

**TIBI 2024 year-end summary**

January 2025

This month, TIBI celebrated its 22nd anniversary, thanks to the provision and guidance of the Lord, the generosity of its donors, and the hard work of its staff and students. It’s truly amazing to see how God has consistently done more than we ask or imagine through the years. Here are some of the highlights of 2024:

* We now have more than 4800 students in Zoom, online, or hard drive courses, in 76 countries.
* We have **311** current full-time students or graduates working in **235** congregations in **167** cities in **20** countries. This does not include all the part-time students working in many more places.
* We have helped plant **79 new congregations** since 2009, and there have been **6000+ baptisms** since 2009 in places where we help train people.
* We had our largest graduation ever in July, with **27 graduates** of different certificates and degrees.
* In August, **11 more students graduated** from our Masters of Practical Theology program, for a total of 39 graduates in 4 years. Another 39 students are currently in the program.
* We are in the process of bringing in several professors for different courses, as other teachers retire. **Benjamin Matul**, a TIBI graduate and licensed psychologist and counselor, is now teaching Counseling. **Wladimir Herrera**, a TIBI and RIB alumnus, is coordinating several other TIBI graduates in teaching Religious Groups. We are proud of these men and glad to have talented, dedicated professors to help us.
* All our faculty and students will have access this year to the **Pitts Digital Library**, which is part of the Chandler school of Theology at Emory University. This is exciting because it provides thousands more resources (books and articles) for our students, in Spanish, vastly increasing research options for us.
* In October, Kevin Montgomery and Steve Austin went to **Cuba to train 32 more church leaders**, as well as conduct a graduation ceremony for the latest group of graduates there. As always, it was wonderful and inspiring to be with these faithful brothers and sisters.
* At TIBI, we have been pioneers in several areas of technology in religious education, including the use of video conferencing with Polycom, Vidyo, and Zoom systems. This year, we discovered a translation app called **Wordly** which could translate our courses simultaneously into 58 languages, either live video, closed caption, or recorded video. We are investigating how we might use this effectively. Of course, funding and logistics are the main challenges to resolve, but we believe both can be resolved.
* Also, we have begun to learn about and research **AI and its potential uses**, particularly in a setting where all our students are remote, and many are asynchronous. We believe this can be yet another powerful resource for planning, teaching, assessment, and research for our faculty and students. The learning curve is a little steep, but it is fascinating. If we can help our students learn how to use AI responsibly, that not only will help their learning about text and ministry, but also give them a tool to continue learning in all areas, and perhaps give them other employment opportunities to support them even as they continue to minister effectively in their churches.

Please pray for us in all these areas as we head into another exciting year at TIBI! God bless you, and thank you for your prayers and many kinds of support.

Steve Austin, Director, TIBI