

Equipping Reliable Leaders in
Sound Doctrine
in

Russia
Ukraine
Latvia
Hungary
Romania

Winter 2001
Volume 4, Issue 4

Training the Shepherds in the
countries of the former Soviet
Block

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION RELATED TO YEAR-END GIVING

Timing of Year-End Contributions:

In order to meet the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service related to contributions qualifying for inclusion in your tax return for the current year, you should note the following:

- Your checks should be dated no later than December 31.
- The envelope must be postmarked no later than December 31.

We ask you to consider ITEM missions as part of your Christmas gift to advancing the Gospel in the countries of the former Soviet Block

International Theological Education
Ministries, Inc
P.O. Box 31456
St. Louis, MO 63131

NEWSITEMS

Winter Edition

HUNDREDS OF VICTORIES!! - HELP!!!

By Dr. R. David Ludwick, President

Facts gained from my recent teaching tour to the DRTC and EUTS, president and adjunct professor of the History of Theology

Hundreds of victories can be counted in the faces of students in the Bachelor of Theology and the Bible Certificate programs! Rev. Norman Haan (CRC) and I served 42 and 36 of these students respectively during the first two weeks of November 2001. The questions were fresh, the energy high, the interest intense, the Bible memorization daunting, and the opportunity to spread the truths of Scripture through the doctrines of the Reformed faith victorious! When I think that just 5 years ago we conducted classes for 12-15 students I am awed by His Grace and provision of answered prayers... as well as His enablement and provision to meet the opportunities that He sends to us - and to you who co-labor with us.

With 45 students in the Masters program (which meets during the 2nd two weeks of the month), the Bachelor of Theology and Bible Certificate programs, and the other programs offered, including the correspondence/distance learning program, we serve more than 1500 students!

Because of the rapid growth in the past 3 years in particular our Lord has given us the opportunities to seek out those who share the vision of theological education for the leaders of His Church in the countries of the former



Tent Lunch for over 870 attendees of the Power in the Pulpit Conference organized and held by the Eastern Ukrainian Theological Seminary (a.k.a. DRTC, Donetsk, Ukraine)

Soviet Union. As I have written to you several times before, the need is great for professors, translations of solid Reformed biblical literature, access to computer programs and the internet, etc., etc. etc.

Answered prayer brings forth its own consequences and so we give you the opportunity to expand your mission mandate personally, as a church member, and as a friend of missions by contacting our offices and giving us opportunity to make presentations of the work or participating in some planned event presenting not only the vision but the work itself or by increasing your giving both to the general fund and/or to designated projects, and, of course, by your effectual prayers, thus enabling opportunities to serve others as the consequences of your prayers become manifest! In the very best of ways we covet your prayers, your participation, your continued support, and the opportunities that you might have to expand your participation as co-laborer in His Kingdom Work through ITEM.

May He grant you special blessing during this advent season and may His bountiful provision to you spill over into all aspects of your life remembering that while we say "yea and amen to Luke 2, to Luke 24 we say yea and hallelujah, amen!"

RDL - Josh 1:6-9



EXPANDING PROGRAMS REQUIRE EXPANDING SUPPORT!

By Dr. R. David Ludwick, President

45, 42, 46; 36; 50+...
These are the numbers of the students in the Masters, Bachelors, Certificate, Riga, and Tyumen programs.

By this article to you, they are asking for your continued prayer and financial support. Because of an actual increase of a number of students in actual programs, from 12-15 students just five years ago, to over 1500 in all the various programs, including the above we ask that you prayerfully consider one or more of the following:

- ◆ providing the opportunity for a local presentation of our Lord's mission work through I.T.E.M. (e.g.: a "perfect providence" potluck supper at the church, a "gathering for coffee," a Sunday school class, a gathering of acquaintances from several churches, a breakfast, or whatever your imagination might lead you to do;
- ◆ organize an opportunity for a presentation of His mission work through I.T.E.M. for local businessmen, philanthropic organizations or organize the same with I.T.E.M. in mind;



Room filled with students and visitors at Riga Reformed Theological Seminary as Dr. Gerard Van Groningen lectures on "What is it to be wholeheartedly Reformed" (October 2001)



Eastern Ukrainian Theological Seminary has theological students in Bible Certificate, Bachelor of Theology and now in Masters of Divinity Programs: from 12-15 students just five years ago, to over 1500 in all the various programs!

- ◆ provide opportunities for friends, church members and acquaintances to share in the harvest, as the opportunities are great and the workers are few. Please do not take this as a plaintiff plea, for when we say the opportunities are great and the laborers are few we are announcing, by His Grace, that there is room for more of you – He makes no mistakes. The very fact that you are reading this article and know of His work through I.T.E.M. is a call on your life, even a prompting to a new and different response as He will and leads you.

