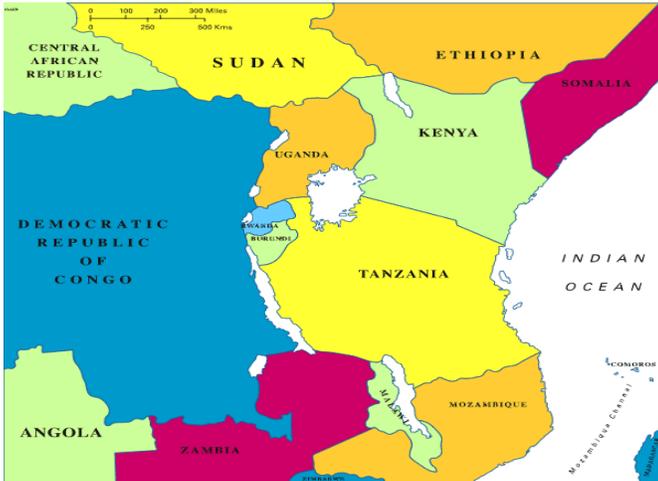


Now ITEM Has a Dozen by Will Hesterberg



The ITEM Board's semi-annual board meeting on March 31 approved adding Kenya as our newest mission field. This also marks our twelfth field and first foray into Africa. As reported earlier in the March newsletter, Will Hesterberg and Mike McLaughlin, Vice President and Chairman of the Board, respectively, spent 2 weeks in Kenya teaching Genesis and Romans at All Nations College (ANC) in Thika and exploring Kenya as a possible field. We left convinced Kenya desperately needed better trained national Christian leaders. Through class sessions with pastors and many discussions with Daniel Muindi, director of ANC, we discovered that most pastors have little or no ministry training, a bare understanding of theology, almost no knowledge of Reformed doctrine, and a scarce awareness of how to apply teaching to living within their culture. Daniel asked us for more instructors to train Kenyan pastors to understand Christianity to transform their culture.

Kenya seems well situated (see map) to impact a significant portion of eastern Africa. Five of top ten countries by population (Ethiopia 2nd with 99 million, Democratic Republic of Congo 4th with 77 million, Tanzania 6th with 51 million, Sudan 8th with 40 million, and Uganda 10th with 37 million)

surround Kenya, the seventh largest. The ease of travel by air to Nairobi and by auto to Thika with its large and rapidly growing population (139,000) should attract potential instructors.

All Nations College has been operating for almost ten years and already attracts pastors not only from Kenya but also Uganda, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda. ANC also operates in 5 other centers in Kenya. The class of fifty leaders demonstrated that many leaders look to ANC for training. Daniel's vision includes not just training the leaders who come to Thika but also providing added training to a small group of outstanding leaders who will travel to the outlying centers to train more pastors. These two approaches provide a huge opportunity for multiplying God's kingdom each time an instructor goes.

We will send three instructors in 2017 and then as many as six annually thereafter until the necessary courses have been taught. For individuals and churches who have a heart for Africa and who want to see Africa transformed long-term through God's Word, our work in Kenya now offers a great place to invest mission funds. Might you or your church be interested in sponsoring a single week teaching session that costs about \$2,500? If so, we will give you a complete report of that session after the instructor returns, so you have an idea on the return on your investment.

Opportunities to Pray for ITEM

1. Praise for an effective Spring Board meeting.
2. Praise for Phil DeHart's teaching on Missions in Indonesia in April.
3. Pray for Will Hesterberg's investor trip to NC in May that God will touch the hearts of people to pray for and support ITEM.
4. Pray for Jeff Richard's teaching in Ukraine May 23-28 on Spiritual Formation and Discipleship.
5. Pray for Mark Vander Hart's teaching in Latvia in May on the OT Pentateuch.



Rejoicing in

Romania

by
Jim Roszell
(photo
middle)

I just returned from my third trip to Maranatha Bible College in Campina, Romania, this year teaching on the Letters of Paul. What a joy to renew friendships – the students, Pastor Ion Vasile and his family, my brothers and sisters at Maranatha, Golgotha and Grace churches. I think I know to some degree the meaning of Paul’s words: “that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.”

In our classes, we saw that where the Gospel is presented, there are problems. The Gospel is a gospel of truth and light, and uncovers that which is hidden. No wonder there will be problems inside of and around us. We discussed the various problems Paul dealt with in his letters. We regularly asked and answered the question: “How did Paul apply the Gospel to these problems and what does that teach us about issues in our churches?”

It was an honor and privilege to share in the lives of these students and congregations. I am different because of the people of Romania and hopefully, they are because of me. “The only one who is anything is God who gives growth... we are God’s fellow workers... God’s field... God’s building.” To Him alone belongs all the praise and glory!

There Is Another Way

by Will Hesterberg

Seeking to train more national Christian leaders, ITEM has begun to help prepare current pastors to preach more Christ-centered messages. We recognized that most of these men, already pastoring, did not have time to return to college for more training. But if they could have training in areas like preaching where they already minister, then might we reach national Christian leaders in the field that we ordinarily had not reached? Thus was born the new way – Preaching Conferences.

Dr. Rob Toornstra, CRC pastor at Sunnyslope CRC in Salem, Oregon, drawing on his Doctor of Ministry studies in Christ-centered preaching at Covenant Seminary (St. Louis), developed the first module “Preaching Christ-centered Messages from the Epistles (from Titus)” for Ukraine in February, 2015. Since then, he has developed materials for “Preaching Christ-centered Sermons from Old Testament Narratives (I and II Samuel)” and “Preaching Christ-centered Sermons from the Gospels (Mark).” Rev. Bill Wilton, CRC pastor of Sunrise Mission in McMinnville, Oregon, has worked with Rob to present these preaching modules four times in Ukraine and twice in Romania. This August they will present the first preaching module in India and Indonesia. Other local missionaries such as Tom Smith (serving ITEM in Croatia) and Maurice Sikes (serving with MTW in Romania) have also assisted with teaching.

At each conference the pastors learn hermeneutical principles (how to interpret a specific type of Biblical literature) and homiletical principles (how to develop sermons from that genre). Thus far narrative, epistles, and gospels have been covered and eventually poetry, prophecy, apocalyptic, wisdom, genealogy, and parable will be addressed. Each conference uses multiple teaching methods such as lectures, actual sermons demonstrating hermeneutical and homiletical principles, small group discussions to apply what is learned, and individual time to work on sermons.

After each three-day conference, the participants leave with the “seeds” for 8-9 messages with sermon components such as outlines, propositional truth statements, illustrations, and applications. The response thus far? Outstanding! Each conference has had 40+ in attendance. Imagine the impact when 40+ pastors begin to preach more Christ-centered messages to their congregations! Each conference costs about \$2,000; would you like to sponsor one and bless 40+ congregations?

In the U.S. send to ITEM, PO Box 31456, St Louis, MO 63131 or through paypal at www.ITEM.Org. Email: lwhesterberg@gmail.com. Phone 618-939-5069. Contributions to ITEM in Canada may be sent to ITEM, % of Action International Ministries, 3015 A, 21st Street NE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2E 7T1.