

SPRING 2025

PRAYER ALERT

IT'S SO STRATEGIC!

**REGIONAL
STRATEGY UPDATES**
The Pacific, Africa, Indonesia

10,000 NEW STUDENTS
Local Online: A Global Strategy

ADDING NEW STRATEGIES
India, Southeast Asia
and Middle East/North Africa



AN INSIDER'S VIEW

TRAINING LEADERS FOR THE BOOMING CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA

The evangelical church in Latin America is currently experiencing exponential growth. A consistent flow of well-trained leaders is urgently needed to disciple the millions of new believers.

Local Leaders International is delighted to present Rev Josué Fernández as our guest speaker for the 2025 Annual Dinner series. Josué (pronounced hose-way) is on the front line of providing essential ministry training to Christian leaders throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. He is passionate about making high quality theological education as easily accessible as possible.

After decades of ministry in Argentina and the USA, Josué has joined the Local Leaders team as Consultant for Local Online: A Global Strategy (LOGS), coordinating the expansion and delivery of online theological education throughout the LAC region.

Josué's insights into the social, religious and cultural dynamics of Latin American society will provide a glimpse into this fascinating and complex region. Plus, you'll love his infectious warmth and humour - we can guarantee he'll bring plenty of Argentinian flair!

PLEASE PRAY

Lord, please help Josué prepare for his trip to Australia in October/November. Open our hearts to hear about your work in Latin America and the Caribbean during his visit. Give the Local Leader team energy and wisdom as they prepare for the Annual Dinner Series. Bless Josué's work with Bible colleges throughout the LAC region and strengthen each seminary as they aim to serve your growing church. Amen.



JOIN US FOR DINNER!

MAITLAND
Thursday 30 October

CENTRAL COAST
Friday 31 October

SYDNEY
Saturday 1 November

BRISBANE
Thursday 6 November

MELBOURNE
Saturday 8 November

ADELAIDE SUPPER
Wednesday 12 November

PERTH
Saturday 15 November

See the enclosed invitation or our website for venue details, costs and how to register:

[localleaders.org.au/get-involved/
annualdinners](https://localleaders.org.au/get-involved/annualdinners)

SCAN HERE ►
to book
your seat



CONTENTS

ANNUAL DINNER SERIES	01 - 02
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	03 - 04
WE GIVE THANKS	05 - 06
IT'S SO STRATEGIC!	07 - 22
CONNECTION TOURS	23 - 24
STUDENT STORY	25 - 26

WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS & COMMENTS!

E office@localleaders.org.au
P (02) 9635 4409
A PO Box 346 Springwood NSW 2777
W www.localleaders.org.au

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Rev Dr Stuart Brooking
EDITOR Lisa Ferguson
DESIGN Cocoon Creative

Local Leaders International
ABN 68 092 388 746

Local Leaders International Fund
ABN 52 284 100 215

Local Leaders International College Building Fund
ABN 68 092 388 746

Authority to Fundraise: Local Leaders International is authorised to fundraise in New South Wales (Authority CFN/20492), Victoria (Registration No. FR0015686), Queensland (Registration No. CH3394), South Australia (License No. CCP3458) and Tasmania (Approval No. C/10581).

Local Leaders International is not required to hold an authority to fundraise in Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory or the Northern Territory.

COVER

Meeting together for the 2025 Africa Mile Deep Strategy Conference. From left: Dr Alfred Sebahene (St John's University, Tanzania), Dr Nancy Njagi (Local Leaders), Dr Emmanuel Mukeshimana (Uganda Christian University) and Dr Julius Kithinji (St Paul's University, Kenya).

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A KEY LOCAL LEADERS VALUE – ACKNOWLEDGING OTHERS

Local Leaders International does not exist in a vacuum of mission. We are part of a wider group of ‘friends on the way’. As we focus on Local Leaders’ strategies it would be tempting to make it look like it is all about us. Of course, it is not.

We work with existing Bible colleges. Each one has a history of missionaries and locals who have built the institutions. Many people have sown, watered and tended these plants in the Lord’s field. Changing the metaphor like the apostle does: we give thanks for the work of previous generations as we build on their work. We trust that the spirit animating this building is the Spirit of Christ.

We work with five like-minded organisations in New Zealand, USA, Canada and Europe. We cooperate with them. We share knowledge. We co-fund projects. We follow them. We lead them. It is a treasured part of the ministry of Local Leaders.

We work with dozens of other mission agencies, accrediting agencies and denominational leaders. In each context there are different ways that our partner Bible colleges connect so we become part of those systems. We are often not the most important part, and so we acknowledge that we are one organisation amongst God’s people doing good.

And also ...

