



MAY NEWSLETTER 2016



“More Than Just Teaching”

by Jim Roszell in Romania

Teaching at Maranatha Bible College is more than just going, teaching, and then returning home. It’s about building relationships. Building relationships with Pastor Ion Vasile and his family; building relationships with the various church congregations who send students to MBC; building relationships with the students at the Bible college. It’s about being “mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.” Truly I was encouraged as I taught there.

This March, I led a study on “Living in Grace” to 16 attentive students who participated in lively discussions. The facility in which the classes were held is new with access to a large white board and a large screen TV for PowerPoint presentations. On Sunday, I spoke at three churches: Grace, Golgotha, and Maranatha. At each I found vibrant, Christ-centered and uplifting worship.

My wife joined me on this trip, and together we experienced the warm hospitality of the Vasile family and the excellent cooking of Helen Vasile. Every morning my wife and I would walk to the lake outside of Campina and sit on a bench and enjoy the scenery and sunshine. While in Romania, we also visited Brasov, about 75 minutes from Campina. We felt like we were stepping back in time into a Charles Dickens novel. The huge town square, the Black Church, shops and restaurants, the Carpathian Mountains hovering as a backdrop, were all wonderful to experience. Brasov is one of the most visited places in Romania. Romania is a truly beautiful country and the believers I’ve met in Campina and MBC are truly beautiful people.



(Norris Lessley center second row)

“Teaching in Ukraine is Always Great” by Norris Lessley

The leaders at Kiev Regional Bible College certainly treat visiting instructors well, picking them up at the airport and staying with them until their baggage is checked in and the boarding pass is secured. I have always felt welcome and completely safe during my times there. I have certainly discovered that KRBC feeds the instructors well with excellent meals and ready snacks. The students appreciate their instructors and show it with rapt attention. They meet at 9 a.m. for singing, prayer, and a Bible lesson and then classes continue from 9:30 to 1 pm. with a meal and fellowship to follow. At the end of my stay this time, the students presented me with a framed picture of myself with them and Administrator Vitaliy Tkachuk and his wife, a wonderful remembrance of a great time there (photo above). What a privilege to serve God in this way and place.



Rejoice with us! The first shipment of 355 books arrived at the Mikael Starin Seminary in Croatia last week. Pictured is Dr. Yasmin Milic, director, happy as can be.

Opportunities to Pray for ITEM

1. **Jeff Richards will teach Hermeneutics at KRBC May 23-28 and attend the graduation.**
2. **Mark Vander Hart will teach Isaiah at BRTS starting May 30.**
3. **Mike McLaughlin will teach “Worship and Sacraments” in Romania May 16-20.**
4. **Pray for the Ukrainian translators.**
5. **Pray for Will Hesterberg’s investor trips to Oregon, Kentucky, and Michigan in May and June.**
6. **Praise that 355 books arrived at the Croatian Seminary.**
7. **Praise for the decisions made at the April 22nd ITEM Board Meeting.**
8. **Pray for the Preaching Conference preparations in Kiev, June 2-4.**



“A Great Week in Riga, Latvia”

by David Smith
(pictured in class at BRTS)

On April 1 I flew from Greensboro, NC, to begin a 24-hour trek, due to flight delays, that brought me to Riga, where I taught for five evenings on “Biblical Theology” at Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary (BRTS). Thanks to host Artis Celmins, translator Janis Perkons, and Robert and Jeanne Smith, missionaries with MTW, I learned about the culture and reformed churches in Riga.

Each night from 6 to 9 I taught between 7 to 17 adults (variation due to schedules). With Janis aiding translation, I lectured about an hour followed by a ten-minute break. The 18 lectures began in Genesis 1 and traced God’s covenant and kingdom reign first with his creation and then his people as seen in the five primary Old Testament mediators—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. We then saw how Jesus fulfills his covenant, brings his kingdom, and consummates it in and through the

church. We stressed the fundamental unity of the Old and New Testament, and the centrality and power of God’s Word and Spirit to accomplish and apply redemption from sin. Throughout each lecture I stressed practical implications and applications relating to family, church, and broader culture. On Sunday, I attended worship and spoke from Genesis 15. The believers listened attentively, worshipped joyfully, and engaged in reformed liturgy and the observing of the Lord’s Supper. The congregation meets at 4 pm because they rent from an already established, larger congregation.

Monday through Saturday I had ample time during the day to see the city of Riga and its surrounding area. One afternoon Janis and I went to Sigulda (a city 33 miles east of Riga), where I saw the longest river in Latvia, the Gauja, 470 miles, and then toured a 13th century castle. The terrain was very hilly, sporadically farmed and densely forested. On Saturday, I strolled the beach along the Baltic Sea with Artis, his wife, and three girls. Robert Smith of MTW greatly helped as he gave me a tour of Old Town and the Central Market (largest in Europe), that is mostly housed in five converted Zeppelin hangars leftover from World War I. Bob also taught me how to use the bus system!

Reformed Christians in Riga are small in number but are filled with the joy of the Lord and a love for their enduring heritage that has survived the atheistic regime of communism. Much progress has been made since 1993 when I first heard of this fledgling work from Professor Dr. Gerard Van Groningen, who taught at the opening of the Baltic Reformed Seminary. I am grateful for the prayers of my congregation during my visit to Riga.

Double your money? Yes, you can, thanks to a friend of ITEM who has pledged \$25,000 to match your giving above giving last year or just begun this year.

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