

Equipping Reliable Leaders in
Sound Doctrine
in

Russia
Ukraine
Latvia
Hungary
Romania

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Training Shepherds in the
countries of the former Soviet
Block

Inside this Issue

- 1 THE LORD'S ONGOING WORK: WALES REPORT
- 2 FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES IN FSU AND BEYOND
- 3 POLAND REPORT
- 4 ROMANIA REPORT

We offer you an opportunity to share in the preparation of His Bride... there is room for you! Please prayerfully consider your participation in His work through ITEM, and call or write us.

International Theological Education
Ministries, Inc
P.O. Box 31456
St. Louis, MO 63131
Tel.: (314) 568-0174
Email: item@item.org

NEWSITEMS

Winter Edition

THE LORD'S ONGOING WORK

By Dr. R. David Ludwick, ITEM
President



Meeting with Polish Christian leaders ITEM seeks to meet the needs of equipping pastors and teachers and lay leaders in the former Soviet block

In this newsletter we bring to you reports from several countries. This first part includes field reports from Poland, Romania and Wales. The second part to follow in the next newsletter will be reporting on Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

Wales, United Kingdom:

As ITEM turns its attention to potentially developing a new program in Poland, it was necessary to secure information regarding the efforts of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales particularly directed at securing advanced Reformed Theological Education in Wroclaw, Poland. For that reason I met with Rev. Dr. Peter J. Naylor, pastor of the Llandaff Presbyterian Church, Cardiff, Wales. Dr. Naylor has earned a Ph.D. from Oxford and frequently travels to attend and give conferences on Reformed Theological Education. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church is a part of the denomination made up of seven churches.

During several meetings, more than a few other interested persons joined in the information exchange regarding the experience and undertakings in Poland. I learned that some students had come from Poland to study in the Reformed program in Cardiff. Moreover, contacts have been made and assistance sought of the UK Presbytery, which appears to be unable to give substantial assistance or faculty for establishment of a school in Poland, other than an occasional conference in the UK (which is quite

costly for those making the jaunt). Additional meetings were also held with representatives of the John Lasky Trust and some expectation was given with regard to funding students to come to Wales from Poland or possibly to fund a Polish program.

Conclusively, communications were then established via the Welsh work with the Polish works, which led to trips to Wroclaw, Poznan and Warsaw to assess the situation first hand. This introduction to the works in Poland was invaluable. It gave some credibility to Rev. Scott Churnock and me for the meetings attended. Peter Naylor has had direct influence on the men, needs, and activities in all three Polish cities and gave invaluable insight regarding the method by which credibility could be most efficiently and expeditiously accomplished. Incidentally, he was sincerely impressed with ITEM's vision and potential and, as a result, he asked if ITEM would be interested in establishing a work in Wales! This is our fourth invitation outside of the countries of the former Soviet Union to come and train pastors, teachers and lay leaders.

Dr. R. David Ludwick, December 2003

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION AND BEYOND

By Dr. R. David Ludwick, ITEM President

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I am taking the opportunity to write to you with some great and exciting news! Since our last newsletter, I have traveled through nine countries in Eastern and Western Europe investigating opportunities for expanding existing Reformed theological education programs and establishing new ones. The following will give you an idea of the opportunities which we anticipate will become available in the upcoming year:

1. Romania.

- *Reformed Theological Institute (Bucharest).*

It was formed approximately ten years ago and numbers ten to twenty students, who, as my personal experience shows, are inquisitive, engaging, and well instructed. The Institute has good apartment accommodations right on its premises too. RTI is beginning with a new class as of October and the opportunities to teach virtually any Bible College/Seminary level course are very good.

Funds needed include round trip and local transportation, accommodations, meals – approximately \$2,500-3,500 per term. Translators are provided locally.

- *Maranatha Bible College (Campina).*

It comes to fifteen to twenty five students regularly attending classes, whose age ranges from teens to seventy year olds, well-read and adding Reformed theology to their Arminian roots. Maranatha is approximately sixty per cent through its curriculum, so that the course selection opportunities for ITEM professors are a bit more limited.

Funds needed include round trip tickets, and local transportation, accommodations, meals, translators – approximately \$2,500-3,000 per term.

2. Latvia.

- *Riga Reformed Theological Seminary (Riga).*

Its students are not only well-read but many of them have advanced degrees in various areas – twenty students, four of them pastors of Reformed churches in various locations in Riga. RRTS is also about sixty per cent through its curriculum and it has ITEM professors substantially booked up through the next two years, thanks to the Lord's provisions and your prayerful and financial support.

