



OCTOBER 2020 NEWSLETTER



Same Christ, Wildly Different Circumstances

By Jim Roszell and Bob Clark, Christ Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Indiana

We waited, watched and prayed as the Lord graciously lifted the travel ban and quarantine restrictions in Kenya. With negative Covid-19 tests and an ample supply of masks, we headed to All Nations College in Thika, Kenya to be with our brothers and sisters for two classes September 14-17.

Over the last year ANC has been meeting on the fifth floor of a downtown office building. The daily climb up the stairs offered a good start for the day's activities.

While most pastors and ministry leaders live within a day's journey, some students travel from surrounding countries to be part of the class. One pastor came from Tanzania to be part of the week-long session.

We led students through Christ and Salvation and Worship and Sacraments. The classes were both challenging and encouraging for the students who

were hearing these topics from a Reformed perspective for the first time.

As usual, we were greeted enthusiastically every morning by students (averaging 25-30) including six students attending their first ITEM-led class at ANC. Jim handled the morning session, including the customary "Kenyan Tea break." Bob led the afternoon session. Along with their excellent questions, students shared a number of interesting ministry stories regarding the condition of the church in Kenya.

Kenyan churches are not as far along in reopening for worship as most churches are in the United States. Additionally, many pastors are bi-vocational. With the downturn in local economies, a majority are scrambling to make ends meet. Some churches are unable to maintain lease payments and have closed their doors—temporarily, we pray. In fact, some landlords have been known to remove parts of a tenant's roof when rent has gone unpaid.

These folks are sharing the gospel under conditions many of us in the United States will never encounter. Even with very difficult circumstances, their love for the Lord and passion for the Gospel is humbling. They are so appreciative and grateful for the ministry of ITEM in Thika Town.

How to Contribute

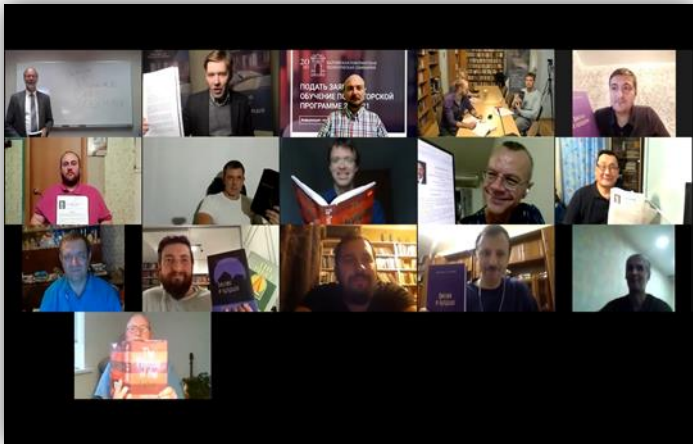
In the U.S. send contributions to ITEM, PO Box 31456, St Louis, MO 63131 or at www.ITEM.org through PayPal.

Email Executive Director Tom Smith at tomsmith@item.org or call 717.640.6268

Contributions to ITEM in Canada may be sent to:

Action International Ministries
3015A 21st NE
Calgary AB T2E 7T1

Please pray for the pastors and leaders as they return to their homes. Pray, too, for the churches represented in our classes. Pray for ANC director Daniel Muindi and his wife, Florence, as he recruits new students and stays in close contact with those enrolled. Also pray for the recent addition of ANC Campus Coordinator, Daniel Mbongo, as he handles a variety of administrative tasks.



Normally, Dr. Venema would have travelled to Riga to teach, as he has done seven times previously. His first trip to Riga was in 1999 at the request of Dr. Van Groningen when BRTS was being organized. While his preference is to teach in person, Dr. Venema says he enjoyed teaching online more than he thought he would. Classes and meetings on Zoom are more exhausting than in person. So, he would teach for an hour, then take a 10-minute break for some vigorous activity to get the blood flowing and then teach for another hour.

They read Anthony Hoekema’s book, *The Bible and The Future* (translated into Russian) for class. The students asked good questions both online and through emails between class sessions. “They were interested and attentive,” he said. For some, Dr. Venema’s teaching was new, but they were all agreeable to what he taught.

Dr. Venema sees BRTS as a strategic seminary whose graduates are going out and planting churches in Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and beyond. While teaching online was quite tiring for Dr. Venema, it was also quite rewarding.

Zoom, the End of the World and a Godly Exhaustion

By Tom Smith, ITEM Executive Director

At noon on October 1, Dr. Cornelis Venema signed out of Zoom on his computer after completing 13 hours of teaching eschatology (the study of last things). He did not do it all in one long stretch, rather he taught two-hour sessions on Mondays and Thursdays over three weeks in September. From his office in Dyer, Indiana, Dr. Venema taught five Latvian students sitting in the classroom at Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary (BRTS) and 27 Russian-speaking students across Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and elsewhere. This was the largest number of students he has ever taught at BRTS.

Prayer Requests

1. Abraham Kogo from MINTS is scheduled to teach Acts & Pauline Epistles at All Nations College, Oct.12-16.
2. Several sites in India plan to do online training with Will Hesterberg in October. Pray for no technical glitches and good absorption of material.
3. Pray for the COVID19 pandemic to ease up globally, but especially in ITEM fields like Bolivia, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and Belize, where many low income people have been seriously affected.
4. Pray for international travel restrictions to ease so that in 2021, we can send more instructors out for in-person training.
5. Praise God for Jim Roszell and Bob Clark’s successful trip and teaching in Kenya in September.

Check us out on Social Media

Staying informed on what ITEM is doing around the world has never been more important. We encourage you to follow us. ITEM is on **Instagram**: @itemmission, **YouTube** (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-P21kU6p-osgfVsNzWU0TQ>) search “About ITEM”, **Facebook**: <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalTheologicalEducationMinistries/>