

# NEWSITEMS



## Thanksgiving Edition



### THANKSGIVING IS A SPECIAL DAY

By Dr. R. David Ludwick,  
ITEM President

*"O, give thanks unto the Lord,  
for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever". Ps. 107:1*

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Thanksgiving is the first special day of the rejoicing year, then Christmas, then Easter, and, of course, your birthday, and your sibling's and your parents'... and all those other days which become special as the year passes.

But Resurrection Day is the one day attesting to the one thing that makes Thanksgiving pleasant and a special blessing each in its time of the celebration sequence of events.

Won't you pray with us regarding future Thanksgivings and what part we and you and I have in it!?

By His Grace, we do share and benefit, although we don't always respond gratefully – "repent and pray!" What can I do, Lord? What can I do?

Christmas comes and Christmas goes and we are happier for what we have received, but is it gifts for us or is it He who is gifted to us? You all know the rest – Christmas is God's gift to us, but Easter is the day when we acknowledge that God the Father gave us the gift of

Jesus graciously; and we sometimes fail to remember that...His resurrection enables us and our eternal life; won't you share this time with us as we celebrate His coming in December and His taking us with Him, in the spring?

Preparation of the Bride comes, by remembering what He did and what we do by our prayers and actions. How you may rise to the occasion on Thanksgiving, Christmas and Resurrection: sing Halleluiah and rejoice! You may also share in the blessing of the Bride by making available the opportunities for others to learn about the gift of Christ and eternal life and rejoice in the gifts of God, by advancing the mission work of Theological Education. Because if you share, others will benefit in this generation and for generations to come!

**Dr. R. David Ludwick,  
November, 2008**

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# LESSONS OF A MISSIONS TRIP

By Stan Guy, ITEM Professor

Many of you may have read the full report I submitted after my visit to the Ukraine back in March. I have been asked to share some further reflections as to how I saw God at work during my visit. I shared some of these remarks at the ITEM Missions Presentation on October 16th, 2008. There were three or four things which were established in my mind as a result of this teaching trip. One is God's timing. I have wanted for years to be involved in a short term trip where I did something besides building. What I finally realized as God opened this door was that I had not been thoroughly trained or prepared mentally to take on the responsibility of teaching others. He first had to get me to school, work 6 years to get my degree and then I was to wait patiently for His timing. When I received the call to go, it was very clear to all, including my wife that I was ready, willing and able to go. I committed myself to class preparation and was able to provide the students an outline of the class before I arrived.

The next lesson was God's provision. While I had gone on other trips in the past and I had seen God provide the money, it had all been through immediate family and my own funds. This trip I needed to depend on God's provision. I received checks from people I only hoped would help. The most significant gift came from my nephew. This was very special because at the time he was in Iraq defending our country.

When he heard from his mother that I was going he told her that he wanted to send me \$500. This was overwhelming (and still is)! God provided enough money that next year's trip is almost paid for. Thank God for His lesson on provision.

The next lesson I learned was how vulnerable I am and my need to rest in God's grace. By the third day, I was becoming a basket case. I had been confined to the church building due to weather and no place to go with no one around to talk to who could speak English and I was becoming stir crazy. Thank God for the internet, I was able to get my wife and daughter online via email and had about two hours to "talk" with them. That got me over my hump and I was able to relax and enjoy the people through the rest of the week.

The final lesson I will share is the people. It took a week for us to figure out each other but the more we had a chance to learn about each other, not just the lessons the more real our time together became. One quick story, on Friday while studying Isaiah I used the word "relation" in my outline. The translator used a very different word and we had a good and lengthy discussion about what the word meant. At dinner that evening, one of the students said "We have a relation with you." I knew then that we had connected and that God had brought together a group of strangers with a common Savior together to learn from each other. I am preparing now to go again next May. I would encourage any that God is calling to step up and to join in this important ministry. We go to serve but we learn much more.

Stan Guy, November 2008

# FREEDOM

By Dr. R. David Ludwick, ITEM President

Somewhere between the tyranny of Communism and the selective tolerance of Democracy there is a right form of government. This is a Republic.

- Communism is enforced Socialism.
- Democracy is demanded Socialism.
- Communism produces dictators.
- Democracy produces demagogues.

Whatever the form of Socialism, it destroys human freedom. Socialism is a mess of pottage by which ignorant people exchange their freedom for security. They give up what is real for what is unreal. Under Socialism there is no security.

Where there is no freedom there is no security or prosperity. Hence, the importance of Truth: "You shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

The doctrines of the infallible Word of God, which sponsor freedom on the one hand, to believers in Christ, and prosperity on the other hand, to those who execute the protocol plan of God for the Church, when Jesus said, "You shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free."

No government can prosper without freedom loving people and no freedom loving people can be perpetuated without Truth. Truth (= Biblical principles) related to economy, government, are ever a part of the Laws of Divine establishment. No Truth can have influence over power mad arrogance, combined with crusader arrogance, to destroy the impact of Truth in the souls of the people.

