

Equipping Reliable Leaders in
Sound Doctrine
in

Russia
Ukraine
Latvia
Hungary
Romania

Summer 2002
Volume 5, Issue 2

Training Shepherds in the
countries of the former Soviet
Block

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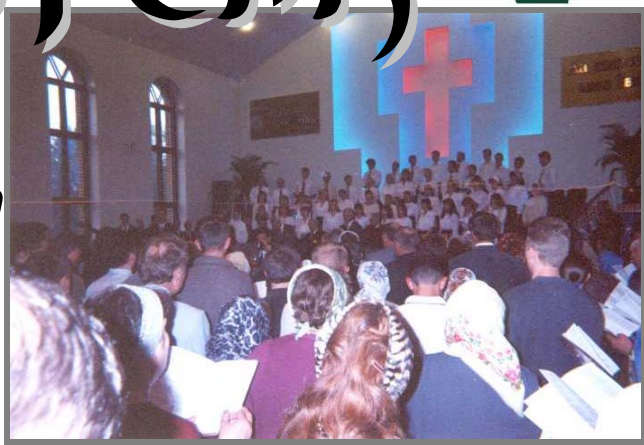
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International Theological Education
Ministries, Inc
P.O. Box 31456
St. Louis, MO 63131

NEWSITEMS

Summer Edition

POWER IN THE PULPIT HOMILETICS CONFERENCE – AN UPDATE



Every year brings even more pastors and lay leaders to hear and learn from the lectures at semi-annual Power in the Pulpit Preaching Conference in Donetsk Ukraine. This May of 2002 the number of attendees reached 1031!

By Dr. R. David Ludwick, ITEM
President

"Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; Sing the glory of His name; Make His praise glorious. Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Because of the greatness of Your power Your enemies will give feigned obedience to You. "All the earth will worship You, and will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name." Come and see the works of God, Who is awesome in His deeds toward the sons of men. He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot; there let us rejoice in Him! He rules by His might forever; His eyes keep watch on the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves." Ps. 66:1-9

Power in the Pulpit Homiletics Conference grows by leaps and bounds. Started two years ago with some 500+ attendees at the week long preaching conference when 300 were anticipated and grew to a 1031 in May 2002.

Dr. Joel Nederhood, Dr. Robert den Dulk, Dr. Dennis Johnson, Dr. David Ludwick, Rev. Sergei Karpenko labor to make this activity one of signal uniqueness in the history of the former soviet union. Provided with prayer warriors and dedicated financial supporters this homiletics conference stands with the masters and bachelors programs in eastern Ukraine as beacons of truth both in substance and in methodology.

Your help is needed:

1. prayer for continued supply of veteran and new professors for the various programs in Ukraine, Latvia, Siberia and Romania;
2. for the specific prayers of those who support their pastors as professors whom they send to teach in the various schools;
3. for accurate translations of reformed theological literature and for the funds to accomplish the translations;
4. for the prayerful support of administration of I.T.E.M. and the logistics and costs of accomplishing its mission mandate;
5. for new professors to be added to the roster so that programs may grow and be peopled with competent and Bible loving and fearing pastors for all of the schools;
6. prayer for the generations to come, that they might hear and see lived out the truths of the word of God in the lives of those whom he sends to our schools;
7. for the deposit of books – reformed theological literature – by agreement with the Ukrainian government into schools, public libraries and the universities throughout the country.

Dr. R. David Ludwick
August 2002

HOMILETICS COURSE AT RRTS, MAY 2002



Article material by Artis Celmins, RRTS Administrative Director, edited by Andre Bouravnev, ITEM Director of Publications

As part of Riga Reformed Theological Seminary Master's degree program, Rev. Stephen Estock (the Kirk of the Hills Presbyterian Church (PCA) in St. Louis, MO and a graduate of Covenant Theological Seminary) taught a Homiletics course during a teaching session of May 22-31, 2002. The course was based on the materials from Bryan Chapell's "Christ-centered Preaching," an outstanding text-book on biblical preaching. Each student received a copy of the book at the end of the class. The class lasted nine full days and culminated with a final examination and an additional expository sermon preparation for those taking the course for credit.

Among the students who attended the class were pastors from local congregations with some years of preaching experience. They, among other students, could greatly appreciate the importance of expository preaching and its vital significance in modern day sermon preparation and delivery as it is a wonderful tool for expounding the great truths of the Scripture. Rev. Estock received numerous questions and comments from the students excited about the course that would help them apply the truths of Scripture through the use of the Scriptural technique proven to be an effective tool by many a pastor.

The course was of particular interest for Riga pastors and those who prepare for pastoral ministry, nonetheless, many other students attending the class saw the material of the class especially useful in teaching or even in presenting the Gospel at work or at home. There was an additional benefit in the fact that Rev. Estock delivered expository sermons in two churches on Sunday between the study-weeks and the students could see practical implications of the classroom material, analyze and discuss the sermons during the classes.

