



JANUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER



God and Science Meet Grace and Truth in Bolivia

WHO: John Byl, a retired PCA elder who has taught in colleges in the United States.

WHERE: Seminario Reformado Latinoamericano, in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

WHEN: Oct. 29-Nov. 2.

WHAT I TAUGHT: “Science and Christianity” to 25-30 students. The students were eager to learn, took many notes and asked thoughtful questions.

I also gave a lecture at Universidad Mayor de San Simon called “Did Science Kill God? Naturalism versus Christianity.” The 150-200 students and faculty in attendance asked probing questions that prompted good discussions.

The university courses are mostly technical, with little time spent on foundational worldview issues. I encouraged the students to think deeply about basic questions of life.

IT WASN'T ALL SCIENCE: I found the Bolivian people friendly and hospitable. It was good to discover that there is a growing Reformed presence in Bolivia.

About 20 Reformed churches, with roughly 1,000 members, have joined an organization called Gracia y Verdad (Grace and Truth). Within these churches is a zealous desire to learn more about God's Word and the Reformed faith.

New Leaders, Same Devotion to God

By Will Hesterberg, ITEM Executive Director

The New Year usually brings resolutions, and resolutions often involve changes. ITEM is making changes, prompted by our growth, to enable us to grow more.

When I began as executive director in 2014, I inherited another position: newsletter editor. We quickly expanded the newsletter from quarterly to monthly, which allowed us to write about more instructors and feature more stories about indigenous Christian leaders.

To create a fresh approach and to lighten my work load, in May we added a new editor, Matt Crossman. Matt works for ITEM about six to eight hours each month. (For more on Matt, see intro.)

We have steadily sent out more instructors each year: 13 in 2014, 28 in 2015, 31 in 2016, 43 in 2017, and 46 in 2018. More instructors were needed as we added mission fields, now numbering 13.

More instructors require more preparation to connect them with their fields, field directors and training materials. To improve the preparation, ITEM hired a



One more change will come to ITEM in this new year—a new Executive Director. I will soon turn 68, and for ITEM to keep serving God’s kingdom, younger men must be incorporated into leadership roles. I will continue to help with fundraising as I mentor our new Executive Director when the Lord brings him to us.

What isn’t changing? Our deep dependence on prayer, so we ask you to join with our Board to ask God to raise up a new Executive Director, more Board members, and more leaders in other countries to seek training. Also unchanging is our commitment to the life-transforming Word of God; in 2019, I hope to focus more energy on developing and refining the Reformed curriculum ITEM instructors utilize in their teaching for us.

Meet ITEM’s NEW Editor: Matt Crossman

I have been a journalist for 25 years and a Christian for 20. I have the great good fortune of being a member of Grace Presbyterian Church in St. Peters, Missouri, where the senior pastor is ITEM’s own Mike McLaughlin.

My wife and I have two daughters who love to be taken to the park, and to my delight they still usually don’t mind that it’s me who takes them.

I consider it a great blessing that I’ve only ever wanted one career and that God has allowed me to have it for 25 years.

In addition to my work for ITEM, I write profiles, essays and travel/adventure stories for whichever publication says yes to my pitches, including ESPN.com, Men’s Health, Success Magazine and a handful of others.

part-time instructor coordinator, Dr. David Smith, from Greensboro, N.C.

More fields and more instructors require more fundraising and more travel for me. To help me be more effective and efficient in making contacts and setting up meetings, I have recruited volunteers in eight locations. I consult with them to determine optimal times for me to visit each area. They locate appropriate venues where groups can gather and invite acquaintances, friends, pastors and others interested in missions to the meetings.

Meanwhile, I contact past supporters and connections in each area to invite them as well. This approach increases the contacts and presentations I can make and also opens up more opportunities for me to preach and teach in local churches.

Prayer Requests

1. Pray for John Irwin teaching Joshua and Judges in Latvia in January and John Butler teaching Eschatology and Discipleship in several locations in Indonesia also in January.
2. Pray that God will provide an instructor to teach in February in Kenya.
3. Pray for the preparations of Noe Acosta in Bolivia and John Lewis in Ukraine both in February.
4. Pray that God will provide a new Executive Director for ITEM.

How to Contribute

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

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