



## APRIL 2017 NEWSLETTER



### What's New in Ukraine

?

by

John  
Lewis

As I flew across the Atlantic Ocean on my way to teach at the Kiev Regional Bible College [KRBC] in Kiev, Ukraine, for the 10<sup>th</sup> time in thirteen years, I couldn't help but wonder what I would find that would be new. Ukraine's economy has been devastated by the fighting in the eastern regions. As before, would refugees from the fighting be pouring into Kiev, needing food, clothing and housing? It would be very cold and snowy. And, it would be my privilege again to enjoy homemade Ukrainian borscht and sausage while spending evenings with Galena and Vitaliy Tkachuk, the president of KRBC.

What I did find that was new, not surprisingly, were the 16 bright and eager students anxious to study the Scriptures and learn how to apply Biblical truths to all of life. Using Dr. Jerram Barrs book, *Learning Evangelism from Jesus*, we spent four hours each day discussing the importance of first developing warm, trusting relationships with those we seek to evangelize and the importance of following Jesus' example of accepting and loving sinners while admitting and recognizing our own sin. We also talked about the necessity of committing our words to the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, the value of memorizing Scripture to guide us in evangelistic discussions, and the imperative to disciple and mentor new believers.

This was certainly the most fulfilling visit I have made to KRBC. The college meets in the Veshneve Baptist Church on the outskirts of Kiev. The congregation of 400 has grown. The average age is younger, and there are many more children. The church is a beehive, with KRBC classes, three choirs, an active Awana Club and a meeting place for confused, exhausted, and searching refugees who are welcomed for tea, snacks, and help with orientation every Saturday.

KRBC graduates become pastors of new churches being organized continuously in small villages near Kiev. I was privileged to participate in the ordination/installation of a former KRBC student to the office of pastor/deacon. Other graduates teach in public schools or serve as choir directors. Pray for Ukraine and its people and for KRBC leaders and graduates serving Christ.

### Thank You to Some Unnoticed Servants – Our Instructors

Last year we presented many articles highlighting the training sessions led by ITEM instructors but did not give you much information about those 31 teachers. They are the silent servants without whom ITEM could not function. They give of their time and resources, leave behind their families and all that is familiar, endure long hours on planes and in airports, teach for many hours, and navigate through unfamiliar languages and cultures so that national Christian leaders are better equipped for ministry. We will introduce them by telling where they serve in the US and in parenthesis indicate where they taught for ITEM.

Dr. Iain Duguid, ARP professor of Old Testament at Westminster Seminary (Latvia); John Lewis, ruling elder (RE) at Covenant PCA in St. Louis (Ukraine); Maurice Sikes, PCA missionary in Romania (Romania); Rev. Will Hesterberg, PCA

teaching elder (TE), Director of Development for ITEM in St. Louis (India and Indonesia); Dr. Robert Smart, PCA Pastor in Normal, IL (India and Croatia); Dr. David Smith, Pastor ARP in Greensboro, NC (Latvia and Croatia); Norris Lessley, PCA (RE) in Sparta, IL (Ukraine); Jim Roszell, PCA (RE) in Richmond, IN (Romania); Rev. Mike McLaughlin, PCA Pastor in St. Charles, MO (Romania); Rev. Mark Vander Hart, URC Professor at Mid America Reformed Seminary (Latvia); Dr. Jeffrey Richards, professor and ARP Pastor in Salisbury, NC (Ukraine); Rev. Wm. Wilton, CRC Pastor in McMinnville, OR (Ukraine and Romania); Dr. Rob Toornstra, CRC Pastor in Salem, OR (Ukraine); Dr. Fritz and Brenda Harms, URC Chaplain in Ripon, CA (India); Rev. Pau Gualmang, Director of Reformed Bible Institute (Churachandpur, India); Dr. Gordon Campbell, professor at University of Leicester, England (Latvia); Dr. Chris Vogel, PCA Pastor in Milwaukee, WI (Romania); Rev. Eugene Oldham, PCA Pastor in Harrisburg, NC (Ukraine); Phil DeHart, PCA Missionary in Malaysia (Indonesia); Rev Mark Stewart, URC Pastor in Burlington, WA (India); Rev. Tom Smith, PCA Missionary in Croatia (Croatia and Romania); Rev. John Birkett, PCA Pastor in Owensboro, KY (Ukraine); Jacob Bluebaugh, URC RE in Kansas City, MO (Romania). **Thank you to all these servants.**

students included high school students, teachers and administrators, and pastors and elders. Teaching such a large and diverse group of students through a translator and across cultures can be extremely challenging. Staying close to the biblical text provides easy referencing and following along for the students. Every instructor should come with a simple structure, outline, summary, and other teaching tools to help ease cross cultural challenges.

The Reformed Church (GGRC) in Indonesia is 60 years old and into its 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of leadership. That represents no small achievement in itself. The fact that it is financially independent, in spite of the great poverty, and continues to plant mission churches with a stable group of leaders who look forward to the future of the church and also outwardly to impacting the nation are all excellent signs. Schools are a central part of the life of the GGRC, which has about 1500 students in 12 schools, mostly kindergarten but also a few primary, secondary and high schools. The high schools divide into three tracks: Religion, Agriculture, and Fishery; English is emphasized in all the schools. Jonson Dethan, a leader in GGRC, wants the schools to grow and serve as a vehicle for mission work in Indonesia as students become lay-missionaries wherever they find employment.

Jonson's leadership provides a very strong point for GGRC as he helps younger leaders grow and mature and encourages older leaders to persevere.



Growing  
the Kingdom  
in  
Indonesia  
  
by  
Phil DeHart

My wife, Barb, and I traveled to Kupang in March to build on the first training session held last October with a course on Missions this time. Barb, a teacher and an ESL instructor, was asked to lead an impromptu class on teaching each day after my module on Missions. We began with 50 leaders and ended with about 120 in my group and Barb's. The

### Opportunities to Pray for ITEM

- Praise for successful preaching conferences in Romania March 9-11 and in Ukraine March 16-18 with 40+ in each location.
- Praise for Phil DeHart's teaching in Indonesia in March and for John Lewis' teaching in Ukraine in February. See articles.
- Pray for the teaching of Jacob Bluebaugh in Ukraine (March 27-April 1) and Jim Roszell in Romania (March 28-April 1).

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). **New Phone 618-939-5069**. 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.