



Biblical Education.  
For the World.  
For Free.



# Annual Report

2020-2021



## 2020-2021 Annual Report

Dear Friends of Thirdmill,

At this time in history, there is a great deal of emphasis on lockdowns and closed doors. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our usual way of doing things, limiting our opportunities for in-person connection.

Yet the very conditions that have locked down nations are opening up doors for Thirdmill. For over 24 years, Thirdmill has made biblical education possible for Christian leaders in hard-to-reach places, under the most challenging conditions. **We have seen firsthand how, by God's providence, pandemics and persecution can ignite a thirst for God's Word.** That thirst has opened the way for Thirdmill to serve more Christian leaders than ever before.

While we are sobered by recent world events and the suffering they have caused, we remain focused on our powerful, loving God and his command to "go and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

As you will see in this report, **Thirdmill has entered an exciting new phase in its mission to provide biblical education, for the world, for free: proactive global distribution.** Since the launch of the Thirdmill Global Network, we and our international partners have experienced a major surge of demand for our materials. We are on track to reach our goal of having served four million pastors and ministry leaders over the next five years. **We have only cracked open the door and it will not shut.** By God's grace, your prayers and support have held that door open against every force that would press against it.

I am excited for you to read this report and be encouraged by the ways that God is using Thirdmill to expand his kingdom all over the world. May the door to biblical education always remain open, and may his kingdom come.

For God's glory,



Richard L. Pratt, Jr.  
President



## Who We Are

Thirdmill is a nonprofit evangelical Christian ministry that provides free biblical and theological education for Christian leaders around the world.

We believe that every leader of Christ's church should be able to learn the Scriptures, regardless of education, financial status, language, or location. **Our mission is to prepare Christian leaders to lead the transformation of the world into God's kingdom by providing biblical education, for the world, for free.**

Since its founding in 1997, Thirdmill has produced more than 27 globally accessible seminary-level courses, featuring over 400 international professors, in 22 major languages. Our multimedia curriculum includes thousands of original illustrations and 3D graphics to engage students from a wide range of educational backgrounds. We are widely used by traditional and non-traditional schools, as well as by churches, groups, and individuals.

Thirdmill offers many forms of delivery to ensure that everyone can access our courses. Through online streams and downloads, TV, radio, smartphone apps, USB flash drives, SD cards, and DVDs, we have taught over 1.27 million reported students worldwide. Millions of others also use our courses independently or through ministries that do not (or cannot) report statistics to us. The longer our efforts continue, the more education we can bring to every corner of the world. **God has positioned Thirdmill to equip millions of pastors and ministry leaders with the truths of Scripture, saturating the globe with training that reaches across geographical and generational lines.**

For more information about Thirdmill, including access to our courses, visit [thirdmill.org](http://thirdmill.org).

"I am grateful for your effort and contribution for the advancement of the kingdom of God in the world, especially in the Third World. Such materials play their role to equip the saints, to make disciples, and to train emerging leaders in the church."

—**Pastor Solomon Kebede Tessema, Ethiopia**

## The Need

Studies show that in areas where the church is growing the fastest, pastors and other ministry leaders have the least access to sound biblical and theological education. According to a study by the Pew Research Center, the number of Christians in absolute number is expected to grow to more than double in the next few decades. If current trends continue, by 2050:

- Africa will be the home of over 1 billion professing Christians.
- Asia's Christian population of 374 million will grow to nearly 567 million.
- Latin America will gain almost 90 million new Christians.

Yet in the midst of this explosive growth, **millions of functioning pastors outside of North America currently do not have access to biblical and theological education.** Not only that, we will soon need more than 10 million new church leaders to guide the growing church.