Funds needed include round trip tickets, and local transportation, accommodations, meals, translators – approximately \$4,000-5,000 per term.

3. Lithuania.

- *Vilnius.*

The city is a site of a new work, possibly to begin in 2004 with fifteen to twenty five students, with accommodations and classrooms provided in church facilities. The students are eager to learn, inquisitive as they are just beginning to be instructed in Reformed theology, though they are well educated in various areas, and many of them hold advanced degrees. As I already mentioned this is a new and developing work, and so the opportunities are at their broadest.

Anticipated costs include round trip tickets, local transportation (minimal), accommodations (minimal), meals, and translators – approximately \$2,200 per term.

4. Poland.

- *Poznan.*

The city has a base of approximately ten to twelve students gathered around a literate, well-instructed Reformed leadership core who are desirous of both informal and formal instruction for the purpose of growing existing congregations and planting new Reformed churches. This is a new work and will begin with the most basic of subjects and methodologies.

Funds needed include round trip tickets and local transportation, accommodations, meals – approximately \$2,500-3,000 per term. Translators are provided locally.

- *Wroclaw.*

Similarly to Poznan, it has a base of fifteen to twenty students around a core of well-educated Reformed leaders eager to establish Reformed school for the purpose of educating the existing churches and starting new ones. This is also a new work in need of basic course teaching and curriculum development.

Funds needed include round trip tickets and local transportation, accommodations, meals – approximately \$2,500-3,000 per term. Translators are provided locally.

- *Warsaw.*

In the same way, the capital city numbers fifteen to twenty five students, ready to learn and gathered around a solid core of Christian leaders with a vision of founding a Reformed school in the heart of Poland.

Funds needed include round trip tickets and local transportation, accommodations, meals – approximately \$2,500-3,000 per term. Translators are provided locally.

(continued on page 3)



Dr. Ludwick meeting with Algimantas Kverdaravicius (on the right), pastor of Lithuania Reformed Church, regarding a new Reformed school in the region

“Future Opportunities”

(continued from page 2)

5. Ukraine.**- Kiev Christian University (Kiev).**

It presents opportunities to teach theology at the university level in the faculty of theology. Students are bright, engaging, and tend to be in preparation for ministry, rather than academia exclusively.

Funds needed include round trip tickets and local transportation, accommodations, meals – approximately \$3,000 per term. Translators are provided locally.

- Bible Institute/College (eight miles outside of Kiev).

The institute has twenty to thirty students, primarily preparing for ministry, as part of the All-Ukrainian Evangelical Christians/Baptist Union program. They are eager to acquire a Christian world and life view theology and stand out as having substantially memorized numerous Scripture passages. This tradition is echoing times of persecution when the Bible was had to get by and under penalty of a ten year imprisonment, so that Scripture memorization was a way of safely passing on the Holy Writ.

A start up projection on initial expenses for organization, administrator, etc. amounts to \$1,500-2,000. Once operational, funds needed include round trip tickets and local transportation, accommodations, meals – approximately \$2,500 per term. Translators are provided locally.

As you can see, a potential for teaching opportunities at virtually every level exists in several locations and we are enthusiastic about passing this along to you as we hope to match your personal missions mandate, as well as your church's, with the opportunities in the field.

As you are aware, we seek to serve in the countries where we work, not seeking to impress a Western paradigm on a non-compatible culture, but together to share information that will make obvious real needs and ways to meet them.

I look forward to seeing these works (the ones already in progress and the new ones) develop into strong schools of solid and Reformed theological training, as I solicit the prayers of God's people to fill these opportunities efficiently and without delay, and on a long-term basis.

We look forward to laboring together, as there is room for more...! (Luke 10)
Remaining in His Service and in Yours,

Dr. R. David Ludwick, December 2003

POLAND REPORT

*By Dr. R. David Ludwick, ITEM
President*

Scott Churnock and I (David Ludwick) traveled to Poland to meet with the representatives of three Reformed groups from the cities of Warsaw, Poznan and Wroclaw. This field trip was spurred by Rev. Dr. Peter Naylor of Cardiff, Wales, whose presbytery has interests in the establishment and perpetuation of Reformed Theological Education of pastors, teachers, and lay leaders there – the type ITEM supplies.