We are grateful for the vision and calling of Local Leaders as it has developed over the decades. We strategically invest in the Bible colleges, and groups of colleges throughout the Majority World. We have the great joy of strengthening what is good and bringing new things to be so the church’s leaders are well-equipped, the church can grow strong, the societies in which they labour can prosper spiritually, and our great Lord can be honoured as he deserves.



Rev Dr Stuart Brooking

Executive Director

PLEASE PRAY

Father God, we thank you that Local Leaders International is not working alone but is blessed to partner with many organisations serving your global church. We praise you for the work of previous generations, for the like-minded organisations who collaborate readily, for the mission and accrediting agencies who lead in various context and the many leaders around the world who make Local Leaders’ work possible. Please bless the vision you have imparted to see the church strengthened throughout the world. Amen.



Above: Praying with our hub Bible college partners in Africa.

Middle: Stuart Brooking (Local Leaders) meeting with Andreas Kammer, Executive Director of like-minded organisation, Overseas Council Europe.

Below: Local Leaders’ staff amongst members of ICETE (International Council for Evangelical Theological Education) in Albania, March 2025.

WE GIVE THANKS

“But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord” Genesis 6:8

Life comes with blessings and curses. Like Noah, we can be called to undertake mighty tasks, or at least difficult ones for us to do. We enter life with failings, yet by faith we can be ones who find favour in the eyes of the Lord. Grace brings that favour to us and animates our choices. Not least the choice to give to the Lord’s work.

Supporters – We are grateful for our supporters who contributed \$1.39 mil in this past six months towards the ministry. This was \$160k ahead of budget which represents the contributions of new donors starting to support. We had over 30 new donors in the period, which is something of a record for the ministry.

Projects – It is pleasing to see the regular completion of students in their courses, of faculty in their doctorates and the training programs we run, and in projects which we fund for our partner colleges.

Strategies - This edition of Prayer Alert highlights some of the big picture favour of God on our organisation. As you read through them, please give a prayer of thanks for that favour on us, but also on our partner Bible colleges and the systems of colleges with which we work.



The current cohort of students completing the Bachelor of Theology program at Christian Leaders Training College in Papua New Guinea - August 2025.

PLEASE PRAY

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for the way you have stirred hearts in Australia to contribute to Local Leaders’ work. Thank you for every supporter, be they a long-term contributor, or a brand-new donor. Encourage each student, faculty member and leader that is being supported through the ministry. Please help Local Leaders’ strategies, partnerships and projects to flourish. Amen.

Staff – We are pleased to have added four new staff members this year.



Brenda Lyons has filled a vacancy as our Finance and Administration Officer, but the others are all new positions.



Rev Kevin Pedersen is volunteering in a new role as chaplain working with the Executive Director to support staff, working with Rosemary Jones to encourage new supporters in Melbourne, and helping us relate to the supporters of Christian Leaders Training College in Australia through their Australian Advisory Council.



Karen Roe has joined us to expand our pedagogy courses in the Pacific and Asia. She came with supporters to cover many of her costs.



Dr Prabhu Singh recently finished with South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS) in India and is now our South Asia Director. He is working with our Executive Director on new strategies for that region.

“STRATEGIC!” - WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Rev Dr Stuart Brooking, Executive Director Local Leaders International, Australia

“It’s so strategic”

“Bang for your buck”

“A great way to multiply your investment in the kingdom”

These are the sorts of phrases we regularly hear from our supporters when we ask them why they support the ministry of Local Leaders International. When the ministry began in Australia, the minutes of the first formal meeting in 1987 referenced ‘a new vehicle’ for contributing to God’s church in the developing world. It was small, but there was an excitement from those business people who got it going with the encouragement of our sister organisation in America.

What we find is that strategic minded Christians get what we’re doing and love to contribute because it matches how they live and view the world: a clear strategy is the best way to determine actions.

When we began, the strategy was to learn from the American leaders and support a small group of Bible colleges in a modest way. As time has gone on, we have increasingly sought to go beyond relating to colleges one at a time, and instead, to see the interconnections in a region or continent. We then see what formal links exist or help create new ones and then invest into the whole system.

We notice that a lot of the world’s Bible colleges are arranged as what we call ‘hubs and affiliates’. The hubs are larger ones which train faculty for the smaller ones. The smaller ones sometimes belong to the larger ones, or are accredited by them, or perhaps just look to the big ones for direction and help. Money and capacity often thwart the hopes of all the players in each system. Local Leaders steps in to build that capacity.

There are several advantages of us working with existing formal or informal systems of Bible colleges:

- We are not forcing a structure that is alien to the locals, but working with their preferences and aspirations.
- We don’t have to do due diligence on all the small colleges before we can help them, since we trust the big ones to manage their development and recommend next steps.
- Any inputs we make are very quickly promoted throughout the whole system. We train hub leaders, and they train the smaller colleges.
- When one part of the system is improving it builds momentum through sharing of ideas, copying successes, and having courage to try new things adapted for the local context.

