

WINTER 2024

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A Newsletter from The Institute of Biblical Leadership

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THE INSTITUTE  
OF BIBLICAL  
LEADERSHIP

because leaders who  
honor God don't just  
come out of nowhere



# “THAT’S A WRAP”

By Dr. David Phelan

▶ As I write this note, we are one week into the new year, and we are prayerfully engaged in planning for the coming twelve months. We are putting the final touches on our 2024 budget. We are finalizing our international leader development training conferences for the coming year. We are scheduling Board meetings, staff meetings, prayer meetings, meetings about meetings, and so much more. We are developing material, delineating the specifics of our first quarter consulting activities, and booking

flights for the four corners of the USA and world. We are making headway on internal operational improvements that will enable more effective ministry for years to come. With all this forward gazing and future planning, it is easy to lose sight of the past blessings, provisions, and movement of God. We should never fail to highlight His faithfulness toward us and His work among us. Therefore, in the spring, we are going to publish a 2023 Annual Report for our friends and supporters. It’s been several years since

**For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!**

**Psalm 177:2**

we’ve provided this kind of overarching view of the ministry. I look forward to sharing with you all what He has allowed us to be involved with this past year, and how He is strategically growing the ministry, enabling us to increase our reach, effectiveness, and impact.

But I’m too excited to not share a few things here in this space.

## In 2023, we:

- Had more consulting days of ministry with more consulting clients than in any prior year.
- Conducted successful, God-glorifying counseling ministries with both our oldest and youngest counselee couples.
- Led eight impactful leader development ministries in South America, Africa, and South Asia.
- Coached more leaders regarding more situations than in any prior year.
- Met our goal of \$29,000 for our Spring Appeal and exceeded our goal of \$40,000 for our year-end appeal.
- Grew our overall support for the ministry.
- Switched our operations to new software, with plans for more to come.
- Clarified plans for expansion of our East Africa and North India leader development programs.

We do not take these blessings for granted. Last year was a whirlwind of activity for us. Some important tasks remain unfinished. But we are pushing forward for the sake of “Making a Difference!” in the lives and ministries of those we serve. May God richly bless your labors in 2024! May you experience great impact in your service of our Savior!

**STRAIGHT  
AHEAD!**



**Dr. David  
Phelan**

President, IBL

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



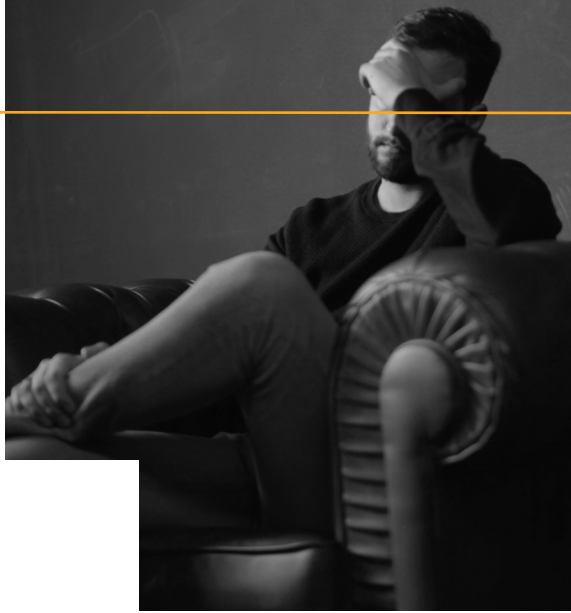
By: Michael Hornek | Volunteer Ministry Executive

*Michael serves as a Volunteer Ministry Executive in our International Training and Consulting ministries. He, his wife Amy, and their two daughters live in Greenville, SC, where Michael is a VP, Financial Consultant with Charles Schwab.*