The Evangelical Reformed Church in Wroclaw is in a serious minority position vis-à-vis the Roman Catholics, Baptists, and Lutherans. The church in Wroclaw started in 1996 as a mission of a Baptist church in that city. It was originally an enterprise of the principal at the Bible Theological Seminary in Wroclaw. Interestingly enough it was entrusted to a co-worker who happened to be a Calvinist/Van Tilian and he began to influence the student body accordingly. Challenged by the new thinking and pursuing Reformed principles, the church left the Baptist Union and became the Evangelical Reformed Church in Wroclaw. Assistance in the form of theological education and access to the UK schools came through Peter Naylor's Llandaff Presbyterian Church in Cardiff, Wales. The Evangelical Reformed Church in Wroclaw now serves a number of students and the movement is spreading from Wroclaw to Poznan and Warsaw! These churches have organized conferences, Christian summer camps, and Reformation Day meetings. They also publish a journal called the “Reformation in Poland”, and are seeking to publish, in Polish, Boettner's “Reformed Faith,” Van Til's “Why I Believe in God,” De Witt's “What is the Reformed Faith?” and Calvin's “Truth for All Times.

Two years ago the churches started an institute entitled “Bible Institute of the Bible Reformation in Poland” – it is a Bible school for church leaders and members. However, the lectures occur only a few times per season and on weekends. The work hopes to establish itself as the nucleus of a Reformed Bible college – enter ITEM in Poland!

In the three major Polish cities we visited, numerous meetings ensued with various persons – potential students, actual



In the three major Polish cities we visited, numerous meetings ensued with various persons –both pastors and potential students.

pastors, potential pastors and teachers. The two principal representatives in Wroclaw are Buguemil Jarmulak and Marek Kamic.

Both have been theologically trained at the seminary level and provide leadership in the church in Wroclaw. While interested in the establishment of an institute/Bible College/Seminary, it was apparent that, knowing little about ITEM, they were at first hesitant to proceed with ITEM. (There was apparently some negative experience with another missionary group somewhere.) However, Scott noted that they had “warmed up” substantially the evening before we left to go to Warsaw and decided to change their initial plan of arranging a single limited participation conference next year. Consequently, they decided not only to have a conference, with some current apologetically relevant aspect of Reformed Theology, lasting three to four days (a long weekend), and held somewhere in “isolation”, but this time for the benefit of the participants, not “outsiders.” Moreover, they agreed to a one to two week conference twice a year, and several conferences throughout the year for pastors and elders, teaching them about the Man, Responsibilities, and the Office (three to four days each minimum and very intensive), as well as some type of program where not only the basics of Reformed Theology would be taught to the church's congregations, but others by invitation might be taught at some advanced level too. Looks like they are quite ready to start a school and for all the right reasons, although because of the amount of effort necessary to be added to the schedules of those men already working their hearts out, they need outside help.

(continued on page 4)

“Poland”

(continued from page 3)

While in Poland, Scott and I observed that, there is considerably more theological literature published in Polish than we anticipated encountering. As a consequence the establishment and addition to libraries is more of a possibility than less. As several round-table discussions showed us, their familiarity of the leadership with American Reformed authors and titles was actually surprising, and not only that, but, they spoke in terms which those authors/books conveyed, portrayed, or caricatured – only the fruit of laborious efforts produce such a result!

One other interesting observation deserves mentioning. The leadership in Wroclaw and Poznan are not only intellectually acute, but theologically well read and articulate. Most read English. They know what Reformed theology is and who they are as a church--they do not wish to be made something other than exactly what they are pursuing through Christ work: to have Reformed churches established and taught by Reformed pastors at the most competent level attainable. They are also interested in the merits in a non-Biblical culture of home schooling but are experiencing governmental/bureaucratic opposition. By the way, in true Reformed fashion, one full Sunday afternoon per month (from lunch to six in the evening) parents and children of half a dozen families alike were catechized by the pastor or an elder. Most impressive!!

Dr. R. David Ludwick, November 2003

ROMANIA REPORT

By Rev. Scott Churnock, ITEM professor and pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church, Hazelwood, Missouri

John Lindley, a ruling elder from my church, and I went to Romania for another ITEM teaching session this last October. We first taught classes at the Reformed Theological Institute in Bucharest during the weeks of October 20-31, 2003. I taught a course on Pastoral Theology and John taught Biblical Theology/Hermeneutics. Then we taught at Maranatha Bible College in Campina. This was my fifth trip and John's second trip as ITEM professors, but our first trip to Romania. We have studied up on the country, talked with others who have gone before, and prepared ourselves for the unexpected as much as we could. However, there were some things that were to be expected: the students were eager and appreciative, the believers were warm and gracious, and the Lord blessed His Word. What more could we ask? What more do we need?

