



**SPENDING TIME ON ESCHATOLOGY:** The 20 hours of instruction with the 35 to 40 students was stimulating. As is typically the case, the teacher learned (or was reminded of) as much as the students. We covered the meaning of Eschatology, summarizing what the Old and New Testaments teach, before discussing questions about Christ's return, Israel, the millennium and the rapture.

We closed with an examination of our place in the unfolding of history, looking at heaven (in its intermediate and final states) and hell, considering alternative views of what happens to the soul after death, and what will happen when Christ returns. The course helped, I believe, those who grew up knowing only Dispensationalism.

### On Eschatology, the Fate of Souls, and Christ's Return

**WHO:** Dr. Tim J.R. Trumper, president of From His Fullness Ministries ([www.fromhisfullness.com](http://www.fromhisfullness.com)), based in Michigan.

**WHERE:** Seminario Reformado Latinoamericano–Bolivia (Cochabamba).

**WHEN:** Late October.

**WHAT WE TAUGHT:** I taught on eschatology. Dr. John Byl, retired professor of mathematical science, taught on faith and science; and Rev. Bernard Van Ee from Reformed Presbyterian Fellowship in Anchorage taught on the pre-exilic prophets.

**WHAT WE LEARNED:** God has been working in Bolivia in very evident ways, developing a Reformed understanding of the gospel. Before beginning the course, I had the privilege of ministering with brothers from Bolivia (Pastor Edgar Mamani), Colombia (Pastor Julio Benitez) and America (Van Ee), at the Conferencia Gracia Y Verdad. (Grace and Truth).



### The Challenges of Church Planting in Uncertain Soil

By Mike McLaughlin, Chairman of ITEM's Board of Directors

What happens when you think you are going to teach a class on church planting to South American pastors only to be confronted with the fact that they live and experience the realities of pastoring in a hostile environment? Hopefully you learn.

It was the third day of class when the news came out that Bolivian President Evo Morales was going to defy the vote of the people and the constitution of the country and run for another term. The people decided that the next day needed to be a day of protest against the government. Those protests essentially shut the country down. Buses and taxis didn't run. Rocks and trees and chairs filled the streets to keep cars from running.

Should I have acted like nothing was happening and just teach my notes I had prepared for that day?

It was a wake-up call that when we plant churches in North America, we are concerned whether to send a mailer to the community or some other trivial issue. But in places like Bolivia, the issues are much more real: Church planters want people to know that in terms of competing philosophies of life there is no

greater one than the gospel of Jesus Christ. It isn't just another philosophy. It is the truth. It is the same story and same message that needs to be heard whether you're in the United States, Indonesia or Bolivia. The point of planting churches is to bring Jesus to all the people in the entire world.

In ITEM, sometimes it is easy to forget the point of what we're doing because we dive deep into the details of theology in our classes. As I debated what to teach that day, I ultimately decided to stick with my notes about church planting. But I also added a section about the realities of the challenges they would face.

So may the Lord move powerfully in our work to keep Jesus as the centerpiece of our message. And my prayer from my class is that we would strive to plant Christ-centered churches in Bolivia and in America.

## Meet Benjamin Nzou

Benjamin pastors Christ Ministry Church and enrolled in all nine courses ITEM offered last year at All Nations College's center in Makindu, Kenya. Benjamin learned about ITEM's training from pastor friends and says his spiritual life and family life have both grown as a result of his studies. He plans to reach out to pastors in other communities so he can pass on the knowledge he's receiving.



### Prayer Requests

1. Pray for John Lewis as he teaches James at Kiev Regional Bible College in Kiev, Ukraine.
2. Pray for Bob Clark as he teaches Eschatology at All Nations College in Kenya.
3. Praise God because John Irwin finished teaching Joshua and Judges at Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary in Riga, Latvia and because John Butler finished teaching Eschatology, Discipleship and Romans in four locations in Indonesia.
4. Pray for God's leading as ITEM seeks a new Executive Director of Development, and pray for Will Hesterberg, current Executive Director, as he will continue serving with ITEM in other capacities after he leaves the executive director position.
5. Pray also for Will and several of our instructors as they seek to continually improve the quality of our curriculum so indigenous leaders get the very best training we can give them.

### How to Contribute

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Contributions to ITEM in Canada may be sent to ITEM, c/o Action International Ministries, 3015 A, 21<sup>st</sup> Street NE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2E 7T1.

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