▶ I began partnering with IBL in December of 2018. I had the opportunity to observe and serve in the training of pastors in Nairobi, Kenya. I remember sitting in the room as pastors and their wives intently listened, worshipped, and learned. I have also served with IBL in facilitating long range ministry planning in multiple churches and organizations within the United States. Through IBL, my eyes were opened to the need of equipping and partnering with our church leaders. Prior to expecting Christ in my twenties, I experienced several periods of rebellion and living for myself. In my early Christian life, I did not have anyone who mentored and guided me. Like me, many Christians go through their lives without solid leadership. This missing element can lead to devastating results. My heart breaks for Christ's church, as we are a hurt and broken people who need qualified leaders to equip and disciple the body. I have witnessed churches

with unprepared or unqualified leaders, resulting in ineffective ministries, a lack of gospel witness, and hurting members. The needs are even more prevalent overseas. Individuals are rising up to be pastors, but they have a poor understanding of theology, poor leadership skills, unhelpful motives, and a lack of skill in studying and teaching the Word of God. After my 2018 Nairobi trip, I asked myself, "If pastors and missionaries are expected to have the answers for the people they lead, to whom do they turn when they need help? Who do they go to when they are hurting and need someone to come alongside them?"

Barna Group reported in March 2022, forty-two percent of pastors have considered quitting full-time ministry within the previous year. The top reasons: the immense stress of the job, and they felt lonely and isolated. Too often our church leaders are taken for granted. This is the domain in which IBL impacts the church.



**“Forty-two percent of pastors have considered quitting full-time ministry within the previous year [2021].”**

I have personally seen the positive impact IBL has on local churches in the majority world. With the financial support of individuals and churches in the United States, IBL provides a multi-year training program for pastors, equipping them with right theology and instilling them with biblical, servant leadership.

In the United States, I have personally seen the impact of IBL in several areas. First, IBL facilitates churches through long-range planning, helping them discover how God is calling them to serve and share the gospel. Second, IBL is a positive influence in times of crisis and conflict as churches go through turbulent times. Finally, IBL coaches and trains leaders, helping churches develop future leaders.

All of this would not be possible without the sacrifice of individuals and churches. IBL utilizes volunteers in addition to their paid staff. This keeps costs as low

as possible. Just as the Philippian church supported Paul financially during his first trip to the province of Achaia (2 Cor 11:9 and Phil 4:15), I believe churches have a biblical obligation to send others, to financially support them, and to participate in the development, assistance, and encouragement of church leaders in the United States and around the world.

Christ gave the church leaders to equip the body for works of service (Eph 4:11-13). I am thankful for the IBL team who come alongside Christ's leaders with encouragement, guidance, and training. Please prayerfully consider how you can join IBL in their mission of assisting leaders who desire to become the men, women, leaders, and ministry teams God desires. It has been my absolute privilege to volunteer alongside the Institute of Biblical Leadership and to see the beautiful impact they are having for Christ both locally and globally.

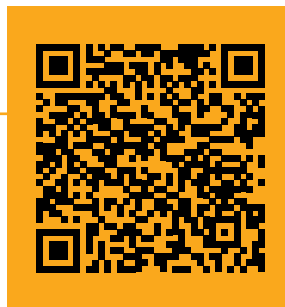


# IMPACT FOR THE KINGDOM



By: Monika Ibrahimi Hernando | Ministry Executive

Monika joined IBL in March 2022, with a particular focus on our counseling ministry. Prior to joining IBL, Monika was on staff with Cru-Albania, working in the area of Leadership Development. She and her husband Matt reside in Camp Verde, AZ, with their six-month old son, Siar.



Use the QR code to support Monika's ministry with IBL

▶ When I came on staff with the Institute of Biblical Leadership (IBL), now almost two years ago, it was with mixed emotions. Everything in my life was changing! I was leaving a ministry (Cru) that I loved and had been a part of for nineteen years. I just completed my master's degree in counseling from a mid-western seminary. And I had just gotten married! Joining IBL was a step of faith, made possible only because of God's assurance that He had work for me to do with IBL. As a full-time missionary and a leader, I saw the often-neglected need for care among those on the front lines. That is why I joined IBL, because its vision aligns with my passion to expand the Kingdom by caring for those who serve.