In this edition of Prayer Alert, you’ll get an update on our major strategies and be introduced to some new ones that we’re currently working on.

For the strategically minded, we expect you’ll give thanks to the Lord for what we’ve done and what we’re working on.



Above: From his base at CLTC in PNG, Dr George Mombi (on right) works with smaller affiliate colleges in the Pacific region as part of Local Leaders’ Pasifika Strategy.

Below: Local Leaders supports a group of 45 Bible colleges in Indonesia, called PASTI. Here you can see faculty members from the colleges at a training conference with Drs Dick and Caroline Seed.

PLEASE PRAY

Thank you, Glorious God, for the way you have helped refine Local Leaders’ strategy over the years. The ‘hub and affiliates’ model has opened up greater avenues for the enhancement of theological education throughout the Majority World. We praise you for the passion and commitment of the Bible college leaders who are working hard to see their institutions flourish and their programs advance. Please bless every hub and affiliate college working together to develop strong Christian leaders for their cities, countries and entire regions. Amen.

THE PASIFIKA STRATEGY - BIG GOALS, NEARLY ON TRACK

The goals are big. We want to work from a strong base to strengthen the whole system of training leaders in the South Pacific Islands. Our starting base was our historical partner, Christian Leaders Training College (CLTC) in Papua New Guinea, and we want to help build up the many small Bible colleges in PNG, Solomons, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa and Tonga.

The strategy is 13 years old – halfway through its 25-year time frame.

The strategy is 13 years old – but we're not quite halfway through the 25-year KPIs.

It was always going to be a slow burn strategy because of the unique issues of the economies and cultures of the region. Furthermore, we could not get the staffing in place that we needed in the earlier years. Thankfully, with the appointment of Dr George Mombi a few years ago we've been able to make good progress.

The cornerstone activity in the strategy has been the Master of Theology program taught at CLTC, resulting in a major shift in the number of people with this degree throughout the whole country. The staff of CLTC now have a common baseline of being Melanesian with an MTh. In addition, a number of the smaller colleges and other ministries in the country now have the benefit of MTh qualified leaders.

A few years ago, CLTC chose six key Bible schools around the country to help lift them up to teach a Diploma of Theology, which is equivalent to the two-year program at CLTC. So far, three have been coached to be able to implement this level of study. George Mombi is working with the other three to help them lift their standards and teach the program in 2026. It is hoped as time goes on that these colleges will be able to teach the Advanced Diploma and eventually even a Bachelor of Theology. In this way, far more pastors and church planters will have access to quality training which, until now, has only been available at CLTC.

In the past year or so, we've been exploring how to work more in the eastern islands of Fiji, Samoa and Tonga. George has visited twice and has been identifying potential Bible colleges with which CLTC can partner. The Polynesian cultures of Samoa and Tonga vary considerably from the Melanesian culture of the other main countries, and parts of their church history have been more influenced by liberal theology.

The Pasifika Strategy has the goal to work in these islands and to expand the cooperation of evangelical colleges, so much prayer is needed as we explore key new relationships in the next year or two.

PLEASE PRAY

We praise you, Lord, for the wonderful work you are doing through CLTC and their affiliate colleges in the Pacific region. Please strengthen CLTC's new and existing Bible school partnerships and encourage the hearts of the leaders as they work to lift the standard of evangelical theological training across the region. Please give George your wisdom and insight as he works with the leadership teams at each Bible school. Amen.

Christian Leaders Training College was established in the early 1960's by missionaries linked to what is now Melbourne School of Theology and what is now New Zealand's Laidlaw College. The MTh at CLTC has raised up a generation of locals who are able to teach the main programs of the college. The next stage of development is to raise up several doctoral level faculty members. There are currently two, with four more in training, funded by Local Leaders. When about eight are in place, the college will be able to look at starting the first evangelical doctoral program, which would be a great achievement for the region.



Top left: Dr George Mombi (Dean of Post Graduate Studies at CLTC and Pasifika Strategy Director) and Dr Maxon Mani (CLTC Principal).

Top right: Recent celebrations for CLTC's 61st anniversary.

Below: Isaac Pulupe, Lionel Tom and Gordon Torbul are completing their PhD studies and are supported through Local Leaders' Faculty Study Grant Program. Here they are with Kevin and Stuart in August 2025.

