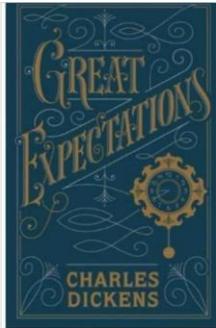


International Theological Education Ministries, Inc.

MARCH 2018 NEWSLETTER



Great Expectations?

by

Will Hesterberg
Executive Director

During high school, I read Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, a novel about an orphan boy, Pip, who dreams of escaping poverty to become a gentleman and marry a rich young lady. Through many painful experiences, Pip learns that his "great" expectations were sadly misguided and misplaced.

Another book, the Bible, encourages us to expect great things of a different kind. Poor or rich, as we share in the work of extending Christ's kingdom, we can expect great blessing. The Bible compares giving to sowing seed in which a farmer expects returns of many times more than what he plants. Yet we should be careful not to make giving a "Let's make a deal" sort of practice. Instead, passages such as II Corinthians 8 and 9 encourage us to expect great spiritual returns when giving. For example, II Corinthians 9 speaks of abounding grace (vs. 8), a large harvest of righteousness (vs. 10), more opportunities to be generous in the future (vs. 11), and many expressions of thanks to God when we give generously (vs. 12).

Expectations often involve sacrifice, foregoing something in the present to receive something even better in the future. We plant the seed we could eat now in order to get back more seed in the future. Giving to God and God's work also involves timing. We forego using and enjoying a material resource now, so we can receive a valuable spiritual blessing later. All this requires faith.

We believe Jesus when He says the spiritual is more valuable than the material (Matthew 6:19, 20). We believe Jesus when He says God knows and meets our current needs (Matthew 6: 31, 32). We believe Jesus as He speaks about our glorious future in His eternal kingdom (Matthew 6:33). We believe that He rewards

our faith (Hebrews 11:6). So, do you have great expectations? Are you living like you do? Are you proving it by your giving, your monthly budget?



God's Kingdom in Kenya

by
Jason Polk
MTW missionary in Ethiopia

Twenty years ago I had the privilege of living in East Africa as a university student, and ever since, my opportunities to return to the region have felt like a homecoming. This was certainly the case in early February when I taught ITEM's Church Planting module at All Nations College in Thika, Kenya. Daniel Muindi, the Director of All Nations, and his wife Florence, were incredibly gracious hosts and beautiful examples of following God's leading and vision to "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

Their passion has been to see local church pastors and leaders trained for effective ministry through accessible, affordable, and biblically faithful theological education. It was my joy to see the fruit of their labors and to participate with them in some small way by instructing a group of pastors and ministry leaders in church planting and church health. Most of these students have been in ministry for many years and are seeking ongoing growth in knowledge and experience to sustain them in long-term ministry in Kenya's rapidly changing context.

We had a wonderful week together exploring the biblical principles and best practices for global church planting and how to move existing churches forward in the vision of expanding God's Kingdom. We shared our varied experiences in ministry and church planting. We reflected on the similarities and differences between their Kenyan contexts and my church planting context in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where my family has served with Mission to the World for the past six years. God is working in sub-

Saharan Africa. I am thankful for your prayers and the partnership between ITEM and All Nations College to see Christ's church reaching the nations.



Books to Go
by
Will Hesterberg

Amazon Kindle, B&N Nook books, internet, I-pads, laptop, libraries, bookstores – what if you didn't have any of these for your work or reading or study of God's Word? Would you miss these resources? Many Christian leaders in Kenya do not have access to any of these means of learning. Imagine the effect on their ministry and the spiritual growth of their churches?

When ITEM began training national Christian leaders in Kenya, Rev. Daniel Muindi asked us to help develop a library that leaders attending All Nations College could use. Dr. Joseph Hall, who helped ITEM build libraries in Latvia and Croatia, along with his wife Hermie, soon used their expertise to establish a library for All Nations College.

Over 950 excellent books have been received from individuals, publishers, and book stores. We are ready to send these and have \$1300 of the approximate \$2,000 needed for shipping and customs. If you love books and know how crucial books are to ministry and spiritual growth, would you help us finish this project with a gift to "Kenya Library Fund"? Thank you.

Opportunities to Pray for ITEM

- 1. Praise that Jason Polk had a fruitful time teaching Church Planting in Kenya.**
- 2. Pray for Phil DeHart teaching Bible Introduction OT and NT in Indonesia, Gerry Van Groningen teaching Genesis at KRBC in Ukraine, and Gordon Campbell teaching New Testament in Latvia, all in March.**
- 3 Pray for Bill Wilton and Perry Tinklenberg leading a preaching conference on the Epistles at KRBC in Ukraine from March 15-17 and for Bill and Rob Tornstra leading the preaching conference in Romania on the Epistles from March 22-24.**



When Past Meets Present
by
Artis Celmins,
Director of
BRTS

Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary's spring semester began with Post-Reformation Church History by Dr. Erik Van Alten in February. Looking back at the intensive week of studies and its impact on the students, I recall the importance of a rightly built seminary curriculum. ITEM helped us establish it at the very beginning of this work, and we have stuck to it ever since. Church History is always under pressure to be sacrificed in favor of more "immediate and practical" training needs.

The period between the Reformation and today is when most of our present context was born: modernist mindset, liberal theology, secularism at large, and the various movements within Christianity. These studies prepare students to see the real roots of today's challenges and equip them for future ministry. This period of history saw Reformed teaching formulated and the Reformed church growing. Dr. Van Alten focused on building up future pastors and mission-minded leaders. As he put it in one of the training goals for this class: "To learn that the churches of Christ must always fight to remain faithful to their Lord. The guidance of the Holy Spirit and human sin - both present in history - must be carefully evaluated and distinguished." Students began seeing how important it is to hold to God's Word and Reformed confessions and not follow the Zeitgeist of movements inside and outside of the church.

Besides the pastoral students we have a track called Christian Leaders for training lay leaders. BRTS now also has an extension site in the city of Jekabpils in eastern Latvia, so this course will reach even more students later during the semester.

In the U.S. send contributions to ITEM, PO Box 31456, St Louis, MO 63131 or at www.ITEM.org through PayPal. Email: whesterberg@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.**