



Then and Now: Tracing KRBC's Growth

John Lewis has been teaching at Kiev Regional Bible College for 15 years. He reflects on the changes he has seen.

The rise of KRBC (Kiev Regional Bible College) can be traced to 1989, the year the Berlin Wall fell. The revolutions that swept Eastern Europe resulted in hundreds of churches in America sending missionaries behind the Iron Curtain to help lift up believers who had been worshipping in underground churches, in barns and forests, during the decades of Russian occupation.

ITEM was formed in 1994 to help. Dr. David Ludwick, then the director of ITEM, was convicted that Eastern Europe needed indigenous Christian pastors and leaders and made an agreement to help develop a training college, which later became KRBC.

I traveled to Ukraine for the first time in 1984 or so as part of my job with Monsanto. Ukraine was controlled by the Russians then. My first trip to KRBC was in 2005. Attendance back then was no more than eight people per class. My most recent class had 30 students.

It's fair to ask why an 82-year-old man would travel halfway across the world to trudge through foot deep snow. I keep going back because I'm convicted by the passage in Matthew 28:19 that says, "go and make disciples of all nations." Teachers by far and away learn more than students. Teaching has been an incredible blessing to me.

Since 2004, 245 students have graduated from KRBC. Some 20 or so have planted churches in small villages. I have participated in the ordination of two of those men.

In the 15 years I've been going, the students have changed. The first students came to study to become pastors. That's still true, but they also are studying to become youth leaders, librarians, Christian educators and choir directors.

The diversity and sophistication of the students have changed. That has led to a change in what we talk about in class. The questions at the beginning were from men who were going to become pastors. They asked about preaching and evangelizing and teaching. Now sometimes the questions are more wide ranging, focusing on the overall teaching of the Bible, what it says, and how you apply it to your life.

The college still exists to prepare pastors; that hasn't changed. Now the college has just broadened its appeal.

The number of evangelicals relative to the overall population in Ukraine remains small. The vast majority of Ukrainians call themselves members of the Orthodox Church. Catholics are second, then Baptists, Pentecostals and Presbyterians. Ukraine, like Latin America, is ripe for evangelism.

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Make a Plan for Your Estate Before It's Too Late

By Carlo Hansen, ITEM Board Member

Last month in the ITEM newsletter we brought up the issue of estate planning because we wanted our friends and supporters to know that we believe it is important. If we don't make plans for our estates we know the state will. But will the state use our funds the way we would like to have them allocated? I think we all know the answer and it's "NO!"

While estate planning makes sense and most of us would say it should be done, it is one of those actions that is so easy to put off. ... *I'll do it tomorrow.*

I fully understand as I find myself in that situation about a lot of things. Is there such a thing as a procrastinator gene? If so, I must have it.

I thought it would be good to remind all of us that there are tax consequences of how we choose to manage the God given funds we have. For example, in an estate plan you might designate appreciated stock be sent directly to ITEM. This avoids paying the capital gains tax

yourself and the full value of the stock goes to ITEM.

Perhaps you would like to discuss estate planning further.

If so, please email Carlo Hansen at cjhansen@htc.net or Jeff Klinger at jklinger23@att.net.

Send Us Your Thoughts

If you have a story idea or a topic you'd like to see covered in the ITEM newsletter, email editor Matt Crossman at mcrossman98@gmail.com.

Prayer Requests

1. Pray for fruit from John Lewis' teaching Christian Ethics at Kiev Regional Bible College in Ukraine in January and Jim Roszell's teaching God and Man in Kenya in February.
2. Pray for Tom Smith, who is making a vision/teaching trip to Ethiopia March 17-26.
3. Pray for Mark Vander Hart, who will be speaking and preaching at the 20th Anniversary of the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary in Latvia from 19-24.
4. Pray for Mark Wanders' teaching Marriage and Family in Belize in April.
5. Pray for more people to pray for ITEM and invest in ITEM.
6. Pray for Gerson Cruz, the site director in Bolivia who is teaching in Cochabamba and La Paz. Gerson is considering graduate studies in America this year.

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.

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Action International Ministries

3015A 21st NE

Calgary AB T2E 7T1

Phone # 618-939-5069