THE AFRICA MILE DEEP STRATEGY - OUR MOST COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

Local Leaders works across many denominations as we identify the key evangelical colleges in each region. We noticed a gap in funding in Africa with the group of Anglican Colleges. Though they are evangelical, they typically are not integrated into the wider evangelical networks of colleges. The Anglican Church is formally part of the World Council of Churches rather than the World Evangelical Alliance where most of our partner colleges find their home. The generous USA based donors tend not to notice Anglican ministry in Africa because of this organisational divide.

Once we noticed this gap of support for this evangelical ministry, we worked to build relationships in Africa and propose the 15-year strategy. The uptake of the six major theological institutions was very quick, and the commitment has become stronger each year of the eight years it has been in operation. The annual conference of what is now seven key institutions, and perhaps soon eight or nine, is the place of fellowship, mutual learning, and strategic determination for the Africa Mile Deep Strategy (AMDS).

As we work to 'make the church a mile deep' through better training of leaders, the impact through these seven 'hubs' extends to about 50 of their 'affiliates' – smaller Bible schools in each of the surrounding areas throughout Africa.

We work with thirteen themes to build up the whole system of Bible colleges beginning with faculty development, library development and financial sustainability. Onto these we have added support to begin training in pedagogy and curriculum development. Urban (slum) Mission has been taught in several countries to leaders from over thirty Bible colleges. They are integrating this vital concept into their regular programs. The need is great as African cities grow quickly, with little attention normally given to the particular needs of the slums.

The strategy has also developed new centres for the study of Islam to help peacebuilding, Christian apologetics and appropriate mission to Muslim communities.



Pedagogy training: Local Leaders team members Karen Roe and Nancy Njagi in Lagos during the first training seminar held with the Theological Institutions of the Anglican Communion of Nigeria, June 2024.

Pedagogy training for faculty is a major need in all the institutions. Developing the teaching skills of faculty members leads directly to better learning outcomes for students. This leads to better integration of knowledge with ministry; and thus, capacity in ministry. We have four staff who work in this aspect of the strategy. They are not only teaching, but are raising up local experts who are now expanding the training to more Bible colleges. A new level of competence training is soon to take shape at George Whitefield College, where a new Graduate Certificate begins next year specifically for the African context.

Another key teaching area has drawn on the expertise of local scholars within the strategy to tackle the problems of the prosperity gospel. The Generosity Gospel instead promotes biblical generosity and stewardship. This part of the strategy has developed training modules for colleges, church leaders and churches and spawned a new agency, 'Generosity Gospel in Africa', which will promote the concepts in the years ahead. Pilot studies are ongoing in 2025 in Kenya and will expand in 2026 to other countries.



Left: The latest group of 19 church leaders and 3 academic deans to receive Generosity Gospel training in Mombasa, Kenya, August 2025.



Right: Representatives from all 7 hub colleges meeting together in Rwanda for the 2025 Africa Mile Deep Strategy Conference in March.

PLEASE PRAY

Gracious God, thank you for the collaboration and encouragement that exists between the seven hub colleges of the Africa Mile Deep Strategy. Thank you for the progress that has been made over the last eight years because of this strategic alliance. We pray for each hub institution, that they would continue to be catalysts for deepening theological education in each region of Africa. Please bless every affiliate college as they look to the hubs for strength and capacity building. Strengthen the entire theological system through the thirteen themes of the AMDS and raise up even more local experts to train leaders for effective ministry. Amen.

FRANCOPHONE AFRICA - TRAINERS RAISED UP

For a range of historical reasons, Francophone Africa is a very under-resourced part of the Christian church. It is for that reason that when an opportunity came up to engage Dr Pauline Golder as our Francophone Africa Director, we saw the value of her contribution. After more than 20 years ministry in Bible colleges in that region, Pauline stepped into a new role with us, through a secondment from SIM, in 2021.

There are hundreds of Bible colleges in the region, and our strategy has been to understand the scene and then raise up trainers, particularly in pedagogy.

After scoping the scene and the particular needs, Pauline has been working closely with CITAF (the Francophone accreditation agency for Bible colleges). She has run numerous in-person and online training courses over the past few years. A key early activity was to identify some potential trainers to replicate her work and then train them into a cohort who would reach into ever wider groups.

The strategy has been building steam which is wonderful to see after the first few years of preparing the people. She has already trained nine faculty members from three countries to be LOGS (Local Online: A Global Strategy) trainers to other Bible colleges.

Pauline is just back from a month in the region and her report demonstrates where

things are up to. She reports on both general pedagogy and online pedagogy under the LOGS strategy.

“During recent months a total of 9 LOGS workshops (by Pauline and local trainers) and the Train the Trainers workshop gave 222 participants the opportunity to improve their teaching skills and make ministry training more accessible via online courses in their different countries.”

