kenyan Bible student Stephen

Otieno came with questions about the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.



Stephen Otieno

After listening intently to the sessions, Stephen commented, “I am seeing the reason for teaching verse by verse and I am starting to understand the balance with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.” The conference had

helped Stephen comprehend that solid teaching and a dependency upon the Spirit of God is what is needed to bring change to a land filled with witchcraft, HIV/AIDS, and poverty.” Stephen currently teaches youth at CC-affiliated Calvary International Fellowship near Nairobi.

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

2 Timothy 4:5

An entire team worked together at the conference in Nairobi, offering training for nearly 220 pastors and leaders. The previous week, these pastors taught the same conference at CC Kampala, Uganda, which was attended by over 300 pastors and leaders.

Topics covered included spiritual warfare, worship, the Holy Spirit, and marriage and family. Besides Trent and Bill, three other pastors taught: Mike Vincent, who pastors CC Rosarito, Mexico; Rob Douglass, Trent’s brother, who currently leads a CC work in Colombo, Sri Lanka, but also spent five years in Uganda with his family as missionaries;

and Ed Cornwell, an associate pastor from CC Costa Mesa, CA, who planted a church in Uganda.

Nairobi

According to Stephen Otieno, hearing from people that have actually served in Africa encouraged him to know the Calvary Chapel philosophy of ministry will work in

“The Bible is all we need to faithfully shepherd God’s people.”

Pastor Trent Douglass
CC Saving Grace, Yorba Linda, CA



Pastor Mike Vincent from CC Rosarito, Baja California, Mexico, was one of several North American pastors that journeyed to Nairobi to teach.

his homeland. As the conference concluded, he was anxious to carry God’s Word back to western Kenya so they could learn the truth about Jesus Christ.

Trent concluded with the conference theme, “The Bible is all we need to faithfully shepherd God’s people.”

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 2 Timothy 4:2

CC East Africa Pastors Conferences:
Midigo, Uganda, July 20-23
Kampala, Uganda, July 27-29

Saving Grace World Missions

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