



SEPTEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

Matching Grants

by Will Hesterberg, ITEM Director of Development

For several months now, you have seen news about two matching grants coming to ITEM. A supporter of ITEM has dedicated a gift of \$5,000 to be used where most needed. ITEM's Executive Committee has selected the gift to support more preaching conferences. These help train men already deeply involved in ministry to more accurately communicate God's Word to their congregations. Beside three such well-attended conferences already conducted in Ukraine, we have received requests from Romania and India for such preaching conferences to train their pastors also. Three of our instructors – Bill Wilton, Maurice Sikes, and Tom Smith – have agreed to lead the first in Romania October 28, 29 on "Preaching Christ-centered Messages from the OT." There is significant cost to send the instructors, translate the materials, help pastors with travel costs, and secure meeting places and meals. If this opportunity tugs at your heart, would you consider investing specifically in this matching fund? Imagine the results of more pastors preaching Christ-centered messages in Romania and India!

The second matching gift of \$25,000, given by another friend of ITEM, is to encourage giving from new investors in ITEM or additional giving from current investors. For every new or increased dollar, another will be given, up to \$25,000. Last year a similar matching gift may have been the impetus behind our having 26 new investors and \$46,494 in new or increased investing!

Contributions to ITEM in Canada may be sent to ITEM, c/o Action International Ministries, 3015 A, 21st Street NE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2E 7T1. In the U.S. to ITEM, PO Box 31456, St Louis, MO 63131 or through PayPal at www.ITEM.org. Ph: 618-939-4836 Email: lwhesterberg@gmail.com

Burning Hearts

by Maurice Sikes (PCA Teaching Elder)

As I prepared to teach on the doctrine of "Christ and Salvation" at Maranatha Bible College in Campina, Romania, in late July, I found myself desiring these students to experience what the two disciples on the road to Emmaus experienced in Luke 24. Without knowing it at first, these disciples encountered the risen Savior who explained what all the Scriptures said about Him. After Jesus left them, they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" I believe that was accomplished in the lives of my 19 students. Most of these students in the July session were leaders in their churches; a number are pastors.

Seeing their faces, I think they were encouraged to be faithful witnesses of Christ, knowing that it is God who does the saving. This is an especially critical truth for them to grasp because they minister in a spiritually hardened environment. Ministry is difficult and conversions sometimes are few. Now they understand better that their job is to pray and to be faithful witnesses; God's job is to open hearts to believe. God's sovereignty in salvation removes the pressure of thinking we have to give the gospel perfectly or completely each time. God saves because sinners are dead in sin and only God can give life. And He does!



Maurice Sikes teaching in Romania in July, 2016

Opportunities to Pray for ITEM

1. Praise for Debbie Richards' (wife of ITEM Board member Jeff Richards) successful operation. Pray for her complete recovery which will take several months.
2. Pray for Chris Vogel, who will be teaching Homiletics in Romania Sept. 26-30.
3. Pray for Eugene Oldham, who will be teaching Homiletics and Teaching Methods at KRBC in Ukraine from Sept. 19-24.
4. Pray for David Smith, who will be teaching Apologetics in Croatia from Sept. 29-Oct. 1.
5. Pray for Gordon Campbell, who will be teaching NT Introduction in Latvia in September.
6. Pray that the churches that will be receiving an ITEM letter requesting inclusion in their mission budget would look favorably on that request.
7. Praise that Pat Klinger (wife of ITEM Board member Jeff Klinger) will not need chemo for her cancer. Pray that upcoming radiation treatments will eradicate any cancer cells left in her.

wife, Brenda, came with me and taught a group of about 17 pastors' wives on personal evangelism.

We left our home town (Ripon, CA) on a Thursday morning and arrived at our final destination in India on Saturday morning. Yes, it was hot and sweaty while we were there but we weren't complaining because our hosts Joseph and Vidya Boddu were so gracious or caring. From the time to wash up in the hotel, to lunch at KFC, to shopping for Indian clothes for Brenda (for cultural accommodation), to meeting with local pastors and prayer services in homes, to a traditional meal back at the hotel – that first day was a whirlwind. After an hour-long car ride Sunday morning, about forty pairs of sandals on the porch and loud singing inside told us we had arrived at church. I preached as Joseph interpreted. Brenda sat cross-legged on the women's side, smiling at the children who came her way, and absorbing the sights and sounds of very spirited worship.

We enjoyed the fellowship with the small groups of believers in their home churches. We were blessed and humbled by the numerous requests for both of us to pray for these believers and their often acute needs.

After lunch, a nine-hour air-conditioned train trip brought us at midnight to Vijayawada – a city of one million – where the conference would be held. We were welcomed warmly into the Boddu home by their two boys, ages 9 and 10, and the grandparents who had cared for them over the weekend. Monday was a day of sight-seeing, shopping, and preparing for class on Tuesday.

The Presbyterian Church of South India has ambitious goals: to plant 300 churches to the glory of God. To that end, they want training. The leaders have asked ITEM for leadership training and ITEM has responded. Brenda and I each taught our classes for three days divided over nine sessions starting around 9 am and ending around 5 pm with breaks for chai and lunch. Our interpreters did excellent work. We pray that each person grew in his or her faith in God and commitment to spread His Word through actions and words where these dear brothers and sisters in Christ live and work.



Like us on Facebook at International Theological Education Ministries.



Experiencing India

by Dr. Fritz Harms (chaplain and Assoc. Pastor)

India - the land of "Jungle Book" lore and home to Gandhi and Mother Theresa - is about one-third the size of the US and has a population of 1.3 billion people. ITEM invited me to train about 45 teaching and ruling elders of the Presbyterian Church of South India on Biblical Theology. My