While we need your financial support, we solicit your prayers all the more

for it is only by His enablement that we have gotten to where He wants us to be, and it will be by His enablement that He gives you and others opportunities to serve and support; and so we are doing what He wants us to do as we are serving this generation and are preparing for the generations to come.

As He leads, we pray for your response.

RDL, the staff, Board of Directors, pastors/professors, students and those "who will come"...

USA donations and correspondence:
 Post Office Box 31456,
 St. Louis, MO 63131-0456
 Tel.+1.314.568.0174
 Fax:+1.636.861.1613
 e-mail: item@item.org
christforrussiaukraine@juno.com
 internet: www.item.org
www.christforrussia.org

Canadian donations only:
 c/o Action International Ministries
 Post Office Box 280
 Three Hills, Alberta T0M 2A0
 CANADA

R. David Ludwick, J.D., M.Div, President,
 Rodney Gorter, Th.M., Professor, Odessa
 Presbyterian Seminary, Odessa, Ukraine

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Youth Conference in Makeyevka House of Prayer (near Donetsk Ukraine). November 2001. 864 youths (ages 14-23) attended this two and a half-day Conference on relating with the present day culture. These are the future Christian leaders of the post-Soviet Ukraine...

EUTS/DRTC GROWING IN QUALITY AND NUMBERS

*By Rev. Richard Blauw, First CRC of
South Holland, IL*

"It was clear the school was growing and... was acquiring a reputation for being far superior academically to another Bible school in Donetsk."



It's always an adventure getting on the plane from Kiev to Donetsk. The post World War II vintage two engine propeller aircraft with broken seat belts, and threadbare tires, noisily rattles its way down the runway until we are airborne. Despite its rickety condition, it still manages two flights a day between Kiev and Donetsk.

This year, as usual, Sergei Victorovich was late in the meeting me at the airport. Armed with some phone numbers (useless since the airport phone didn't work) and a few gryvnas (Ukrainian currency) I was prepared to take a taxi when he came strolling up the stairs of the terminal and greeted me with a Russian bear hug. It was good to back in Ukraine.

There were approximately 75 to 80 students this year in two classes. The first class was for those seeking a Bible Certificate. The second class was more advanced for students seeking a Bachelor's degree in Theology. It was clear the school was growing and, according to the translators, was acquiring a reputation for being far superior academically to another Bible school in Donetsk, which also had a number of visiting professors from the US. It was difficult to cover as much material in the advance class since there were far more questions and much more discussion.

After working with our two translators for three years (Max and Natasha) it becomes easier to teach since we become more comfortable with each other's translating and teaching

styles. The classes began at 9 a.m. and continued through 4:20 p.m. with a 50-minute break for lunch. On Fridays the school is let out early since the students face 2-6 hour commute on trains or buses back to their towns and villages in the Donetsk region. One student came from beyond the Russian border.

Even though the students were very familiar with the Bible, they did not take a systematic approach to Bible study. As in the past I was able to teach the Heidelberg Catechism which touches on all of the basic Biblical themes. This year, however, we had printed copies of the Catechism in Russian so the questions and answers were easily accessible with the proof texts. This was a great help in teaching since I could ask the students to read from the Russian text. Ramon, a student from last year who was a pastor told me that he used the Catechism in Bible study and in preaching. It gives more depth to their preaching and is certainly useful as a teaching tool. In addition to teaching, we had an opportunity to preach both Sundays. Once in Transfiguration Church in Donetsk and twice in House of Prayer Church in Makeyevka where there was a special Thanksgiving service and a communion service.

There were three pastors this year who shared duties—myself, Rev. Merle Messer, a Presbyterian pastor (PCA) from Jackson, MS and Rev. Roger Sparks, a CRC pastor from Rock Valley, IA. This is the third year I went with Rev. Messer who is also on the Board of International Theological Education Ministries (ITEM, Inc.). Rev. Sparks took a few semesters of Russian in high

school so it proved to be helpful especially in the market place.

The students were delighted with the washcloths, tooth brushes, combs, and personal items we included in the travel kits, which we had assembled. A number of times both officially and informally they asked me to convey their thanks to our church for its concern and generosity. We also had an opportunity to take the ladies in the kitchen shopping one afternoon. This was obviously quite an outing since they all were dressed up and went to the only department store in Donetsk. They bought some pots and pans, a strainer, some other kitchen utensils and a power meat grinder with which they were absolutely delighted. The only food the students would get would be at the school. The menu usually consisted of soup, bread, tea or fruit drink, and rice or pasta dish. Tea and bread in the morning, soup and rice at noon and usually a smaller portion after classes at 4:30 in the afternoon.

What made this trip especially memorable was hearing the news of the tragic events of September 11. Young Sergei was clearly upset when he called with the news. At first we didn't believe it, but later that evening we saw the pictures of the collapse of the World Trade Center on Russian television and listened to the reports on Voice of America (V.O.A.) and the BBC short-wave radio. We had a time of prayer in the apartment and the next day for our Scripture meditation in class considered Romans 8 and Psalm 27. Many of the students expressed their sympathy and were visibly moved by the events in New York and Washington.