## Our Response

At Thirdmill, we believe that **every Christian deserves a well-trained pastor.**

We see an opportunity to revolutionize the growth of God's kingdom and to make a lasting impact by training millions of Christian leaders in the Scriptures. For the last 24 years, we've worked hard at developing a proven, scalable model of training. Communities have already been strengthened and encouraged by countless leaders trained by Thirdmill and our global partners. By God's power, we seek to impact millions more through the work of the **Thirdmill Global Network.**

### Over the past year, Thirdmill:

- Responded to 340 curriculum requests from 70 countries
- Provided download instructions to students from 61 different countries
- Distributed 632 flash drives (198 in June alone) in 12 languages to 33 countries



*Thirdmill student in Kenya.*



## The Thirdmill Global Network (TGN)

This year, Thirdmill reached a significant milestone in its history with the launch of the Thirdmill Global Network (TGN).

### How the TGN Works

Church leaders are no longer alone in their pursuit of biblical education. The TGN stands with them every step of the way.

#### STEP 1: Field Directors



In-house Thirdmill Field Directors appoint and train Regional Directors.

#### STEP 2: Regional Directors



Regional Directors recruit, train, and advise indigenous Country Directors.

#### STEP 3: Country Directors



Country Directors work alongside ministry partners in recruiting, training, and advising Community Trainers.

#### STEP 4: Community Trainers



Learning Community Trainers implement local programs using Thirdmill curriculum, working hand-in-hand with local pastors and leaders.

At every level, the TGN coordinates, trains, and supports Christian leaders as they pursue in-depth biblical education to lead their churches and communities in the truth of God's Word.

**The TGN is a worldwide community devoted to bringing biblical education to church leaders in every major region in the world, utilizing our award-winning curriculum** in structured biblical education programs. This global network strategy greatly enhances training opportunities for pastors and local ministry leaders. Thirdmill coordinates and trains Christian leaders who then expand the network by training more leaders, who in turn train even more leaders, all under the supportive umbrella of the TGN. This proven strategy furthers our goal of training four million Christian ministry leaders over the next five years.

On average, pastors and other church leaders touch the lives of 100 people throughout their lifetimes. By this calculation, **the four million church leaders equipped by the TGN will go on to impact an estimated 400 million followers of Christ.**

## TGN Momentum

Thirdmill is encountering a surge of demand from pastors and leaders all over the world for sound biblical teaching. Through the TGN, these leaders can receive the training they need while remaining in the communities where they live and serve.



*Thirdmill student in Taiwan.*

**In the first quarter of the fiscal year, the TGN field team saw:**

- 24 New Partnerships initiated
- 23 Learning Community Trainers trained
- 24 New Learning Communities established

*"I am a missionary serving in Mexico. I have been looking for this exact thing to train national pastors here! What a God-sent ministry!"*

*— Trent Granger, Mexico*



*Cloud Roman, Area Director for East Africa, speaks at a Pastor's Conference in Tanzania in 2021. More than 800 pastors and leaders attended his breakout sessions.*