The past two years have been a whirlwind of new experiences, challenges, and opportunities for growth. As I have settled in at IBL, I have enjoyed the opportunity to work on many new and interesting cases, such as a consulting case in

Texas, where I worked with a new organization trying to establish a homeless shelter and counseling center in San Antonio. On a challenging counseling case last spring, God worked through IBL to help an older pastoral couple take positive steps in their marriage relationship, after which they thanked us for helping to create "a healthy and open setting for learning and changing according to God's plan for our lives, marriage, and ministry." In a more recent counseling case, I've had the chance to come alongside a female missionary in Africa as she gets settled into a new country, culture, and ministry. This has enabled me to apply lessons I learned going through similar transition processes in my earlier missionary work in the Middle East.

Indeed, ministry with IBL has proven rewarding on a personal, professional, and spiritual level. Walking alongside leaders and missionaries helping them live healthy lives, and so, advance the Kingdom, is what I enjoy doing. But as I often remind people: none of this would be possible without the prayers and the financial support from my ministry partners. As you are probably very aware: real, everyday financial needs continue to exist even for people in ministry. And that is why I am so thankful for my supporters. **Because of them**, I have been able to remain in ministry, and to continue the work I have been called to do. So, to all of my and IBL's team supporters, know this: you are making a difference for the Gospel and for the Kingdom!



# A TEAM EFFORT



By: Keith Fleming | Ministry Executive

*Keith joined IBL in January 2022, and serves primarily in training and consulting teams. Keith also oversees some operational aspects of IBL. Prior to joining IBL, Keith served for nine years as the Executive Pastor of Brookside Baptist Church in Brookfield, WI. He and his wife Sarah reside in Greenville, SC. Their two daughters attend college in the Greenville area.*



**Use the QR code to support Keith's ministry with IBL**

▶ As I reflect on my first two years with the Institute of Biblical Leadership, I am thankful for the opportunities to gain experience and participate in the different areas of ministry here at IBL. It has been a blessing to see the impact that a commitment to biblical principles can have on leadership decision-making and the personal development of the leaders we serve.

My involvement in the consulting ministry has allowed me to contribute to many different areas of ministry where biblical values guide decision making in the church. The international training ministry at IBL is having global impact for Christ through workshops and training of national pastors around the world. I have served with teams in Tanzania, Uganda, and South India. IBL's coaching ministry is a platform for nurturing and encouraging biblical leadership potential. Among those I've worked with, I've seen them develop a deeper understanding of their unique roles within their churches and ministries. The counseling ministry provides a space for couples to explore and work through relational challenges using a biblical lens. I recently had the opportunity to observe this ministry and its impact on those we serve. Starting in 2024, I am beginning the process of learning IBL's financial accounting and other operational

aspects of the ministry, a process that I am extremely excited to begin, given my operational bent!

None of this would be possible without both the prayer and financial support of the churches and individuals that partner with us as we serve with IBL. I am very thankful for each of you! This aspect of the

ministry has been the biggest challenge for me personally, as we continue to work towards being fully supported. The main challenge comes with the fact that we are based in South Carolina in the USA, automatically taking us out of consideration for mission support by many churches. Please pray for both churches and individuals to see

the importance of developing biblical leaders both here in the United States as well as in the majority world.

My two-year journey with IBL has been marked by personal growth and learning. Through active participation in IBL's consulting, international training, coaching, and counseling ministries, I have personally grown in several dimensions. I have also witnessed the impact of leadership rooted in biblical principles. As I look ahead, I am confident the seeds planted through these ministries will continue to bear fruit in the lives of ministry leaders around the world.