Furthermore, she trained 27 educators for five countries as they take steps to become LOGS trainers. As LOGS has just one more year to run, this resource of so many potential trainers is a great gift to the region. The General Coordinator for CITAF thanked her and Local Leaders at their annual meeting for the ‘ongoing legacy’ that has already been left in the region.

Even though LOGS will wind down through next year, Pauline’s work in the region will continue as she builds into the life of the expanding network of trainers for Bible college faculty. In the coming year we will be working out the next steps for our activity there.

PLEASE PRAY

The way you have expanded the Francophone Africa Strategy is remarkable, Lord! Thank you for the collaborative principals and faculty who are leading the colleges Local Leaders partners with. Thank you for Pauline’s expertise and passion for training Francophone leaders. We praise you for the work already done and for the momentum that we’ve seen. Amen.

One of the roles that Pauline has played with CITAF has been to smooth the discussions with the other evangelical accreditation agency in Africa, ACTEA. She has helped rapprochement between the two, otherwise, isolated organisations. They are now considering how they’ll work more closely together.

As part of building these organisational relationships Local Leaders was able to sponsor several of the CITAF leaders to attend the conference in March held by ICETE, the peak body of evangelical accrediting associations. By developing personal relationships, the formal discussions have been able to proceed more easily.



Above: Pauline with the team at St Patrick’s Theological College in Madagascar, during the LOGS competency training workshop in February 2025.

Below: Building healthy partnerships - Pauline attending a CITAF meeting in Lomé, Togo, (July 2023). She is pictured with the Nigerian seminary French program coordinator.

PASTI - 45 INDONESIAN BIBLE COLLEGES

When the PASTI Chairman approached us for help we considered it an answer to a decade-long prayer. We had supported just a few Bible colleges in Indonesia, but here was a chance to do much more. This group of 45 Bible colleges was wanting to 're-boot' after the founding generation of leaders were stepping down due to age. This was not just a response to a generational shift, but there was a new challenge to be met in the form of government regulations.

The Government of Indonesia was changing legislation so that Bible colleges (and the education institutions of other religions) would no longer just be answerable to the country's Department of Religion, but also answerable to the Department of Education. The initial fear was that the Department would interfere in curriculum and content, but that has not materialised. The Dept of Education's main concern has been to lift standards in all these institutions (size of library, standard of teachers, policies for students etc).

Over the past eight years we have helped all 45 colleges of PASTI in one way or other.

- All the colleges have had small grants to encourage the faculty to do research and publish articles.
- We have part-funded two or three conferences each year for 40-60 faculty members to attend each time. These have been vital to help them improve their awareness of teaching, curriculum development, and key theological issues.

- We have also supplied experts to teach various topics at these PASTI conferences. In September this year Dick and Caroline Seed were there again teaching in their key area of pedagogy.
- Our LOGS strategy has provided funds to many of the PASTI colleges to help with training and provided the IT they have needed to establish online education programs. This has increased their reach to more students.

This strategic engagement with our near neighbour has been a great encouragement to our partner Bible colleges in the PASTI consortium. It remains our privilege to have answered their request and to see God's answer to our prayers.



Dr Dick Seed and Dr Samuel Sidjabat leading a Theological Research Methods Workshop for PASTI in 2023.



Above: PASTI ran a theological research methodology workshop in Surakarta (Solo) Indonesia in September 2024. Local Leaders' Theological Education Consultant, Dr Caroline Seed, led the workshop with the assistance of two Indonesian facilitators.

Below: Over 40 representatives from PASTI colleges attended the theological research methodology workshop, and here you can see some of the scholars engaged in group discussion.

PLEASE PRAY

Sovereign Lord, we know you set the wheels in motion for Local Leaders' connection with PASTI. Thank you that this partnership has flourished over the past eight years and that Local Leaders has been able to help the 45 Bible colleges to achieve their goals of lifting standards and upskilling faculty. Please bless every college in the PASTI consortium as they develop many more competent ministers and church planters for the church in Indonesia. Amen.

LOGS - 10,000 NEW STUDENTS CAN'T BE WRONG

Numbers aren't everything, but they are something! We'll soon have our fourth year data available about how LOGS (Local Online: A Global Strategy) has benefited the church. At the end of the third year (mid-2024) we had recorded 10,600 new students in training.

One key element of the LOGS results is that the only infrastructure needed to provide this growth in numbers has been to provide funds for smart classrooms, recording studios and other IT equipment for nearly 200 Bible colleges.

The LOGS strategy grew out of the pandemic emergency situation where every college had to go online. This new way of teaching was done poorly, like everyone else at that time, but it was a scramble to get something working for their students who were now remote from the college campuses. LOGS has stepped in to build on the new situation and has helped nearly 3,000 faculty members to learn how to do online education and to provide new options for over 10,000 students so far.

