



Timely Training in Croatia

by Rev. Wm.
Boekestein

During the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, many Croatian people embraced the reformed faith. As evidence, the oldest surviving Protestant church in Croatia began around the year John Calvin died. But in Croatia, as in Italy, under the Habsburg-led counter-reformation the reformed faith was almost eradicated. Today Croatia is predominantly Roman Catholic (86% of the population). Less than one half of one percent of the populace identifies as Protestant. A recent poll indicated that less than a quarter of the population attends religious services regularly.

For these and other reasons I was delighted to accept ITEM's invitation to teach from June 6-8 at the Mihael Starin Theological Seminary, a small reformed theological school in Osijek, Croatia, and to preach the following Lord's Day at the Protestant Reformed Christian Church in Tordinci. The work of this seminary and the churches that are pastored and planted by its graduates is important in expanding a reformed and gospel witness where it is sorely needed.

The course I taught, eschatology, or the doctrine of the last things, was meant to equip and encourage believers to flourish in these last days by highlighting the complimentary notes of hope and urgency. As we wrestle against the ravages of sin in our bodies, in the cultures of this earth, and on the entire cosmos, we do so with confidence that Christ rules over all things and that he is presently working to make all things new (Rev. 21:5). Eschatology helps Christians live well in this world as we fervently anticipate the growing in-breaking of God's kingdom and the coming gift of the new heavens and earth. This message infuses our work with meaning, offers hope in the midst of suffering,

invigorates missions and evangelism, and grounds us in the life of Jesus.

This is good news for Croatian people who struggle with a shrinking population (currently 4.2 million), high unemployment rates (30% among young people), and low salaries (around \$10,000 USD). The message of God's breaking into our world is also good news for those who enjoy the best of this life. Now is the time for us to invest in the age to come (Matt. 6:19-21). One way is by training national Christian leaders in Croatia so they can reach more with the gospel and train them in kingdom living. Thank you for making ITEM part of your kingdom investment.

Opportunities to Pray for ITEM

1. Praise for Mark Vander Hart's ongoing teaching in Latvia and Lithuania in June and July.
2. Pray for Dr. Fritz Harm's teaching Church History July 25-30 in Romania and representing ITEM at their graduation.
3. Pray for Larry McAuley as he teaches Biblical Leadership at All Nations College in Kenya July 24-27.
4. Pray for comfort for Virgil Tinklenberg, long-time ITEM Board member and Director of Development, after the death of his wife, Beverly, on June 19. And pray for their son Perry, also an ITEM board member and instructor.
5. Praise God for Will Hesterberg's recent safe travels to Michigan, Oregon, Washington, and Vancouver. Pray for his trips to Ontario and Kentucky in July.

Books for Kenya (by Will Hesterberg)

Last month we reported on a new project to build a library for All Nations College (ANC) in Kenya. ITEM's board in March approved beginning training at ANC. Having a library there would help the attending pastors to supplement their classes with additional reading and provide materials to help

with research papers for their courses. Dr. Joseph Hall, directing this project, has gathered 250 books. These, when added to over a 100 books contributed by Westminster Bookstore in Philadelphia, form a nice collection. But more commentaries are needed. If you have commentaries you would like to donate, contact Dr. Hall at jhhall33@att.net. Or maybe you would like to help underwrite the cost of shipping these books to Kenya?



A New Twist to Training by Will Hesterberg

Speaking of Kenya, we will be trying a new way to train national Christian leaders there. When Mike McLaughlin and I taught in Kenya in February, we taught at All Nations College's center in Thika, but also traveled 7 hours by bus to one of five outposts to train an additional 25 pastors. Thinking that such a grueling pace and trip might be too much for some instructors, we explored alternatives with Daniel Muindi, ANC's director. Daniel has identified 5 godly, gifted, mature pastors willing to travel to these outposts to train other pastors. When Larry McAuley teaches in Kenya July 24-27, he will teach all the pastors during the day, but then each evening he'll give additional training to these 5 pastors so they can teach other pastors. So, he will be training trainers. That's even more multiplying!

What I've Discovered About Fundraising by Will Hesterberg

First, I've discovered that fundraising is tough. I talk to people about money, their money, and how they use their money. That is a private matter and sometimes I feel like I'm intruding into an area without being invited. How do I tackle my reticence? I have learned that first I must talk with God about my own money and how I use it. Again and again, I've met other Christians who are serious

about being good stewards of God's resources. Their commitment to Jesus and to building His kingdom renews my resolve to approach other believers about the importance of wise stewardship, and about the blessings, both now and later, of investing themselves in spiritual returns.

Secondly, I've discovered that fundraising requires totally trusting God. God may have put me in this position as Director of Development more to grow me in trusting Him than to help ITEM. Fundraising is not about my persuasiveness, persistence, or planning. Only God changes hearts. So it is totally about praying and trusting God to work, trusting that God will supply the laborers to the kingdom and supply the resources needed to get the laborers to the field and to bring in the harvest. Being Director of Development is not my identity; being a child of my heavenly Father is. When I focus on my Father and not on fundraising, I fret less when our treasurer sends the weekly receipts.

Third, I've discovered fundraising takes time. Fundraising is about building relationships and not just relationships so that people give. It is about caring more about people than about what they can do for ITEM. I need time to know people and churches and their concerns. I must give them time to think and pray about how to respond.

Finally, I've discovered fundraising takes truthfulness. I must ask myself if I truthfully care more about people or about their contribution. I must treat people truthfully and not fake interest in them. I'm reminded of a misprint in a fundraising letter probably more truthful than realized. The fundraiser wrote, "We genuinely 'fake' (instead of 'take') an interest in all our donors." I must truthfully tell what ITEM is and is not accomplishing. I must be truthful about what ITEM's needs are and truthful when I say I will pray for someone.

Fundraising has been a steep learning curve for me, but I'm grateful for this opportunity to grow in my faith and help others invest in God's kingdom.

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. Contributions to ITEM in Canada may be sent to ITEM, % of Action International Ministries, 3015 A, 21st Street NE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2E 7T1. **New Phone # 618-939-5069.**