

## MARCH 2017 NEWSLETTER



### Teaching Reformatio n History in Riga

by Fritz  
Harms

In late January 2017 I traveled once again to Riga, Latvia, to teach the intensive course Introduction to Reformation History. The class averaged 12 students, two of whom are ministerial students. Both men have come from active ministry in local Baptist churches and aspire now to serve as Reformed pastors. It was a pure joy to teach the men and women that came to the week-long evening lectures. This January group was particularly responsive, making the teaching experience all the more enjoyable. Several in attendance followed the lectures for the second time.

Though growth is slow, the churches continue to be very active in training their members in the theology of the Reformed faith and tradition. From the questions students raised, it is obvious that Christians in Riga face the same challenges as Christians do here in North America. Following Christ involves a constant checking and evaluating of one's faith and understanding of Scripture. God has blessed the Reformed witness over the years, and the seminary aims to meet the growing need and interest that arises from a number of locations inside and outside the capital city of Riga. May God continue to bless the fine men (Artis Celmins and Janis Perkons) who run the seminary and also give His encouragement to the faithful and diligent pastors in Latvia who work hard in bringing the Word of God to their friends and neighbors.



### Prayer Requests from the Vasiles at Maranatha Bible College, Romania

Pray that the Holy Spirit would bring about a spiritual revival in each participant at Maranatha Bible College and then through them, in their local churches.

Pray for protection and guidance from the Holy Spirit for the professors and their families as they come to teach at Maranatha Bible College.

Pray that the Holy Spirit would give the believers a genuine desire to attend the sessions from Maranatha Bible College for their own spiritual growth and maturity.

### So, How Did We Do in 2016?

Because we believe that God gives all we have and wants us to be good stewards of His gifts, because we believe we must give account to Him for how we use His gifts, because we believe God wants us to invest in His kingdom, and because we believe God multiplies our gifts and gives us a great return on our investment, we at ITEM believe we should give you an accounting of your investment and the spiritual returns each year. So, how did we do by God's grace?

Everything we do points toward training national Christian leaders. This year we trained over 730 compared to 622 in 2015 and 537 in 2014. We sent 31 instructors this year compared to 28 in 2015 and 13 in 2014. In 2017, we anticipate sending over 40 instructors. Also, our pool of instructors expanded from 47 to 70 in 2016.

Now we hold classes in 11 locations. In 2014, we were in 5 locations – NE India, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, and Ukraine. In 2015, we added Romania, Bangalore, and Chennai, India. In 2016, we expanded into Croatia, 2 locations in Andhra Pradesh, India, and Indonesia, and temporarily stopped sending instructors to Russia. In 2017 we're exploring Kenya, Africa, and Colombia, South America.

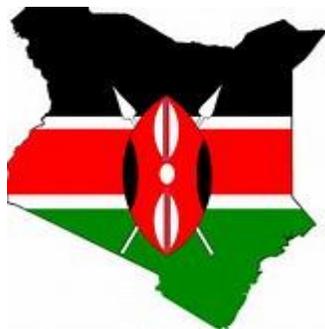
Our General Fund Investments from you grew in 2016 by 21.7% to \$219,923. In 2015, the General Fund Investments grew by 19% over 2014 to \$180,693 and the General Fund Investments in 2014 were \$152,148, 24% over 2013. New or increased investment amounted to \$34,504 for 2016 compared to \$46,494 in 2015.

While the overall number of investors decreased from 161 to 155 in 2016, the number of new churches giving increased by 4 and funds from Canadian investors increased by \$11,000. Church investment came from 19 Presbyterian Church in America churches (increase of 2), 17 United Reformed Churches (+2), 10 Christian Reformed Churches (+2), and several other denominations. Churches invested 38% of the (+2%) total General Funds and individuals contributed 62% (-2%).

Finally, our reserve assets for emergency needs, or expansion continue to increase from \$199,000 in 2014 to \$224,000 in 2015 to \$245,000 in 2016.

**And so, we say, "Praise the Lord for His faithfulness and rich grace" and 'Thank you' to you, our investors and supporters."**

**Exploring  
Kenya**  
  
by  
**Mike McLaughlin  
&  
Will Hesterberg**



ITEM made its first foray into Africa in February when Rev. Mike McLaughlin (new Board Chairman of ITEM) and Rev. Will Hesterberg (ITEM Director of Development) traveled to

Nairobi, Kenya. They responded to an invitation from Daniel Muindi of All Nations College (ANC) in Thika Town to come, teach, and see if All Nations College and ITEM might "fit" together to train national Christian leaders from all over East Africa. Teaching 75 pastors and spouses in 2 centers of ANC, Mike and Will found very eager, committed, humble Christian leaders hungry for training that will help them to change their culture. They encountered leaders who have sacrificed much and are ready to sacrifice even more to spread the gospel, expand God's kingdom, and deepen the church theologically. Mike and Will will report their findings to the ITEM Board meeting this Spring on March 31 for it to decide if adding a new field is warranted at this time.



**Class Picture  
at  
All Nations  
College,  
Kenya**

**Opportunities to Pray for ITEM**

1. Praise God for Will Hesterberg's and Mike McLaughlin's teaching in two Kenya locations where they taught approximately 75 pastors and spouses.
2. Pray for the Preaching Conference which will be held in Campina, Romania on March 9-11.
3. Pray for the Preaching Conference which will be held in Kiev, Ukraine, on March 16-18.
4. Pray for Will Hesterberg's investor trips to N. Illinois and Chicago March 11-15 and 23.

Please participate in ITEM's Day of Prayer and Fasting on March 23. Use the February prayer issue with all the prayer requests from the fields.

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