The strategy has entered its fifth and final year, but you won't be surprised to know that we are working on the multi-faceted elements of the post-LOGS era. Our staff and Board are thinking through the priorities to 'maintain the gains' and see a steam-rolling effect of this investment in tech, training and resourcing.

Numbers aren't everything. Indeed, we are just as concerned about quality as we are about quantity. The training of these faculty and providing resources is a key part of the strategy. We have trained up dozens of champions for online education who are now working beyond the initial group of faculty that we have trained directly. In this way we know the experience of learning for students will get better as time goes on. Our vision is to 'normalise' professional development of faculty. While we take such concepts for granted in the west, the costs and rhythms don't always allow for such faculty training in the Majority World.

We are not just training faculty and more champions to carry the banner for good online education, but we are also working with the accreditation agencies. Our goal is to help them work with the many colleges providing online education so they keep high standards from here on.



Above: The opening ceremony for the new smart classroom, funded by LOGS, at the Tafakari Centre in Kibera near Nairobi, Kenya (March 2025).

Below: Faculty learning how to capture content on a smart phone during the LOGS competency training workshop at St Patrick's Theological College in Madagascar, February 2025.

PLEASE PRAY

What an encouragement the LOGS Strategy is! Thank you, God, for all those who have contributed prayerfully and financially to this strategy. It has had a huge impact on the landscape of global theological education over the last four years. Thank you that thousands of faculty members have been trained to deliver good quality online education. Thank you that thousands of ministers and lay leaders have subsequently been able to access high quality online training that is sensitive to their contexts. It's a game changer! Please help the LOGS team to finish the fifth and final year of the strategy well – leaving a legacy that will help Bible colleges for years to come. Amen.

GRASSROOTS TO CANOPY - THEN WE CAN CLOSE DOWN

As we have developed the different regional strategies and global LOGS strategy, we have asked the question about how the whole Majority World could be significantly changed for the better. The idea was to think how in as short a period of time (15 years) we could get theological education to a much stronger position in all the regions of the world.

The goal of Local Leaders is to develop the capacity and ability, in each country and continent, to theologise for that context.

What might that look like?

Here's a simple test: could a Christian go to a bookshop, or find online help in their language - biblical advice on the sorts of topics they need to live by? Could they go to their pastor and have confidence that they have thought about their issues?

For example: Is there a book on parenting written for parents in rural Kenya? Something that deals with the pressures of children going to live in the slums of Nairobi. Or is there a training program in India to help work with new Christians from the outcaste people of their state? Or do the churches of Colombia get good teaching on the recent migration of Venezuelans into their country.

Westerners don't think about these issues or write theology about them, but they are greatly needed, along with a thousand other issues.

So how do we get the Bible college systems of the Majority World to a point where they can be 'self-sufficient' in a theological and organisational sense? And how can they do that for the good of the church and the mission of Christ?

Grassroots to Canopy (G2C) is the concept which seeks to draw on decades of Local Leaders' experience, mixed with the work of many other organisations to pull all this together. The concern is that grassroots pastors with primary school education, through to the professors who write the books will be coherently strengthened for the good of the mission.

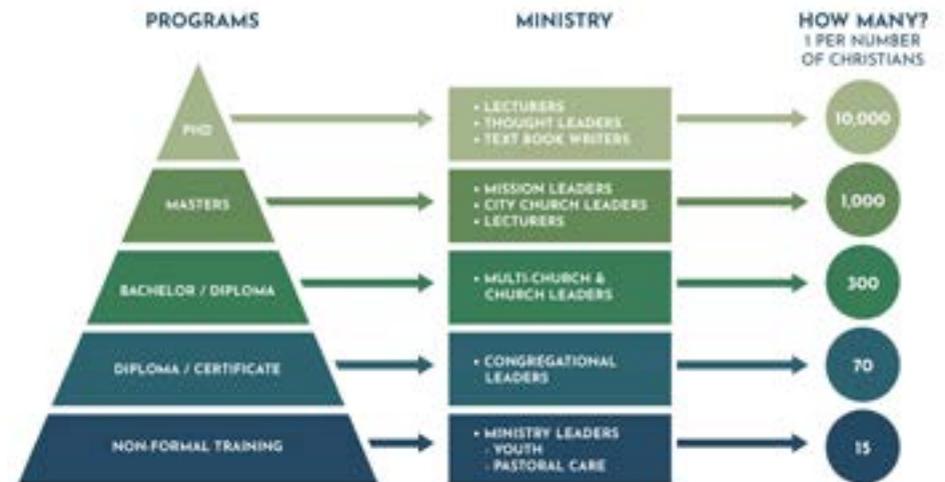
In practical terms this looks like an amalgamation of all the good work being done, but with more coherence, in a shorter time frame, and on steroids. So, we have divided the Majority World into 19 areas and set out 15 years of activity for each region and how they will interconnect.

