

Equipping Reliable Leaders in  
Sound Doctrine  
in

Russia  
Ukraine  
Latvia  
Hungary  
Romania

Winter 2002  
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Training Shepherds in the  
countries of the former Soviet  
Block

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### !!! Needed !!!

1. **Student stipends \$50-75 each per month;**
2. **Library fund – 323 Reformed Theological books in Russian for \$740;**
3. **Professor sponsorship - \$3500 per term – 24 per year;**
4. **Prayers for the existing schools and the new schools in Romania and Siberia**

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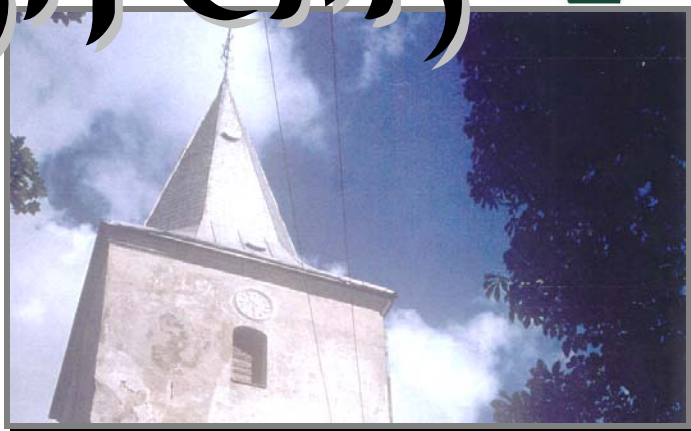
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# NEWSITEMS



## Winter Edition

### RRTS WORK EXPANDS INTO LITHUANIA



Reformed Church in Lithuanian town of Papilys, where the Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church elders, Rev. Larry Sibley and representatives from Riga Reformed Theological Seminary held a meeting regarding the program offered in Riga

By Artis Celmins, RRTS Administrative Director, Riga Latvia

**RRTS, which is based in Riga, Latvia, has been expanding its work in its neighbor country – Lithuania. It has been the vision of RRTS from the beginning to serve students of the three Baltic countries (Estonia being third of them) and this year it has come much closer to reality.**

#### Contact with Lithuania Christian College

A delegation of Riga Reformed Theological Seminary Board, including the Dean and Director visited Lithuania Christian College (LCC) in the neighboring country. It is a Liberal Arts college, run by Christian management, staff and faculty. Altogether there are 550 students at the school; it has a Bachelor's degree program in Theology. The purpose of the visit was to get acquainted with the people at LCC and to inform LCC about the existence and work of RRTS. One of the main ideas was that LCC could potentially recommend their Bachelor's graduates to come for Master's degree studies at RRTS. The delegation met with the President - Jim Mininger, Academic Dean - David Shenk, and the head of Theology Department - Steve Van Zanen.

The good results are that LCC, being the largest and nearly the only school teaching theology from evangelical perspective in Lithuania, is now aware of the current degree program in Riga. It was tentatively agreed that RRTS delegation would come back and present the study opportunities at RRTS to LCC last-year theology students. Other cooperation possibilities were discussed, including

the possibility of cooperation on professors who arrive to teach at both of these institutions.

#### Contact with the Evangelical Reformed Church in Lithuania (ERCL)

At the second half of the year RRTS established a better contact with the Evangelical Reformed Church in Lithuania (ERCL) – the historical Reformed denomination, now consisting of 12 congregations, which is struggling after the years of Soviet devastation. Despite the number of well-kept church buildings, recognition by the government and the historical congregations (a congregation in the neighboring republic of Belarus also belongs to ERCL), there are only 3 pastors and there hasn't been any theological training available during the past years. In addition to that, liberal theological trends are on their way of splitting the denomination. In several meetings with Algimantas Kvedaravicius, the vice-president of ERCL Synod Collegium, RRTS board has been working out ways of how RRTS could effectively offer training and help ERCL. Since July 2002 two Lithuanian students have entered the Riga program with financial support from RRTS (transport, accommodation in Riga).

#### Lithuanian Pastor Joins the Board of RRTS

In October 7 Board meeting of RRTS, Algimantas Kvedaravicius, pastor and Vice-President of Synod of ERCL was elected an associate member of the Board of RRTS. He called RRTS "the only hope" for the declining

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## TRAINING SHEPHERDS OF GOD'S FLOCK IN THE BALTICS

*By Westminster Theological Seminary  
Professor Larry Sibley, teaching pastoral care at RRTS, Riga Latvia*

**I left Riga a little after sunrise on an early winter morning, having just completed about 24 hours of evening classes in eight days at Riga Reformed Theological Seminary, with 15-20 students most evenings. Half-dozen working pastors were in the group, plus small group/Bible study leaders, worship leaders, and others with shepherding roles in Riga churches. Two Lithuanian pastors came, from a Reformed synod that goes back to the sixteenth century.**

Jesus told Peter, "Feed my sheep." We spent our evenings exploring what that means, biblically, historically and practically. On the last evening we considered small groups, with their four components of worship, nurture, fellowship, and mission, as a means of primary pastoral care and of mission to the city. Three small groups had met throughout the course, discussing the role of spiritual disciplines in the life of those with shepherding roles in the church. Other evenings looked at shared urban ministry and diaconal care in sixteenth-century Geneva in order to take away some lessons we could re-contextualize in twenty-first-century Baltic nations. Other, contemporary models were looked at for wisdom.