**As I look ahead, I am confident the seeds planted through these ministries will continue to bear fruit**



# BACK TO SCHOOL!

## Five lessons on Contentment from Philippians 4:10-13

By: Dr. Dave Deets

▶ As a leader, one of the most difficult things for us to balance is the need to find our contentment in Christ with the desire to advance as a leader. To truly find our satisfaction in Him is something all of us should strive for. Yet, we still find ourselves with the angst of pushing forward and growing both in our ministries and as leaders. Combined with that struggle is the fact that we often have many needs: financial, physical, emotional, and even spiritual. As I write this article, I am on the heels of our family losing nearly 15% of our financial support in a span of four weeks! How am I supposed to write an article on contentment? The answer is, the same as you would write an article: go back to God's Word and find in Christ the strength, encouragement, and balm our souls need on a regular basis. So, true contentment...

**...does not negate rejoicing at God's provision** (v10)

Do you need pastors/elders or deacons in your church? The answer is most likely yes! Do you need resources (both physical and spiritual) as a leader? The answer is yes! So, what happens when God provides you the leaders and resources you need? Do you rejoice and give praise to God for His bountiful, amazing blessing? If you do rejoice and praise God for meeting these needs, does that imply you weren't content before? No, of course not! It simply means you were content to wait for God's provision, doing the best work possible with the resources God gave you then, but now rejoicing at God's blessing.

**...does not mean an absence of need**

(v11) True contentment does not negate rejoicing at God's provision, and the opposite is true as well. Being truly content as a leader does not

mean we do not have needs. We all have needs as leaders. We need to continually examine the motives of our heart, we need to continue to grow in Christlikeness, we need to improve in our roles and relationships, and we certainly need to continually be dependent on the leading of the Holy Spirit, implementing spiritual practices which enable us to become godly leaders. So, no, I do not have an absence of need. In fact, I have a lot of needs; and yet, in the midst of my need, I can and must find true contentment. This paradox can be baffling.

**...requires active learning in every situation** (v11)

Here's the reality: as a leader, you must be a life-long learner. On how to be a better strategic leader. On how to build your staff, team, or group. On how to address pressing, difficult situations. On how to give your spouse and family preeminence as you serve in ministry. However, more than learning "techniques" of leadership, your first assignment is to learn how to be content. Paul says, "I have learned..." The word he uses here means to learn from experience, with an implication of reflecting on the situation as it is resolved. In other words, much of our learning to be content will occur after the trouble is resolved: as we reflect on what happened, what God did, and how He was faithful to provide for us. This in turn allows us to reflect on His goodness and faithfulness, and it prepares us for the next opportunity for contentment.

**...is possible in any and every situation** (v12)

Paul may have lost his mind with this one! Is it truly possible to be content in each situation? And not just that, but in all situations combined! In other words, with each circumstance I face, and then with the

entire collection of circumstances I face in my life and ministry, Paul makes the audacious statement that we can truly be content. This flies in the face of our society today, which is focused on self, how we have been wronged, and what people need to do to rectify what happened to us. Paul says in no uncertain terms, "Hey, Christian. Hey, leader. You can and must be content in each individual situation and in the totality of all the situations you face each day." In our flesh, we want to scream, "BUT WHAT ABOUT ME, MY RIGHTS, MY NEEDS, MY DESIRES?" This is why Paul says that contentment is a learned characteristic!

**...is not possible apart from Christ**

(v13) At the end of the day, and really all throughout the day, here is the key: we can only find true contentment in Jesus Christ. This could be construed as a "Sunday school answer," but the reality is this is exactly what Christ wants for us as leaders. Yes, we have needs. And yes, we rejoice when those needs are met. And yes, we are to be actively learning to be content in every and all situations. But the ultimate reality is that we will never find true contentment apart from Christ. He is our fulfillment and satisfaction. It is not possible to be truly content apart from Him. This is why the Psalmist states in Psalm 1, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want!" The simple truth of that verse is what allows us to move forward when the uncertainties of life happen.



**Dr. Dave Deets**

VP of Ministry, IBL

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P.O. Box 338,  
Fairview, NC 28730

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