



AUGUST 2017 NEWSLETTER

Joy and Sadness in Romania



Romanian class with instructor Dr. Fritz Harms seated on left, Rev. Ion Vasile standing on the right.

From July 25 through July 29 I (Dr. Harms) taught the Protestant Reformation course covering topics such as the historical context; Luther and Calvin (their lives and theology); the Swiss, English & Scottish Reformations; Anabaptism; and the Catholic Reformation. The class of eight was responsive and asked good questions.

On Sunday morning I preached at the Ploiesti Baptist Church, and then in the evening graduation service at Maranatha Baptist Church in Campina, where four students received their diplomas. At the graduation ceremony I sensed both joy for the work accomplished by students who have graduated from Maranatha Bible College (MBC) as well as sadness that the Bible College program comes to an end. ITEM plans to continue presenting Christ-centered Preaching Conferences to pastors in Romania.

Andrei Vasile again ably assisted me as he translated my notes and interpreted my lectures for the students. I thank him. I also thank God for His mercies giving me both opportunity and strength to give this intensive course to men and women who are eager to know more about God's hand in the history of his Church. Please, pray for the Reformed and Evangelical churches in Romania. They form such a small community of believers in a country where 86% identify as members of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Sadly, the Orthodox church provides the most opposition to the evangelizing of the Romanian people. The Orthodox church views Protestants as cults and teaches that Protestants should be avoided.

Commencement at MBC in Romania

Below are pictures and testimonies of four MBC graduates receiving their diplomas on July 30.



Daniel Dragnea (an elder in the Golgotha Church in Filipesti and missionary to the Good News Church in Scortini): *"I am grateful to God, but also to everyone*

who made it possible for me to be able to attend the classes at MBC. Even if I had participated in classes before, this time around I had a lot of wonderful things to learn. It has been a wonderful help for me in the ministry I do in my church. We had wonderful teachers, men of God, who gave their best to present the materials in a clear way. May God be glorified and may He use us in His ministry."



Andi Nistoroiu (pastor of Golgotha Church in Filipesti): *"I give thanks to the Lord for the grace of being able to participate in the classes at MBC. As God's servant I had many wonderful things to learn. As a pastor, I've been challenged to have the Lord Jesus as the center of my life*

and the ministry I do. Thank you for giving me the privilege to go deeper in the Word and for the continuous challenge to live according to the Scriptures, but also to teach others from the Word."



Valerica Bobescu (serves by leading prayer times and occasionally preaching at Maranatha Bible Church):

“Through the courses from MBC I was able to get more knowledge about God. I find this very useful because now I can better share the truth of the Bible with other people as well.”



Gabi Dragan (member of Maranatha Baptist Church): *“Attending the courses at MBC has meant so much to me. I have tried my best to learn and get as much knowledge as I could. I pray this will allow me to be a better servant of our Lord and share His love with others as well.”*

Opportunities to Pray for ITEM

1. Praise for the graduation in Romania with Fritz Harms teaching and participating and the great attendance in the Kenya session with Larry McAuley.
2. Pray for Director Emeritus Virgil Tinklenberg who is experiencing significant health issues.
3. Pray for Bill Wilton and Rob Toornstra who will be teaching Christ-centered Preaching in the Gospels in Andhra Pradesh, India, Aug. 15-17 and in Indonesia the next week Aug. 22-24. This will be a grueling trip.
4. Pray for great responses from all the instructors as the 2018 teaching schedule goes out.
5. Pray for God’s guidance for our supporting churches as they begin planning their missions budgets and end-of- year offerings.
6. Give thanks that Banner of Truth will be sending free books to our Kenya Library.

Learning Together in Kenya by Larry and Linda McAuley

How we enjoyed our week in Kenya! A large group of 33 pastors and 9 wives attended the day sessions on Biblical leadership with wonderful participation, questions, connections between leaders and instructor, and responses to the hands-on-learning. The students were asked to identify an area of leadership needing strengthening, the steps needed to see progress, and the measurements to gauge the progress. Their responses were reviewed and they are to develop a follow-up report to be graded by the leadership at All Nations’ College.

The evening group had 18-20 leaders with Linda helping with sessions focused on Transformational Development in their churches and then to their communities. This emphasized church and community working together, something that most never realized the church should be involved in.

We found the students attentive and quite engaged in the material. We reduced the material to hit the main ideas in the limited time available and focused on the Word to ground those ideas well. When the students seemed baffled by a word, phrase, or idea, I would say it in Swahili and “the lights would come on.” Most were quite comfortable with English but a few found it easier to understand with Swahili.

Most of the students came from Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, but they grasped the material well. Perhaps the most contentious part of the Leadership presentation came from the emphasis on men in ordained positions. African culture has traditionally been male-oriented but African churches have begun recognizing women in positions of leadership. I explained that my position was not based on ability or gifting but on our understanding of God’s Word.

While instructors teach best when they come from the culture they are teaching, significant cross-cultural learning can happen when multiple cultures engage in Biblical exploration and learning. Seeing things through others’ eyes can help broaden our understanding and increase our tolerance of other positions, even when we disagree!

We savored working with Daniel and Florence Wambua, Moses, Mary, and Obed, all very competent with a clear vision and great integrity. They work within their resources and are gracious.



Leaders at All Nations College with Larry and Linda seated on the right.

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, c/o Action International Ministries, 3015 A, 21st Street NE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2E 7T1. **New Phone # 618-939-5069.**