



MARCH 2019 NEWSLETTER



On the Old Testament, Trust and Church Growth

WHO: John Irwin, pastor of Faith PCA in Myrtle Beach, SC.

WHERE: Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary in Riga, Latvia.

WHO ELSE: I took my daughter, 15. She stayed with the family of Artis Celmins, the seminary director, who has daughters about her age. She really got exposed to another culture and made friends she'll have for a long time. I think she developed an interest in mission work and travel while she was there.

WHAT I TAUGHT: Old Testament history—Joshua through Esther, with an overview of each book and the time period in which the books are set. I always keep in mind that I have two levels of students—those who hope to become pastors and laypeople who just want more Bible knowledge.

WHAT I LEARNED: In the three times I've been to Latvia, I've discovered that when we prepare material for ITEM classes, it's important to keep in

mind that the students there have different backgrounds than Americans. They have a palpable history of suffering in the 20th century.

Because of their culture coming out of the Communist era, they are more guarded. Even in their churches, it's harder for them to trust each other than it is for us to trust each other in America. For that reason, I make a point to share personal things, to be open about my ministry and the good and bad things in it. I think that benefits them and helps them trust me. They don't share readily, so I try to do so to encourage them to do it, too. I'm pretty transparent anyway, so it fits my style.

WHAT NEEDS WORK: There's a movement there to reject the Old Testament and be New Testament only Christians. I tried to counter that with my teaching. With each book of the Bible that I went through, I had a historical outline, a literary outline and a theological outline. The theological outline pointed out how the passage pointed to Christ. I did a radio interview while I was there, and the host specifically asked me to address this topic, too.

WHAT'S NEXT THERE: They're looking at the growth of their local churches. They described it to me as they have two churches and a church plant in Riga and a church plant outside the city. They told me they've already reached all their friends and relatives. Now they've got to take the next step and take the gospel to others.

KRBC Thrives Amid Chaos of Uncertainty in Ukraine

WHO: John B. Lewis, who made his eleventh visit to Kiev Regional Bible College in February, this time teaching the book of James to 34 students.

WHAT I LEARNED: Enrollment at KRBC in Kiev, Ukraine has doubled in the last five years. From



25 students in 2015, enrollment is now at 50 students and is expected to continue rising.

WHY THAT'S AMAZING: Ukraine has experienced tremendous turmoil over the past seven years, with thousands of civilians killed in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions due to fighting between loyalist Ukrainians and troops supported by Russia, which has the objective of destabilizing Ukraine. Thousands of refugees have fled eastern regions to Kiev and other areas of Ukraine, creating great need for food, clothing, shelter and spiritual support.

HOW GOD IS WORKING THERE: In the midst of these terrible trials and sufferings, God has blessed and equipped the administrators and teachers at KRBC through the work of His Holy Spirit. He continues to provide a wonderful group of gifted and talented students desiring to study Scripture and other courses to become pastors, Christian educators, choir directors and church librarians. See next month's newsletter for more on what God is doing in Kiev.

Endowment Forms Bedrock for ITEM's Long-term Plans

By Carlo Hansen, ITEM Board Member

Endowments are often described as money in the bank that earns interest and dividends to use for operations. But technically, the term refers only to that portion of your investment basket that is "permanently restricted" because you collected it with the understanding that it was a permanent investment reserve.

Prayer Requests

1. Praise for Bob Clark, who taught Eschatology in Kenya in February.
2. Pray for Tom Smith who will teach Church History at Kiev Regional Bible College in Ukraine in March.
3. Also pray for Rob Toornstra, Bill Wilton, Fritz Harms and Perry Tinklenberg, who will conduct a Preaching Conference from March 14-16 in Romania, then a Preaching Course at ERSU in Kiev, Ukraine March 18-21, and finally a Preaching Conference at Kiev Regional Bible College in Kiev March 21-23.

Just as investment advisors recommend individuals have six months of emergency funds tucked away in a savings account, so nonprofits should also have a permanent reserve that provides income separate from that received from investors.

The ITEM Board created our endowment on Nov. 2, 2018 to enable ITEM to have long-term financial strength to carry out our vision. The endowment will help create financial bedrock for our organization. It will be managed by the ITEM Executive Committee with oversight of the ITEM Board of Directors.

ITEM's Executive Committee will use financial advisors to assist in managing the endowment funds. The EC will always monitor the performance of the account and maintain guidance to provide reasonable levels of risk and liquidity.

The endowment will seek to achieve an average annual real rate of return of 6 percent per year over the long term and have an annual allowed withdrawal rate of 4 percent of the endowment balance.

Donors may designate funds for the endowment to help ITEM continue its mission to future generations of indigenous Christian leaders.

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.

Phone # 618-939-5069