We started with John 21:15-17 and explored its Johannine and Old Testament contexts for a couple of evenings, discovering the biblical dimensions of pastoral care. John 6 especially showed us Jesus the master shepherd feeding his flock: bread and fish for hungry people, symbolic of his death for them, followed by teaching (food of a different sort). It was those insights we sought to shape into a practical approach to the complexities of shepherding today's believers.

One morning in Lithuania, I lectured

on pastoral care lessons from the Old Testament to about 90 people in a country church: pastors, elders from around the country, and much of the local flock. They had heard that there was to be a visitor coming to speak to the synod (about 15 men) and when we drove in from Riga, the churchyard was filled with people. Hasty plans were being made to use the unheated sixteenth century church, since the heated building was too small. So, I lectured in out of the wind, but it was still only 35 degrees (about 3 centigrade!).

The Latvia Reformed church, active 1722-1952 in Riga, disappeared during

## RRTS WORK EXPANDS INTO LITHUANIA

*(continued from page one)*

ERCL to revive and possible cooperation plan was discussed.

### Lecture and Presentation of RRTS Given at Elders Meeting of Lithuania Reformed Church by Rev. Larry Sibley

On November 2, during a session of lectures by Rev. Larry Sibley (lecturer at Westminster Theological Seminary) in



**Standing:** (from left to right): Jim Mininger (President of LCC), Ungars Gulbis (RRTS), Larry Stout (RRTS).  
**Sitting:** (from left to right): Donatas Ramonas (Th. Professor at LCC), David Shenk (Dean of LCC), Steve Van Zanen (Head of Theology Department), Dainis Smits, Artis Celmins, Alvis Sauka (RRTS).

the Soviet era (1945-91) and is starting over, three congregations strong. To develop leadership for the churches of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, RRTS ([www.rrts.edu.lv](http://www.rrts.edu.lv)) was begun almost five years ago. Guest professors, largely from United States seminaries and pastorates, have covered a comprehensive curriculum of biblical studies, systematic and historical theology, and pastoral theology. The school has a regional vision: equipping pastors and other leaders for the Baltic and Scandinavian churches. They are searching for their first full-time, resident professor to assist in the next level of development.

This is a strategic ministry and I appreciate so much the partnership of Christians in the United States, making these two weeks possible. The seminary class sent me off on the last evening with a couple of CDs by Baltic composers Prteris Vasks and Arvo Pärt, plus greetings to all of you and pleas for deepening ties with other Reformed churches in the United States.

Riga, a visit was made to a small Lithuanian town of Papily, where ERCL elders meeting was held in a local Reformed church building. Larry Sibley gave a lecture and representatives of RRTS gave a presentation about the school and the program offered in Riga, to raise an interest and supply information.

### Vision: RRTS the official training institution of ERCL

It is planned that some of the professors arriving to Riga to teach M.A. courses may travel to Lithuania to give short lectures during weekend, to make them available to the potential students there who are not yet ready to enter M.A. program in Riga.

By offering the training on several levels, it would be a start for RRTS to become the training institution of the Lithuania Church.

**Artis Celmins, December 2002**

## TYUMEN BIBLE COLLEGE OPENS!

By EPC Missionary Jim Foote (Footprints, International)

**"After several years of dreaming, planning and praying, the Tyumen Bible College got off to a flying start on Monday September 16, 2002. There were smiles, warm hearts, songs, speeches and congratulations all around during the opening festivities at the Tyumen Cultural Educational Center where the classes were held."**

This first session of the college was very intensive for the students, the professors and the interpreters. Two (3 credit hour) courses were presented during the two-week (12-day) session - Biblical Theological Orientation was taught by Rev. Don Galardi and Hermeneutics was taught by Dr. Warren Lammers. There were eight hours of lectures during the day on Monday through Friday and four hours on Saturday morning. The students were then given two weeks to study for the two final exams. We are very pleased to report that twenty-four students passed both examinations and will continue with the program on a for credit basis. Other students will continue to audit courses. We give thanks to our Lord that He has provided this many people who are willing and able to study His word in this very serious manner.

The next session of the Tyumen Bible College will be held during the last two weeks of February 2003. Again, two (3 credit hour) courses will be presented. Old Testament Survey will be taught by Dr. Randy Brown from Military Avenue Presbyterian Church in Detroit, Michigan. New Testament Survey will be taught by Dr. David Brown from Ward Presbyterian Church in Northville, Michigan.

