



DECEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER



Strange but Special - by Mitchell Persaud

It was strange, but special, to go on a mission trip where the people looked exactly like me. Being of Indian descent, I felt like I was at a homecoming. And that was how it seemed to the brothers there.

I gave three lectures at the Reformation 500 conference, preached in three church services, spoke at the Presbytery meeting, lectured for two days in Bangalore on Pastoral Counseling, and lectured in Chennai for three days on Pastoral Counseling. That sounds busy enough, but it was the private and small group conversations and counseling sessions that I especially cherished. Then there were the impromptu visits at the hotel for discussion.

The pastors seemed to appreciate the training on counseling, but I was more blessed than they. As I saw their faithfulness in the Gospel, their endurance in poverty, their persevering under persecution, and how they bear the estrangement from their families due to the Gospel, I was changed.

I became somewhat overwhelmed. I saw the need of the brothers. They need teaching to grow in their understanding and application of the Reformed faith. They need financial support badly, though they never complain. If not for overseas help, the brothers could not even afford to travel to their own Presbytery meeting. Most of their wives work to support their family, as most pastors are paid little, if anything. Perhaps your church might consider sending your pastor or another pastor to teach the brothers there, and maybe your church might want to financially help the brothers. And they will stretch your dollar thinner than filo pastry sheets.

Opportunities to Pray for ITEM

1. Praise for these classes taught in November: (a) Mitchell Persaud in India; (b) Charles Williams in Kenya; (c) Cal Hoogendoorn in Ukraine and (d) Will Hesterberg and Norris Lesley in Bolivia.
2. Praise for all the 43 teachers who faithfully taught for ITEM in 2017 and for the many seeds that were planted.
3. Pray that the approximately 1,200 men and women who were taught in 2017 will share what they learned with other believers and non-believers.
4. Pray for ITEM investors that they will give generously in the critical month of December.



Cochabamba through the Eyes of Jesus - by Will Hesterberg



During our time in Bolivia in November, Norris Lesley and I, along with our guide, Gerson, went to see the concrete and steel Cristo de la Concordia, the tallest statue (132 feet) of Christ in the world. It is situated on the mountain that rises in the center of Cochabamba, a city of one million. Having ridden the gondola to the top of the mountain, we then ascended 140 steps inside the statue to peer through the eye holes of the Christ figure. It was breathtaking to gaze out over that vast city spreading 360 degrees around the foot of the mountain.

That next week we also began to see Cochabamba and Bolivia through the spiritual eyes of Christ as we each taught classes of about 35 indigenous Christian leaders at the Seminario Reformado Latinoamericano de Bolivia. Many of these leaders – pastors, men preparing to be pastors, and others preparing to become better leaders in the

church – have lost their churches and incomes because they would not deny the Reformed faith in their churches. These leaders have discovered the Reformed faith within the last five or so years through reading articles on the internet, devouring the few books on Reformed doctrine that they could find, and learning from Reformed speakers at conferences held in Cochabamba. They are committed to the Reformed faith despite the persecution and hardship and eager to learn more of God’s Word so they could share that faith with others. They want to spark a reformation in Bolivia by planting churches faithful to God’s Word.

Not knowing much about the church scene in Bolivia, Norris and I came to investigate whether ITEM could be of help to this small group of Reformed believers, numbering about 1,000 in about twenty churches. We found an excited group of believers with vibrant worship, usually lasting about two hours. And we found leaders showing their commitment and hunger for the Reformed faith by attending about forty hours of classes on Romans and Introduction to the OT during our week there. When we left they pleaded with us to return to bring them the light of the Gospel and the reformation that we have in such abundance and that they so desperately desire. And when we left, we had many new friends.



Students in Kenya, Nov. 2017

So Many Opportunities in Kenya

by Charles Williams

At the spring board meeting in March ITEM’s Board approved adding Kenya as a mission field to the work of ITEM. On November 1, I flew out to Nairobi for ten days to preach and teach Christology & Soteriology at All Nations College in Thika.

While there, I had the privilege to preach at a small church in a remote village in Machakos County - about two and a half hours west of where I was staying. The church in which I preached (All Nations Salt & Light Ministries) started about three years ago, in an area still highly dominated by

witchcraft and tribal pagan practices. The little Christianity in the nearby areas is Roman Catholic or Pentecostal. In a nearby town stands a massive mosque. I preached from Hebrews 1:5-14 - that Christ has inherited a better name than the angels.

On Monday, class began. We spent Monday and Tuesday covering the Person and Work of Christ. Wednesday and Thursday we covered how Christ’s redemption has become ours. The men were so encouraged; they asked me to teach an extra lesson on Tuesday and Wednesday evening on preaching Christ from the Old Testament. Nearly forty ministers attended, along with some of their wives. Most came from Kenya - some from Tanzania and the Congo as well. Nearly all of them have been pastors for over twenty years, and for many this was their very first Bible class. Though Kenya is amenable to Christianity, it does require every Christian denomination to register with the government. Every denomination has an administrative head (called a bishop), who is also usually a pastor. About ten of the forty pastors who took the class were bishops who planned to take this course and teach it to all the pastors in their given denominations. Talk about a Trickle-Down effect!

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served in this capacity. The pastors there have few opportunities for formal theological education and hunger for what even the most remote Reformed churches in the U.S. take for granted every Sunday. May the Lord continue his work in Kenya. Will you help send more trainers to Kenya, India, and all the other places where ITEM serves?

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. **Phone # 618-939-5069.**

Brief Update

As this newsletter comes to you, we have welcomed home the last of our 43 instructors who by God’s grace have trained almost 1200 indigenous Christian leaders, compared to 31 trainers last year training 730. Sola Deo Gloria!