With all of the flights grounded the trip home was more eventful than we anticipated. We spent two days in Paris trying to get a flight to the US along with thousands of other stranded Americans. I managed to get on the first flight of an international carrier (Air France) that was allowed to land at O'Hare after the terrorist attack. When the plane landed, everyone broke into applause. I uttered a quiet prayer of thanksgiving. The Lord has protected us. My wife was waiting beyond the customs area. It was good to be back home. ~~~ RB

STEWARDSHIP BEGINS WITH PLANNING NOW!!!

By Glenn Grevengoed, the Barnabas Foundation attorney.

As a member organization of Barnabas Foundation, and as friends of International Theological Education Ministries, Inc. (Christ for Russia, Christ for Ukraine, Christ for Latvia, Christ for Hungary, Christ for Romania) you can take advantage of the financial planning services offered by Barnabas Foundation. **THESE SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE WITHOUT CHARGE TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES WHO ARE SUPPORTERS OF THIS MINISTRY.** The goal of the Barnabas Foundation is to "assist Christian people in extending their lifelong pattern of good Christian stewardship into their wills and estate plans."

Barnabas Foundation has four full time attorneys on staff dedicated to Christian stewardship. These attorneys work exclusively in the area of financial and estate planning and therefore have great expertise in these areas as well as all aspects of charitable giving.

The attorneys from Barnabas Foundation are located in Illinois, Michigan and California, and periodically travel throughout the country to meet with those interested in Christian estate planning. These attorneys give their expertise and concentration on estate planning allowing them to provide you with specific recommendations and innovative ideas that you then bring to your own attorney for preparation of your legal documents. Many people discover that being charitable can also be financially beneficial. This is true not only through tax savings but also by giving gifts...! gifts that provide a current income stream. Examples are gift instruments such as charitable remainder trusts or gift annuities.

Meeting with a Barnabas Foundation representative may also be of special interest if your circumstances



have recently changed due to widowhood, retirement, or as your children reach adulthood and you have an "empty nest". You may also have concerns about what will happen to your family business or farm, etc. in case of your death. Barnabas Foundation representatives have found that people who are selling a business, farm or other asset (that has greatly increased in value over time) often can benefit greatly from legal and financial planning expertise in these matters.

Glenn Grevengoed is the Barnabas Foundation attorney who serves the St. Louis area. We will be happy to put you in contact with Glenn so that you can arrange your own convenient meeting time. You may also simply call the Barnabas Foundation toll free at **(888) 448-3040** and arrange a meeting with Glenn or the attorney in your area. It is a simple and effective means of seeking to be a good steward of the possessions with which God has blessed you.

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**Field Ministry:** ITEM participates in the conducting of five centers for theological education; working within nine curricula or degree programs; serving more than 1500 student (all programs considered); and equips students to be pastors, teachers and lay leaders in His church;

ITEM provides all costs for the programs in Riga, Latvia and Donetsk, Ukraine and participates in the costs of other institutions.

**Home Ministry:** ITEM also conducts *Home Ministries* marshaling our Lord's co-laborers in missions here in the US and Canada.

**Costs:** Our *Administrative* outlay, for example, through the month of November 2001 was 6.56%, our *Home Ministry* outlay was 15.34% and our *Field Ministry* outlay was 78.10%! As you can see *Field and Home Ministries* accounted for 93.44% of our actual expended budget!!

Theological education is a sound investment. The ministry that we share with you as co-laborers bears much fruit – numerous congregations are served by our students and some 50 churches have been planted as a result of their efforts! All this is by His grace, including your participation. We pray, as He leads, that our ministry together will ever be recognized to be His and that the bounty that He provides us is an opportunity to share in the costs which are also His. We are, then, His grateful "second causes and means."

# THE BUSINESS OF PLANTING SEMINARIES; THE BUSINESS OF COST.



By Dr. R. David Ludwick, President

Unfortunately, this business of planting seminaries does involve the business of cost.

Fortunately, the "costs" are almost totally related to finances and expenditure of one's personal time. As regards to the matter of personal time - this we delight to call ministry, and we do it zealously for its own rewards.

Ministry then is our most important object, effort, and cost.

Financial costs seem to be a necessary concomitant to the accomplishment of the objectives and goals of ministry.

But it is His ministry, not ours. And so we know that the cost is His also. He often chooses to work through "second causes" or "means." That means you and I, and that is one way that He does "ministry" – through us! This is also how He administers the cost of ministry, that is by second causes or means!

He makes no mistakes. His plan is perfect. You have received this newsletter and are reading this article for a reason, which He has given you only you know whether it is ministry or support or both. But because He makes no mistakes, your reading this is no mistake either!

And so His mission mandate on your life to serve or to send is a part of the reason why you are reading these paragraphs, the other part is what you will do about it.