

“Entrust to Reliable People” UBF HQ Educators Retreat

The HQ Educators Retreat, a pivotal event in UBF Education, was held on May 24-25 at the World Mission Office in Chicago. This stimulating retreat was a platform for our committed educators to share instructional experiences, assess the efficacy of our current programs, engage in prayerful discussions about our plans for educating leaders in UBF worldwide, and unite in prayer. The retreat resulted in fruitful discussions and strategic plans for the future of our educational programs, marking a significant step forward for UBF Education.

The HQ Education Committee organized the retreat under the UBF General Director, P. Ron Ward. In addition to the committee members (Dr. Augustine Suh, Dr. Ezra Cho, P. Kevin Albright, Dr. Paul Hong, Dr. Abraham Lincoln, P. Joshua Hong, and P. Steve Stasinos), Pastor Ron and Dr. Henry Park participated in this historic meeting. P. Mark Vucekovich and M. David Kim attended partially. The retreat opened on Friday evening with dinner and a warm welcome from North American Elder President Jim Rarick.

On Saturday morning, Pastor Ron encouraged educators, based on 2 Timothy 2:2, to guard the gospel truth and to entrust it to reliable people. He gave his account of the history of the HQ Education Department. His report helped us to see the critical importance our HQ Education programs have in equipping and serving native leaders all over the world, as well as our unique position to be able to do so. For example, after over a year of prayerful labor, the Pan-Africa cohort was formed to meet an urgent need in Africa for our UBF churches. The native African leaders whom the sacrificial missionaries have raised heard God’s call and have stepped up to lead their UBF churches and continue the mission work in their continent. However, they need support, particularly in education, fellowship, and continued mentoring. UBF HQ is uniquely positioned to help them, leveraging both Korea and HQ resources and abilities. HQ leaders are aware of the cross-cultural reality these leaders face daily. After strategically visiting many Asian nations earlier this year, P. Ron identified many leaders in the same situation, so a Pan-Asia Cohort is currently in the design phase. Also, there may be needs elsewhere. May God pour out his Spirit on us so that we can be humble, compassionate, and wise enough to serve native leaders around the world. That is just one aspect of education programs that HQ Education is stewarding. In addition, there is the Emerging Leaders Cohort program, online education courses, two Bible study material teams, and Women Encouraging Women (WEW). Details for these can be found at <https://ubfinstitute.org>. One thing is clear: thus far, the Lord has led us, and for that, we give thanks. The educational needs of our growing ministry are vast, and our resources are small. So P. Ron reminded us of our focus on Jesus, who fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish.

After his lecture, we each shared our experiences, good and bad, with all of the current programs. This session not only helped us have a shared perspective on where we currently stand in carrying out the tasks Jesus has for us but also highlighted the significant impact of our educators' work. We were humbled by the powerful work God has done through our education work these past years and overwhelmed by how much we need to grow and improve to meet this ever-increasing need.

In the afternoon, we focused on improving the quality of our current instructors, programs, curriculum, and courses. We discussed many things in a dynamic and engaging discussion. Some highlights are summarized as follows:

- The scope of education, currently focused on leaders and pastoral/theological training, needs to be expanded to meet UBF educational needs in many areas, such as self-care, family life, community, public Christianity, counseling, etc. Particularly, we pray to increase focus on the education of women leaders and younger leaders through our programs.
- We need many more educators to step forward. We thank God for some who are willing to join.
- To help instructors implement courses more effectively, a “How to design and carry out a course” workshop in the fall is being planned.
- Feedback methods are to be implemented, and courses need to be constantly improved. All instructors are to adopt a commitment to lifelong learning by always pursuing deepening and broadening their understanding and expertise.
- Strategic partnerships were discussed.
- We pray for funds and expertise to transform our online programs into something more dynamic and useful for all educational activities where students (prospective and current) and instructors/facilitators can engage.

In the final session, we discussed three major topics:

- The next Educator’s Retreat is planned for November 8-9, 2024. This retreat is for those facilitating our educational programs and potential future instructors.
- The need for the Education website was discussed regarding fundraising, design, and time frame.
- Fundraising generally will be needed.

We closed with one hour of united prayer, thanking God for all he has done and for all our instructors. We prayed over everything we discussed in detail and interceded for one another. We also prayed for “The Way” European Bible Conference.

On behalf of the HQ Education Committee,
Augustine Suh