BUCHAREST

The Reformed Theological Institute was established by Rev. Hong Key Chong, a Presbyterian missionary from South Korea. Due to prior engagements, Rev. Chong was not in Bucharest during this teaching session. The Institute consists of a 6-year training program for pastors, church planters, and lay workers. The first four years consist of in-class training provided primarily by foreign instructors (USA, England, Germany, etc.). The fifth year of instruction involves a personal study project with the sixth year being an internship program.

All of the students are involved in the ministry of Zion Presbyterian Church, where Rev. Chong is the pastor and where the institute is housed.

The student body is made up of students with ages ranging from the early 20's up to the late 30's. The enrollment is about 80% men and 20% women. The students come from a variety of church backgrounds. Since there is little Reformed ministry in Romania, most of the students have no Reformed background prior to coming to the institute. Rev. Chong recruits students from all over Romania. Each year he runs ads on the Christian radio station advertising the institute and soliciting inquiries from potential students. Most of the students are not from Bucharest and many are from distant parts of Romania.

While the students are obviously Reformed in their theological position, their answers and responses seemed to be more of a studied understanding of the Reformed Faith rather than those borne out of intense personal conviction. However, in class the students were receptive to the material being taught from a Reformed and Presbyterian perspective. Having taught in Donetsk on the Certificate, Bachelors and Masters level, I would assess the academic level of the RTI students as being on about the first year Bachelor level. This is based upon the assessment from teaching an average of 7 students daily during the week (the high attendance being 12 on the first day of class with the low attendance of 5).

(continued on page 5)

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

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 Reformed Theological Institute (Bucharest, Romania) consists of a 6-year training program for pastors, church planters, and lay workers. Most of the students are not from Bucharest and many are from distant parts of Romania.

“Romania”

(continued from page 4)

The Institute is housed at Zion Presbyterian Church. The building is in a busy downtown section; a 3-story structure with a small gated parking area in front. The first floor houses the kitchen, dining area, shower, restrooms and other small rooms. The second floor has several small office areas, restroom, the main class area, and the worship area for the church. The third floor is a dormitory area with several rooms for students (two to three students per room). This floor also has a room for the visiting professor. It is a large room but with very spartan furnishings (bed, table, desk, chair, stuffed chair, and a small credenza). The only common meal is lunch. All other meals are “on your own”, with the students doing their own cooking. One of the women students was assigned to the professor to prepare his breakfast and dinner which were usually served in the professor’s room.

CAMPINA

Maranatha Bible College (MBC) was founded by Rev. Ion Vasile, pastor of Maranatha Baptist Church, Campina, Romania. Its purpose is to train pastors, church planters and lay leaders for evangelism and church planting. The school is tailored to meet the schedule of working students and lay leaders. For this reason it meets in the evening from 4:00 to 7:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The college meets in the facilities of Maranatha Bible Church.

Rev. Ion was not in Campina during the week I taught. He is finishing a Masters program and was in Vienna for course work. His entire family is involved in the operation and administration of the college. Andre, the eldest son, does the work of translation, transportation of professors, reviews business documents, and other administrative work. Andre is completing his Bachelors degree in English and Business with a desire to begin a business translating theological materials and books. Daniel is completing his final year of college and helps with transportation, caring for the professors’ needs, and other necessary details. Ioana is in her first year of college and serves as the secretary and administrator, bookkeeper, office manager and correspondence secretary.

While the academic level of the student body is probably comparable to a first year Bible College level, they are



The college meets in the facilities of Maranatha Bible Church. are drawn from many churches in the Campina area. Some of them travel up to 25 kilometers to attend class.

very attentive, receptive and involved with the material being presented. The college is not distinctively Reformed in its theological position, yet the students were very receptive to the issues of Reformed Theology being presented. They are drawn from many churches in the Campina area. Some of them travel up to 25 kilometers to attend class. Local transportation costs are provided by the college for the students living outside Campina.