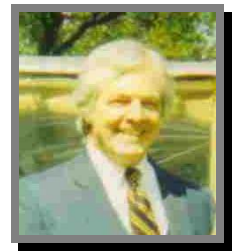


Rev. Stephen Estock (the Kirk of the Hills Presbyterian Church (PCA) in St. Louis, MO) and pastor Dupurs of Riga, Latvia having a Q&A discussion on the practical application of expository preaching

During the classes the interaction with students was helpful, as many would have questions regarding preparation of the sermons or application of the newly acquired materials at the pulpit. A set of meetings was arranged outside the usual evening class periods to accommodate a group of local pastors to discuss any questions that arose regarding the preaching as well as other matters of pastoral ministry.

Artis Celmins,
RRTS Administrative Director
May 2002

BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS!



Books... Books...

An important element in our Lord's ministry through I.T.E.M. is the provision of good Reformed theological literature to the people whom we serve. Several booklists are being accumulated. One that has more than 300 entries. One is already being translated into Russian, including works by John Owen, J.I. Packer, R.C. Sproul, Charles H. Spurgeon, et. al.

I.T.E.M. has prepared a listing of books to be purchased and anticipates a cost for these three hundred plus books of approximately \$700! **THAT IS ALMOST \$2** per each of these solid theological works, which have already proven to be a priceless source for ministry, service and personal daily walk in the Lord for many in the English speaking world.

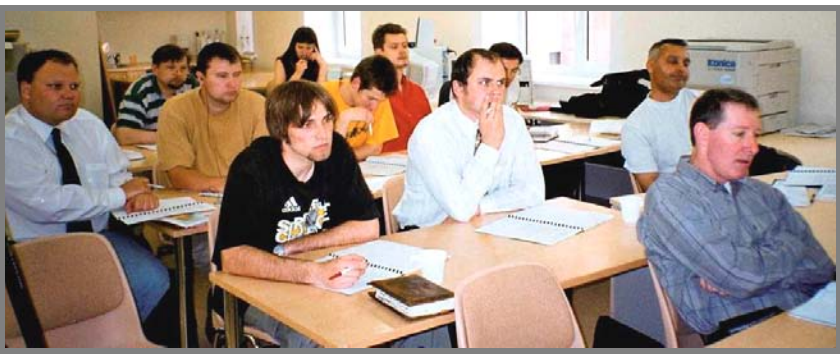
These books will be used by the Masters, Bachelors and Bible Certificate programs, as their library and resource materials are slowly growing...! We and they have been waiting for this time for 9 years! Praise the Lord for His faithfulness!

In addition to the acquisition of these books we are undertaking the translation of the Covenant Family by Gerard Van Groningen; John R. De Witt's book What is the Reformed Faith, being also under present consideration.

On a related note, Dr. Ludwick and I.T.E.M. joined Rev. Rod Gorter in joining International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education (I.A.P.C.H.E.), whose purpose is to serve Jesus as Lord by fostering the worldwide development of integral Christian higher education through networking and related academic activity. It is an organization of international theologians whose primary purposes include but are not limited to networking so as to avoid redundancy of efforts.

We believe this affiliation when added to others like East-West Ministries provide a vehicle though which efforts by numerous organizations can be enhanced by the focus of many minds rather than a few working separately.

Dr. R. David Ludwick



Students at RRTS listen to final instructions before the final exam for Homiletics class taught by Rev. Estock

ITEM APPROVED BY CRWM!

At its recent synodical meeting International Theological Education Ministries, Inc. was named to the list of Christian Reformed World Missions approved missions for contributions. C.R.W.M., in its administration of the responsibility and funds given to it, exercises judicial stewardship and displays appropriate zeal for missions and stewardship in these matters. It is diligent in its pursuit of the approval of qualified mission efforts and organizations.

On behalf of the students in the various school and the generations who will receive the benefit of their theological education all who serve Him through I.T.E.M., "Thank you!" and look forward to a long and fruitful relationship as we co-labor together in His service!

It is also important to note here that C.R.W.M. renewed partnering agreement with I.T.E.M. in its combined ministry with Rod Gorter in advancing the cause of theological education in Ukraine and its neighboring countries.

A MISSIONARY'S ROUTINE?

Rev. Gorter, Th. M., a CRC pastor and I.T.E.M.'s first full-time field professor serves in the capacity of professor/visiting lecturer in numerous colleges, institutes and seminaries throughout the countries of the former Soviet Union.

His job description while originally very particularized to organizing theological education for the emerging Christian schools has expanded to include the following.

- Teaching – Donetsk (Masters program at Eastern Ukrainian Theological Seminary and Bachelors and Bible Certificate programs at Donetsk Regional Theological College) and other locations (conferences, courses);
- Field contact person – phone/email communication, planning, etc.



Rev. Rod Gorter in front of the Central Church of Evangelical Christians Baptists of Makeyevka where the Power in the Pulpit Conferences and regular Eastern Ukrainian Theological Seminary classes are held.