Close down? A former chairman of Local Leaders, Philip Twyman, used to occasionally ask "when can Local Leaders close down?" It is a very important question: what is our end goal that indicates success? The answer is: when Grassroots to Canopy is completed.

G2C is a massive concept, and we have made some attempts to see where we could get the huge amount of funds to work on it. We are still working on it.

What has been helpful for Local Leaders is to think through the strategy because it now forms a framework for all our strategies. We can see the elements of what is needed and so any small activity is designed more intentionally to fit into the whole.

As we develop new strategies, the concepts are clearer of where we begin and how we proceed.



This graphic shows the effect G2C could have on theological education and ministry throughout the Majority World. Many more leaders could be trained to meet the need at every level of ministry.

PLEASE PRAY

Heavenly Father, the Grassroots to Canopy Strategy is huge in scope, but could have a profound effect on the capacity of Bible colleges in each country and continent. Please help Local Leaders during this planning phase to refine the strategy for each of the 19 areas identified; to bring together multiple organisations and partners; to find funding and support; and to put in place the scaffolding necessary for such a large project. Give the key leaders of the strategy wisdom and sensitivity as they move forward with the planning. Amen.

ADDING NEW STRATEGIES

Our regional strategy concept has proven very useful to focus our efforts and encourage fellow travelling organisations to work with us, and us with them. Local Leaders has identified the next regions where we want to do more coherent work beyond supporting individual Bible Colleges.

We'll continue with what we're doing as reported in the earlier pages of this edition of Prayer Alert, and we will marshal our resources around three new initiatives, building on what we've already been doing in these three regions.

1. India – necessity is the mother of invention

There have been a number of complications with supporting ministry in India. The government has recently made remitting funds to many ministries impossible. This has impacted us such that we have not been able to do our usual support of students and other projects to our partner Bible colleges. We have been praying about new avenues to support the growing church of India.

In July we contracted a new staff member who is helping us to develop a plan.



In summary we're trying to 'make the Bible colleges more missional, and the mission training organisations more biblical'.

We have had some good initial conversations with key leaders in the country and will advise more in the coming months.

2. Buddhist Southeast Asia – the least impacted region

Which region would you pick as being the least impacted by gospel ministry? It is a hard thing to define, of course, but few would guess how unresponsive the Buddhist people in SE Asia have been over the centuries. There are very few good examples of large-scale success in mission work or people movements towards faith in Christ.

Local Leaders is working closely with our NZ counterpart, Beacon Partnerships. We'll be holding the first of a series of meetings in February next year in Thailand with select Bible college leaders to work out our potential next steps. The response to the invitation has been very good so far to this initiative. Look out for another update next year!



3. MENA – complexity and opportunity

The Middle East North Africa region is complex but has seen people movements towards the Lord. God's church has responded to new interest in and commitment to Christ in the Arabic speaking world. In the past few decades this has been seen throughout North Africa and now can be seen in parts of the Middle East.

We have been involved with a small group of Bible colleges in the MENA region and are looking for ways to work more on a regional basis. We will be working with our partner organisations and partner colleges as we seek to expand this work.



Photos from opposite left:

India: Students in class at South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, India.

Buddhist Southeast Asia: A group of students gather for Bible study at Phnom Penh Bible School in Cambodia.

Middle East/North Africa: A cultural trip to Byblos Castle for students at Arab Baptist Theological College in Lebanon

PLEASE PRAY

King of kings, thank you that you have inspired people all over the world to serve you, learn more about your word and serve their communities. We thank you for Local Leaders' three emerging strategies in India, Southeast Asia and the Middle East/North Africa. Please guide the Local Leaders team, fellow organisations and partner Bible colleges as these strategies are expanded. May each region's theological education system be strengthened over the coming decades. Amen.



SPONSORED STUDENT STORY

Kan Thin Htoo

Studying a Master of Divinity at Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology

Warm greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I am deeply grateful for all your love, prayers, and support, it truly blesses and strengthens me in my journey of faith and ministry.

During a recent holiday, I had the opportunity to visit my father's hometown, Moe Goak in Shan State, a place currently facing difficult times due to ongoing airstrikes. Despite the conflict, my purpose was to bring encouragement to my family and support the new believers in the area. Many of them are from a Nepali Buddhist background, and by God's grace, they have started accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

This experience was deeply moving for me. I was reminded that we are only messengers, and that only through the power of the Lord can people truly see and know Jesus. Witnessing these new believers was,

for me, one of the greatest miracles. It has strengthened my faith and deepened my passion for mission work.

