



JUNE 2017 NEWSLETTER



Roman



Elena



Vova



2017 Graduates

Students & Graduates – What ITEM is about! by Dr. Jeff Richards, instructor

Roman Shemigonov, a student at **Kiev Regional Bible College (KRBC)** received Christ as Savior at age 39. His grandparents and parents were Christians, but for decades Roman only knew of the Lord. Roman's grandparents were instrumental in his coming to Christ. Roman regrets not turning to Christ earlier. Now as an active member in his church, he is involved in many aspects of the local church. A choir director in his church encouraged Roman to attend KRBC. He already uses his KRBC education in ministry and plans to attend Irpin Seminary in Kiev after finishing his KRBC's studies. He hopes to become a pastor. Roman loves to focus on God's mercy.

Vova Krivenko is from Vasilkov, not far from Kiev. His mother took him to the "prayer house," a term many in Ukraine use for the local church. As a teenager, Vova did not have good friends and made

some bad choices. Nevertheless, Vova says that God protected him. From his grandmother he heard a story about David in the Old Testament and wanted to learn more about what the Bible taught. As he learned about the Bible, he also heard about Jesus and His love for him, which eventually led Vova to accept Christ. His wife encourages him in his walk with Christ. He is gifted in music and enjoys working with youth, as he organizes youth camps through his local church. He plans to keep working with teens primarily in a sports ministry.

Elena Tereshchenko lives in Chabany, Ukraine. She received Christ as a twelve-year-old after her mother encouraged her to attend a children's camp. Two years later, she began to attend a Mennonite church where she stayed until age twenty. The Mennonite church she attended focused too much legalism there so Elena began attending a local Baptist church. One of her friends told her about KRBC. Elena is a pianist and wants to attend Irpin Seminary when she completes her studies at KRBC. She feels called to minister within the local church when she finishes her education.

Opportunities to Pray for ITEM

1. Praise for Jeff Richard's teaching on Spiritual Formation and Discipleship at KRBC in Ukraine, May 23-28.
2. Pray for the students who graduated from KRBC May 27.
3. Pray for Mark Vander Hart's teaching of OT Pentateuch at BRTS in Latvia in June.
4. Pray for Will Hesterberg's investor trip to Michigan from June 1-7 and to Oregon, Washington, and Vancouver June 12-21.
5. Pray for Bill Boekestein's teaching on Eschatology in Croatia, June 1-3.

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, c/o Action International Ministries, 3015 A, 21st Street NE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2E 7T1.



Exciting Developments in Latvia

by John Irwin

In January 2015 I made my first teaching trip with ITEM to Riga, Latvia. I learned much and felt good about being used by the Lord to help out our brothers and sisters there. This past March, I returned, this time accompanied by my wife.

The Lord provided for us in many ways. Our tax refund was just about the amount needed for the plane tickets. The week of the class “just happened” to be my in-laws’ spring break week, so they could host our children. The list of provision could go on.

Two particular things made this trip memorable and exciting. The first was to see what the Lord has done in Riga over the past two years. Two of my students along with an MTW missionary couple are planting a new church in Riga with an intentional outreach to university students. From kickboxing to building relationships to completing studies at the seminary, these two men are “all in” for planting Reformed churches in Latvia.

Another student hopes to plant a second church elsewhere in the country. If the Lord blesses these two plants to cause them to grow into particular churches, the number of Reformed churches in Latvia will double! How exciting to be part of that!

The other exciting, memorable thing is building relationships. Having my wife along allowed us to get to know people better. Instead of feeling like a sightseeing, visiting professor, I felt this time like part of the family. Now we can pray for seminary director Artis Celmins and others with more clarity. We cherish the memories of singing “In Christ Alone” in English with the Celmins family.

Preaching Christ in Kiev by Dr. Rob Toornstra

“One of the hardest things about preaching the gospels is preaching the gospel.” This observation was made at the beginning of the most recent Christ-centered preaching seminar, held near Kiev, Ukraine, this past March. Dr. Rob Toornstra

(Salem, OR) and Rev. Bill Wilton (McMinnville, OR), conducted the two-day workshop with nearly 60 pastors and lay-leaders from across Ukraine.

The seminar focused on how preachers can preach the message of the gospels so as to point to Christ – not simply as a teacher or exemplar, but as our Savior. In a context where the message of grace is often eclipsed by a message of legalism, pastors were encouraged to proclaim the grace of God, made known in Jesus, the Messiah as both the power and the reason for obedient living. Two days flew by, as the pastors heard lectures, participated in small-group workshops, and listened to sermons. While referencing all four gospels, we focused especially on Mark’s gospel. The four lectures outlined the concepts of Christ-centered preaching, using the story of the Transfiguration as an example. Four small group sessions offered the chance to study four additional passages from Mark. Finally, four sermons demonstrated the principles taught using yet four more Mark passages. As a result, these busy pastors had a working draft of 9 sermons from Mark to take home!

This seminar was the fourth taught in Ukraine. ITEM partners with both the KRBC, and the Evangelical Reformed Seminary of Ukraine to bring the Christ-centered preaching approach to pastors throughout Ukraine. ITEM’s Instructors have taught similar material working from Old Testament narrative, and New Testament epistle. Next we plan to teach Christ-Centered preaching from the Psalms.

It is exciting to see these events growing! In September, 2015, attendance numbered around 2 dozen. Last June, attendance rose to approximately 40. This time, attendance reached nearly 60. Many were repeat students! May God use these trainings to His glory, and for the good of His church.



Books for Kenya

Last year we built a library for Croatian students. We want to do the same for Kenyan leaders attending All Nations College. We need good reformed commentaries and funds to send the books to Kenya. If you can help, contact us at lwhesterberg@gmail.com.