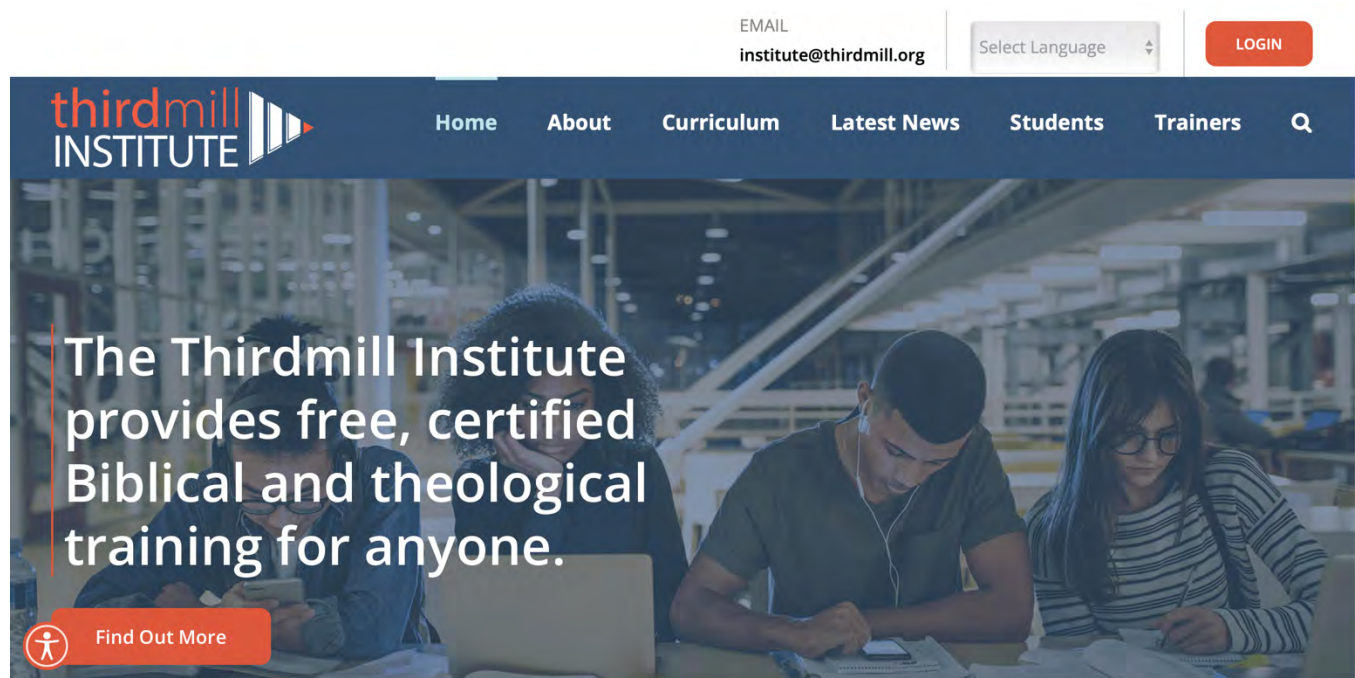
At this time, the TGN has established a foothold in 6 of the 10 regions of the world, with a quarter-million new reported students in the past year.

## The Thirdmill Institute

Another significant milestone from the past year is the launch of the **Thirdmill Institute** that undergirds the work of the TGN. **The Institute's mission is to empower churches and leaders globally to equip others for ministry through free, *certified* biblical training.**

Over the years, a number of churches and organizations have expressed a growing need for a ready-made biblical and theological training program—using Thirdmill's curriculum—to prepare their leaders for ministry. They have also wanted a certified program recognized by their governments. With the launch of the Thirdmill Institute, such a program is now a reality.

The Institute's program is provided free of charge and is open to everyone, regardless of previous education, and has the flexibility of being implemented over the internet or offline.



*The Thirdmill Institute website, [thirdmillinstitute.org](http://thirdmillinstitute.org), launched in 2021.*

“Thank you to all of you there at Thirdmill who do an incredible job but sometimes never get to visibly see how your labor is blessing people and extending God’s kingdom in some of the world remotest regions. Well done, team! You are highly celebrated out here!”

— **Solomon Okello, New City Bible Church, Uganda**



## The Role of the Thirdmill Institute

The Thirdmill Institute uses our high-quality curriculum to train students in the Bible and theology while also adding an increased emphasis on personal and ministry application.

The Thirdmill Institute works with missionary agencies, educational institutions, independent ministries, and churches to create local learning communities consisting of a group of students and a local trainer. We call these local leaders “Institute Trainers.” **Our curriculum is designed to lift the burden of preparing and teaching information so that these trainers can focus on local application.** Typically, the trainer will be recruited by a local church, a group of churches, or a Thirdmill partner.

Learning communities that have access to the internet engage their Institute curriculum materials through the Thirdmill Institute website, launched in 2021. Learning communities that utilize an “offline” approach receive a microSD card from the Institute.

Students earn a Diploma in Christian Ministry by completing three distinct certificates. Each certificate combines a subset of Thirdmill courses with a focus on ministry and life skills. The Institute’s Foundations Certificate is now available in English. Additional certificates and languages will be added in the near future.

For more information on the Institute, visit [thirdmillinstitute.org](http://thirdmillinstitute.org)

“Thirdmill’s courses have given me a good foundation to understand God’s Word. Like he says in the Bible: ‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’ That’s what happened to me with this study.”