By the grace of God, my theological studies are growing steadily. Recently, I have been studying subjects like Christian Leadership, Christian Education, Diaspora Mission, Old Testament Prophetic Literature, and Contextual Theology. Among these, Christian Leadership challenged me the most. It gave me a fresh understanding of leadership rooted in Christ-likeness and scripture. The course provided powerful strategies and training tools, especially valuable for my role as an elder at my local church.

Another highlight was Diaspora Mission, which opened my eyes to a new way of seeing the mission field. As many young people flee our country, we now equip them with a Diaspora Mission mindset so wherever they go, they can carry the gospel with them.



In my home church I serve faithfully every Saturday and Sunday. I lead the youth group, teach the adult Bible Study during worship services, and help coach the Sunday School ministry. We also have a strong prayer team composed of youth and women who meet regularly to intercede for our country. Once a month, I have the privilege of teaching the adult Sunday School class.

When challenges come, and they surely do, I fix my eyes on the cross. I remember how our Lord Jesus gave His life, bearing shame and pain for us. The cross gives me new strength, new life, and the courage to keep going.

Thank you once again for walking alongside me in this journey. May the Lord continue to bless you and use us all for His glory.

PLEASE PRAY

Lord, we give thanks for Kan Thin Htoo, that he has a passion to serve you and serve the people of Myanmar. Thank you for his recent joy in encouraging new believers in Moe Goak – please continue to grow them in their faith and protect them from conflict in that area. Bless Kan in his studies at MEGST and as he ministers in his local church. Thank you, Jesus, that you give him new strength, new life and the courage to keep going. Amen.

A glimpse into Yangon - a typical street in the largest city in Myanmar. Photo taken by Local Leaders staff member, Kathy Mildenhall, on a recent trip to MEGST.

CONNECTION TOUR TO MONGOLIA

Imagine standing next to a gold plated Chinggis Khaan statue, practicing your archery skills, and watching the national wrestling competition in Mongolia's capital. Along with these treats, imagine sitting at lunch with eager Bible college students telling their stories about the growing church in Mongolia and their work to serve the Lord.

For two weeks in July, Stuart Brooking had the privilege of hosting a Local Leaders Connection Tour in Mongolia. Joined by the principal of Union Bible Training College (UBTC), Rev Luya Gantumur, the group included eight of Local Leaders' Australian supporters.

The highlight was visiting the UBTC campus in Ulaanbaatar and hearing from the lecturers and students during the college

tour and over meals. The group was also able to visit several local churches whose leaders had been trained at the college. Seeing the relationship between the training institution and the life of the local church is an important connection to appreciate.

Building on this insight into theological training in the capital city, the group enjoyed multiple experiences deepening their understanding of the traditions, history and landscape of the country. Savouring the food and music of the region, cheering on competitors at the Mongolian 'Olympics' (Naadam Festival), visiting sites dedicated to Chinggis (Genghis) Khan's exploits, and exploring parts of the grassland steppe provided an immersive glimpse into the rich tapestry of Mongolian culture.



PLEASE PRAY

Almighty God, the world is yours and everything in it. Thank you for the recent Connection Tour in Mongolia and that you imparted your love for the Mongolian people into the group who travelled with Stuart. Thank you also for UBTC and the way they are training leaders to minister in Mongolian society. Please lead Stuart in preparing for the next Connection Tour and gather supporters who will greatly benefit from the insight the trip provides. Amen.

"It was amazing and inspiring to be able to travel to Mongolia and see the way God is at work in the Bible college and in the country. We were particularly thankful to be led by knowledgeable tour guides Stuart (Brooking) and Luya (Bible college principal). And it was very special to do it with our Christian brothers and sisters - new friends and old, whose fellowship we loved." Phil and Wendy Godden



INTERESTED TO TRAVEL WITH LOCAL LEADERS IN 2026-27?

Every year our Executive Director visits numerous countries and some of these trips are ideal for supporters to come along. Each trip provides an immersive understanding of the history, culture and religion of the country. This gives rise to understanding the story of the church and the role of its leaders. In turn, this helps visitors to understand the training focus of the college and the way Local Leaders supports that ministry.

If you like the sound of joining a Connection Tour, or you're keen to suggest a location for a future trip, please register your interest by emailing Stuart at office@localleaders.org.au or call (02) 9635 4409.



-  (02) 9635 4409
-  office@localleaders.org.au
-  PO Box 346 Springwood, NSW 2777
-  localleaders.org.au
-  [localleadersinternational](https://www.facebook.com/localleadersinternational)
-  [local-leaders-international](https://www.linkedin.com/company/local-leaders-international)



JOIN US FOR DINNER!

30th Oct - 14th Nov, check
page 2 for more details.