There will be three sessions of the Tyumen Bible College each year. Each session will last for two weeks and will include two (3 credit hour) courses. The current course schedule for the remainder of 2003 and for 2004 is as follows:

- May 2003 - Doctrine of God / Doctrine of Man;
- October 2003 - Doctrine of Christ and Salvation / Ecclesiology;



Participating in the ribbon cutting ceremony were (from left to right): Pastor Vladimir Chernyavsky (Pastor of Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church in Tyumen); Dr. Warren Lammers (Pastor of Second Christian Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan); Rev. Donald Galardi (Pastor of Community Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Owosso, Michigan); Irina Anisimova (Administrator of the Tyumen Bible College); Jim Foote (Field Director for Footprints International); Pastor Pavel Mochalkin (Pastor of Spiritual Renewal Baptist Church in Tyumen); Pastor Andrei Knyazhev (Pastor of Good News Pentecostal Church in Tyumen).

- February 2004 - Eschatology / Homiletics;
- May 2004 - General Church History I / Personal Spiritual Development;
- October 2004 - Worship and Pastoral Theology / Missions and Evangelism.

There is a current need for professors for future sessions of the Tyumen Bible College. If you have an M.Div. or equivalent and feel that the Lord may be leading you to teach a class at the Tyumen Bible College and would like more information please contact:

*Dr. David Ludwick - President of ITEM (International Theological Education Ministries)*

*Email: christforrussiaukraine@juno.com*

*Phone: (314) 861-1870*

or

*Mr. Ronald Restum - President of FPI (Footprints, International) Email: Mission-Point@cac.net Phone- (810) 229-6758*

The city of Tyumen is the capital of the Tyumen Region, which is just east of the Ural Mountains in western Siberia and is approximately the size of the eastern United States. The city is approximately 1000 miles east of Moscow and has a population over 800,000 people. Tyumen was established in 1586 as a Russian frontier fortress on the Tura River and since that time the city has served as the gateway to Siberia for European Russia.

Tyumen has for some time been a strategic center for commerce, education and the arts. As a result of the recent development of large reserves of oil and gas in the northern parts of the Tyumen Region, the city is enjoying an economic surge. There are several non-stop flights daily between Moscow and Tyumen.

**Jim Foote  
December  
28, 2002**



*Classes are well under way at the Tyumen Bible College*

# LETTERS OF APPRECIATION FROM UKRAINIAN STUDENTS

*By the students of Eastern Ukrainian Theological Seminary, Donetsk Ukraine, to all those who share this ministry in the Lord Jesus Christ*

**"I am grateful to the Lord that He found me in this world and put me on the way of truth, gave me salvation through repentance. I'm thankful for grace and opportunity to study at the Seminary under God's refuge; I also appreciate brothers' self-sacrifice and financial support. We ask you to continue to help us. Sincerely Yours, brother in Christ Leonid."**

**(Leonid Nikolayevich Shapovalenko, student at EUTS, B.A. in Church Service)**

**Igor Klochko, student of Bachelor's in Church Service Program at EUTS:**

"I thank God for His special care and mercy to His children. The 14-th session is over now and I come back home with new knowledge and humility before the Almighty Creator. Being a pastor in the church, I need to study the Bible and my education helps me a lot. I'm grateful to all the professors who teach at the Seminary and also to those who make our education possible. I'm obliged to people who support this ministry materially. My wife stayed at hospital for three month, but I didn't miss my classes, even though my two little children (9 years and 9 months) had to stay at home. Material support, that the Seminary gets, played important role in it. The Lord bless you all! Please, pray for us. In prayer for you all in Christ,

Brother Igor."

**Valery Lobko, preacher and student of Bachelor's in Church Service Program at EUTS:**

"I thank you, brothers and sisters,



for your hearts, sensitive to the Holy Spirit. You have become our sponsors and gave brothers and sisters chance to penetrate deeper in studying God's Word. We see abundant grace of our Savior Jesus Christ in it, so that through this education we could put on the full armor of God and bring the Gospel to the world. Knowledge, received at the Seminary, helps us not only in Church, but also outside of it.

May the Lord bless you abundantly, so that you could work for Glory of our God,

Valery Lobko."

**Leonid Verlan, student of Bachelor's in Church Service Program at EUTS:**

"I'm joyful for the blessed opportunity to study at the feet of Jesus, when we receive brothers, coming from abroad, who devoted themselves to God and share not only their knowledge with us, but also their hearts full of sharing. I have an opportunity to preach in my Church in town of Torez. Professors that came to us also added to it. May the merciful God bless you,

as you make contributions for us, and not only during our sessions.

Praying of you, with great appreciation to our Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, brother in Christ, Leonid Verlan."

**Alexander Goyunov, student of Bachelor's in Church Service Program at EUTS:**

"I serve as a pastor at "Hope" Church in the city

of Bryansk.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! We sincerely thank you for your work in Ukraine and help to know and understand God's Word and use it in our life. Your service is of great importance for us as there are very few seminaries in Ukraine, besides we have a difficult economic situation in this country. Praise the Lord, for He gives us many churches, but alas there aren't many educated prepared servants in them. We clearly see your love and devotedness to the work of Christ. You help us spiritually – with wonderful professors, and you also support us materially. This strictly ordered system of education we cannot organize in Ukraine ourselves so far, thus, we hope that you will support us in the future and contribute to the further extension of the Kingdom of our God Jesus Christ.

May the Lord bless you abundantly! With love from all the students of the Seminary and our Churches."

**Students at DRTC/EUTS, November 15, 2002**

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