— *Alexandra Morales, Ecuador*



*Thirdmill courses being copied onto SD cards.*

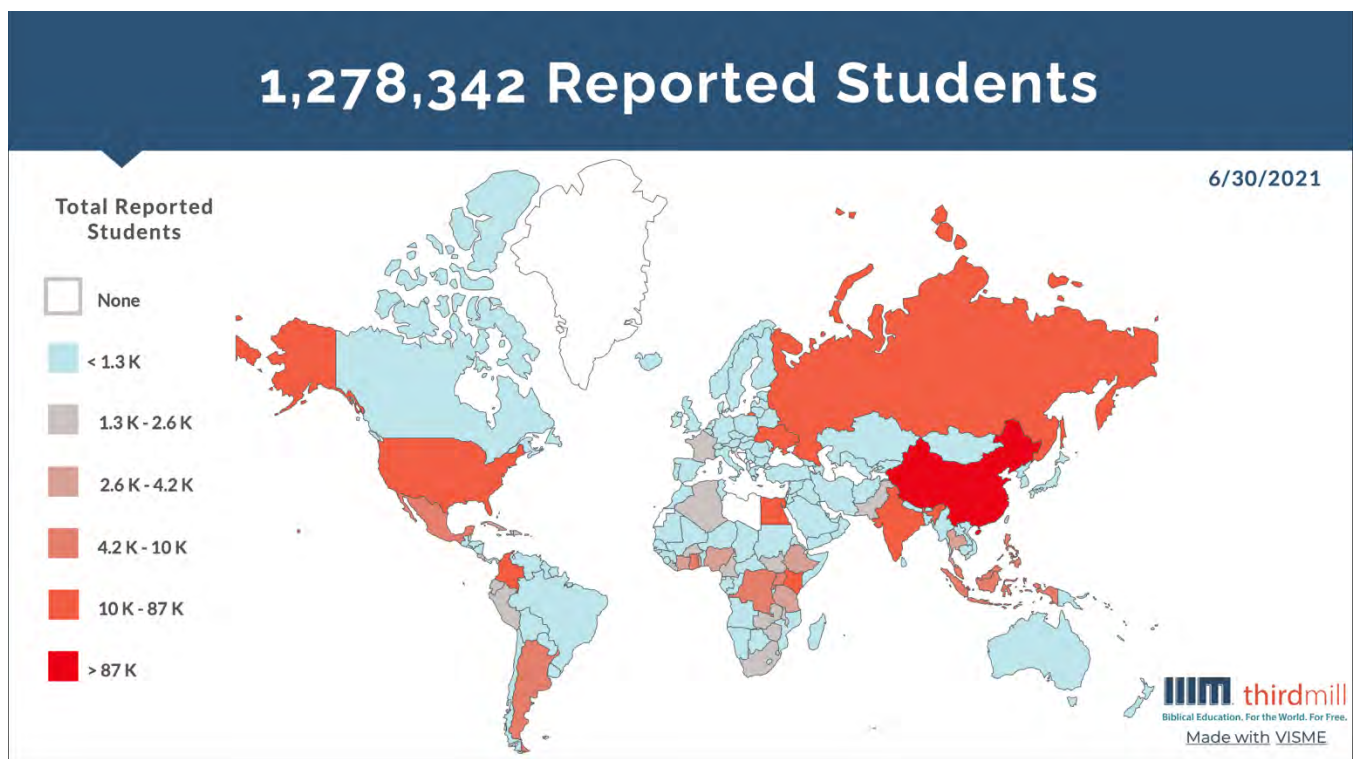


## Making Strides: Achievements in 2020-2021

In addition to establishing the Thirdmill Global Network and the Thirdmill Institute, we were able to achieve several other major goals across departments over the last fiscal year.

### Student Growth

As illustrated below, the number of Thirdmill reported students grew to over 1.27 million and continues to climb.



### YouTube

Thirdmill experienced a substantial increase in viewership on YouTube, with subscribers numbering over 36,000 on the English-speaking channel alone. In the first half of 2021, we gained 7,600 new subscribers (a 28% increase). On average, we are seeing over 1,000 new subscribers per month.