- Reports (financial, ministry, etc.) – keeping records, writing and sending reports.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ukraine – Odessa – Church Developer.

- Meet with key leaders for weekly discipleship, counseling, ministry issues, etc.;
- Meet with session and deaconate regularly as a consultant/advisor;
- Church planning assistance (coming in groups, building issues, ministries, particularization, etc.);
- Liaison with American short-term groups

EPCU – Belgorod, Izmail – Church Developer

Evangelical Reformed Seminary of Ukraine

- Teaching and facilitating courses;
- Mentoring and follow-up with students (tutorials, phone/email contacts, etc.)
- Board Member

Proto-Presbytery

- Credentials Committee (overseeing licensing and ordination procedures);
- Participation in semi-annual meetings;
- Missionary consultant on Presbytery Diaconal Committee;

- Consulting with other church leaders (specific questions – diaconal, pastoral, theological, etc.)

(Miscellaneous)

- Monthly updates to supporters;
- Hosting visitors (Ukrainian, American, other missionaries);
- Church/supporters resource finding assistance

As you can see Rev. professor Gorter is a busy missionary! The time may be short, but the harvest is ready and the laborers are few. Won't you consider sending your pastor to work with I.T.E.M. as a professor. And in your sending, make it part of your mission mandate to train pastors/teachers and lay leaders so that even if the window of opportunity for evangelism and theological education in the countries of the former Soviet block should close, the work will go on, and national leaders themselves will have been equipped for the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Dr. R. David Ludwick
August 2002

USA donations and correspondence:
P.O. 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
P.O. 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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THE MISSION OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

By Rev. Scott Churnock, Covenant of Grace Presbyterian Church (PCA)

"As I began each day's lectures in Dontesk, I looked at the faces of my students and reminded myself that each of these men are pastors or future pastors. These students are already impacting the lives of hundreds of people. As I looked at the faces of the 75 believers, I was able to see the thousands that these would someday reach for Christ. "

Having had the privilege to teach twice at the Donetsk Region Theological College in Donetsk, Ukraine, and anticipating a third teaching term in October, I have been able to experience firsthand the strategic place the ministry of theological education plays in evangelism and church planting. When we in the West think of "missions", we usually envision a young couple sensing God's call to the "foreign field" going through the process of language and culture training, raising support (both prayer and financial), cutting ties with friends and family, packing up only the essentials, and moving to a new country and culture where they seek to minister as aliens and outsiders. Sometimes it takes years for them to see any discernable fruit from their labors for Christ.

In many areas of the world, this "traditional" approach to missions is the only way for the Gospel to be introduced. But in other places, this kind of missions strategy is both ineffective and inefficient. Such is the case in many of the countries of the former Soviet Union. Until about 10 years ago, with the demise of the Soviet Union, it was illegal to practice and propagate Christianity. The great atheistic empire of the Soviet Union was closed to all missionary activity.

But the Holy Spirit works even where the political doors are closed. During the Soviet regime, Christ was building His church and calling His people to faith even in the face of opposition and persecution. When the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union disintegrated, the believers in Russia, Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, and the other former Soviet countries, now experienced a new freedom to practice and promote their faith openly and freely. Within these countries a strong, vibrant, evangelistic Church exists. These dear saints have a passionate love for Christ and intense desire to reach their fellow countrymen with the Gospel. What they lack are training and resources.

This is where the mission of theological education comes in. We could send Western missionaries into Ukraine using the traditional method of support raising, language and culture training, then plant them in an unfamiliar city and pray for them as they seek to evangelize and plant a church as "foreigners." Or we could focus our efforts and resources on providing the theological training Ukrainian believers need to plant solid, vibrant, biblically sound and evangelistically focused churches. As one pastor in Ukraine said to me, "we don't need you to send missionaries. We need you to train us, so that we can do the work." This is the mission of ITEM. Instead of merely putting a handful of Western missionaries on the field, ITEM is committed to training hundreds of church leaders who will in turn reach thousands of their countrymen with the Gospel. This is already being done. Each year scores of churches are planted by students and graduates of the two schools in Dontesk, Ukraine,

which are sponsored and staffed by ITEM. As I began each day's lectures in Dontesk, I looked at the faces of my students and reminded myself that each of these men are pastors or future pastors. These students are already impacting the lives of hundreds of people. As I looked at the faces of the 75 believers, I was able to see the thousands that these would someday reach for Christ. What a humbling privilege it is to realize that through my 2 weeks of lectures and lessons I was having an impact on the future generations of believers in Ukraine. When I return to Donetsk in October (Lord willing) I will be excited to hear of the many who have come to faith during the past year and the number of new churches planted through the efforts of these dear students. Whenever anyone questions me as to the importance of theological education in missions, I simply tell them the story of the believers in Ukraine.

**Rev. Scott Churnock
August 2002**



Classes at the Donetsk school – May 2002: above, class break, ITEM professor Rev. Perry Tinklenberg among students asking questions; left, Bible Certificate Class, Rev. Norman Haan teaching OT Survey Introduction.