There were approximately 23 students present during each night of the session. They range in age from late teens to middle 60’s. Some of the students are pastors and elders of churches. Some attend classes just for the training. Others desire the qualifications to be pastors and teachers. The student body is evenly divided between male and female students. All of the students either attend school or work in addition to their studies at MBC. This indicates a high level of commitment on their part and a strong desire for further training. Two of the newest students are somewhat resistant to the doctrines of Reformed Theology, while virtually all those who have been in the program for a year or more are very receptive and have an obvious grasp of the material they have been taught. The students had obviously reviewed each day’s material and were prepared on the next evening to answer questions from the previous lessons. When an additional topic covered by dialoging with Andre and Mihai (from RTI) was that of covenant theology, Dr. Ludwick, who was with us, asked numerous questions of both men and even used the term “dispensations” for the unfolding aspects of

of the covenant. Both men replied that the covenant unfolding through the various covenants is a single covenant and they believed that was biblically correct. Attempts were made a second time to persuade them that they were both dispensationalists, however, neither would have any of it. This led Dr. Ludwick to conclude that while they are not dialogically conversant with covenant theological teaching or specific terminology, they are covenantally based and require specific instruction so that they may be able to defend their faith.

Rev. Ion and two of the students of the Bible College have started three mission churches. They are viable and growing. Rev. Ion desires to make MBC the major theological training institution for that area.

The college meets in the worship area of Maranatha Bible Church. The pews are movable benches which are rearranged to accommodate tables set up for desk areas. This arrangement makes it impossible for the church to be used for other activities during the days the college meets. Rev. Ion has a plan for expanding an existing garage area to accommodate the college classes and also to provide additional meeting space for the church. The cost of the project is estimated at about \$2000. The churches in the area can raise about \$500 of this amount with the rest needing to come from outside sources.

(continued on page 6)

“Romania”

(continued from page 5)

This expansion will be done by simply extending the end wall of the building by 3 to 4 meters. This will provide a classroom with an area suitable for up to 50 students.

The professors are housed in the Vasile home. It is a comfortable 3 story house on the edge of Campina. It is in a very quiet and picturesque area. Pastor Ion’s wife is a very gracious and caring hostess. She makes you feel part of the family and not a guest. The professors have a private bedroom and bath on the main level of the house adjacent to the office/study. Computer access enables the professors to have e-mail availability. Vasile’s wife provides three meals daily and professors eat with the family members. Since classes meet in the evenings, the days are free for the professors to study, read, prepare lectures, tour the area, or work with the family. The entire family is very gracious and accommodating, and they are grateful for the sacrifices the professors make to teach at MBC. The second floor of the Vasile home is the main living area. The third floor is still under construction but is intended to be used as a “dormitory” for the college or for other Christian groups.

Costs continue to remain low for the 2-week term and are “a big bang for the buck!!”



ITEM’s Dr. Ludwick and John Lindley, elder of Christ Presbyterian Church dine together with Romanian students. Both Reformed Theological Institute and Maranatha Bible College are in great need of Reformed theological literature and plead for the same in Romanian or in English.

CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

Both RTI and MBC are worthy beginnings of worthy works. Both have been reasonably well thought through and each has responded to the education presented substantively and not structurally only. This is to say the content of the instruction has been taken in and in many cases provided the theological underpinning for some extant Bible knowledge (or the lack thereof) – in either case, by ITEM, the foundation is being laid for Reformed Theology which goes forth in the two institutions’ various activities including street evangelism and church planting, summer camps, daycare, Sunday School curriculum (adult and children), etc.

While at the present time we have no knowledge of the fiscal needs of RTI, it is anticipated that should fiscal needs arise we will be informed. A modest sum is currently being paid for room, board and local transport (less than \$500/term). Once RTI has established relationship sufficient to make a proposal, it is assumed that the nominal amounts being paid will suffice.

Maranatha’s needs are being met at a reasonable rate and the garage renovation will give the college an actual classroom (rather than a sanctuary only) for a one-time cost of \$1500 (plus the \$500 raised from local sources).

Both schools are in need of Reformed Theological literature and plead for the same in English or Romanian. The plan of fiscal administration regarding funds advanced to MBC is progressing smoothly and seems to be of little burden to the school.

[FYI: should you be traveling in Romania (or even any countries of the former Soviet Union, make sure you have crisp, new currency to exchange as worn, folded, or marked ones will be rejected]

Rev. Scott Churnock, October 2003



The student body of the Reformed Theological Institute is made up of students with ages ranging from the early 20’s up to the late 30’s. The enrollment is about 80% men and 20% women.