“I’ve been listening to your Bible study series on YouTube over the past few months. The last one has been *The Heart of Paul’s Theology*. It is the best visual Bible study course I’ve ever come across! Excellent!”

— **Annegret Meyer, Germany**

## Curriculum Updates

To ensure that our lessons are effective for Christians in the digital age, we are redesigning our foundational series. These upgrades include new interview footage and updated graphics that improve how we explain concepts visually, making fundamental but complex aspects of theology even more accessible.

Our most recent re-release is *The Heart of Paul’s Theology*. In this version, we’ve updated the graphics and incorporated new images that bring concepts to life in ways we could only have imagined when the series was first released in 2005. We’ve also added expert interviews with professors from around the world to enhance the original content.

Access the new series at [thirdmill.org/seminary/](http://thirdmill.org/seminary/).

## Global Languages

At this time, Thirdmill offers courses in 22 major languages, covering 46% of the world’s population. Our translators continue to make strides in releasing new course material, with plans to add more languages over the next five years.

## Online Degree Pathways

Having recognized the quality of Thirdmill’s curriculum, a growing number of accredited programs incorporate our material into their courses and degree programs, including:

- African Bible Colleges
- Belhaven University
- BibleMesh Institute
- Birmingham Theological Seminary
- City Vision University
- Sekolah Tingi Teologia
- Southeastern Baptist
- Thirdmill Seminary
- Union Theological College (Belfast, Northern Ireland)

## Thirdmill Staff

Despite the limitations that COVID imposed, our staff continued to adapt and persevere. Weekly staff meetings over Zoom served as a vital time of fellowship and connection, with so many team members working from home and abroad. Thirdmill added numerous staff over the course of the year whose skills and expertise have accelerated the growth, reach, and efficiency of the Thirdmill Global Network. **We give thanks that the Lord has brought together such a talented team of individuals who are committed to seeing his kingdom flourish all over the world.**

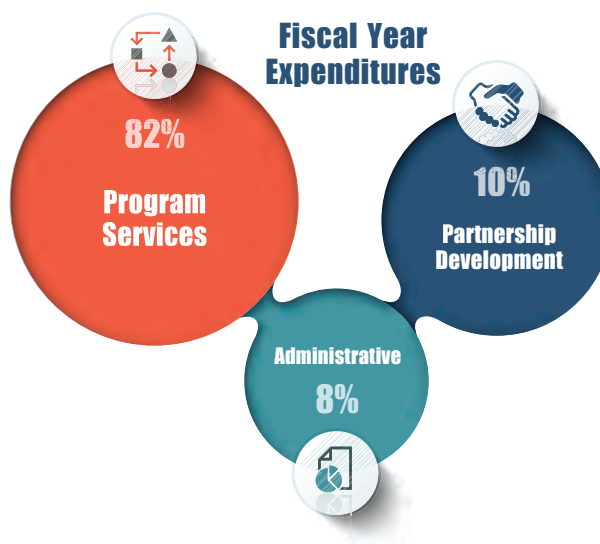
See the entire Thirdmill team at [thirdmill.org/mission/team.asp](http://thirdmill.org/mission/team.asp).



*Thirdmill staff on a team-building excursion.*

## Financial Position

Thirdmill has maintained a healthy financial position that has furthered its mission while ensuring organizational stability in a challenging economic environment. **We are grateful to the many donors who have generously supported Thirdmill as we work to meet the growing demand for biblical training.**



For a copy of our latest financial information, please email Ra McLaughlin, VP of Operations & Finance, at [rmclaughlin@thirdmill.org](mailto:rmclaughlin@thirdmill.org). Third Millennium Ministries is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).





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"I want to express my deepest thanks to you that my knowledge in the Scriptures and methods of study has been increased and enriched. My faith and love for God and his Word now reaches higher and deeper dimensions. Because of this joy I wish to share the knowledge with pastors who have lower or little learning. May our God continue to richly bless you all and your ministry."

— **Roberto Javellana, Philippines**

## Contact Us

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