People motivated by security and prosperity rather than by Freedom and Truth become slaves to big government. But when the influence of Truth brings freedom to the people, the government becomes the servant of the people, never the master. And this is the way our founding fathers conceived government and so presented it to us in our Constitution.

But, we as believers go far beyond this. If enough believers advance to spiritual maturity, then you will have a "client nation to God" and not a Christian Nation (never has been one and never will be).

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Keep standing fast and do not become entangled in the yoke of slavery (carnality, legalism, crusader arrogance, Christian activism, i.e. slavery)" (Galatians 5:1). "I will walk in freedom, for I seek your direction" (Psalm 119:45).

RDL, November 2008

*"The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest we become bankrupt. People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance."*  
Cicero, 55 BC

## OPEN AND SHUT

By Rev. Will Hesterberg,  
Waterloo PCA, ITEM Board of  
Directors

One of the most important events in church history happened in Acts 16. "Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to." How could a "non-event" become such a momentous event? Because it led to a different direction. In this case closed doors in Asia Minor prepared Paul to cross over into Europe. The gospel took firm root there so that when the Muslims overran the Middle East and North Africa, the church in Europe still flourished so that centuries later the Protestant countries of Europe became a great missionary-sending force.

Just this Fall we have seen doors closing in Romania. The pool of students has steadily declined over the last several years as more young people leave Romania for better jobs in Spain and Italy. We had graduated two students this past June and several others were ready for graduation after a few more classes this year. We anticipated more students from several other churches in Campina. But when we began our first Fall class only a handful came. As we spoke with Pastor Ion Vasile, director of Maranatha Bible College, we all agreed that the small number of students was not an aberration and did not warrant the expense of sending other professors for now.

Now what? First we will pray for God's direction to become clearer. Second, we will explore less costly alternative means of delivering quality theological education to those students still interested. And third, we will listen for any "Macedonian calls" that might come from other places in Romania, Eastern Europe, or elsewhere. Would you please join us in praying, listening, and exploring alternatives.

Thank you for your past support of Romanian education. Rejoice in all who have been trained and have even gone to plant new churches in Italy and Spain among the many Romanian immigrants there.

Will Hesterberg, November 2008

## HOW LONG, O LORD?

By Dr. R. David Ludwick, ITEM  
President

How long oh Lord...?

Serious service is called for when serious circumstances serve us. Or maybe we should state it this way: when the road gets tough the tough get going. Doesn't that passage follow right behind the one about heaven helps those who help themselves?

Of course you see through the thin veneer that surrounds these clichés, but isn't there something true in them? Isn't that why we hear and say them? If there is no truth in the clichés of our days, we pay little or no attention, for it is the truth/Truth that does, in fact, both hold us together collectively and set us free individually.

This month there will be a graduation at the Kiev Regional Bible College, Ukraine, and the Baltic States Theological Seminary in Riga, Latvia, where those students, who have completed their work of perceiving the truth, apprehending the truth and applying the truth to their own lives and the lives of those whom He puts in their paths.

What greater joy can there be than to serve a gracious God when those with whom you serve are of like conviction and that submitted to His will.

As we approach the time of Thanksgiving we need to be certain that we do not trip over the deception of Halloween. Our struggle to have "Reformation Day" in our Churches and may, instead, be indicative of a need to "do right and please Him" which is born out of the gratitude we have for His grace.

However, a mere ceremony, once per year is hardly evidence of a conviction and we are called upon by our brothers and sisters in the Countries of the former Soviet Union to be able to justify what we believe with only Hapax Legomena\*. Can we be Christians and biblically faithful in our attempt to reach those in a different context without compromise? We must wonder. It is because Hapax Legomena seeks to build on a single occasion or event (when used as we are here) and so there is no other reference by which to measure or apply that single instance. Do we become better citizens terrestrially and celestially by giving unitary lip service? I think not, nor do we do with the established holiday of thanksgiving to say nothing of the advent and Christmas time that follow. The disjunctive relationship between the elements of a proper recognition of His grace, consumed by our gratitude, is sadly deplorable when compared to the whole.

If we are to celebrate Reformation Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day as being indicia of His Truth then we must evidence (not as a source only of our gratitude but a fruit of it) our gratitude day by day and year by year and onward; not just on certain occasions. The necessity of Christ's birth goes without question – Yea and Amen (Luke 2), but in comparison, His resurrection gets short shrift and while it is equal necessity-wise, there is more necessity found in His resurrection, for without His resurrection we would not have ours (Luke 24).

All this is to say that your mission mandate should include regular daily prayer for your missionaries and His work in them and through them; and periodic tangible support on a regular basis as a testimony to the watching, waiting world and those occasions of celebration, thanks, thanks, Thanksgiving...

RDL, November 2008

\*Hapax Legomena (HAPP-acks Li-GOM-eh-nuh) is a Greek term used in anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics to describe a word or phrase that has only one recorded use.



## ITEM AND AFRICA?

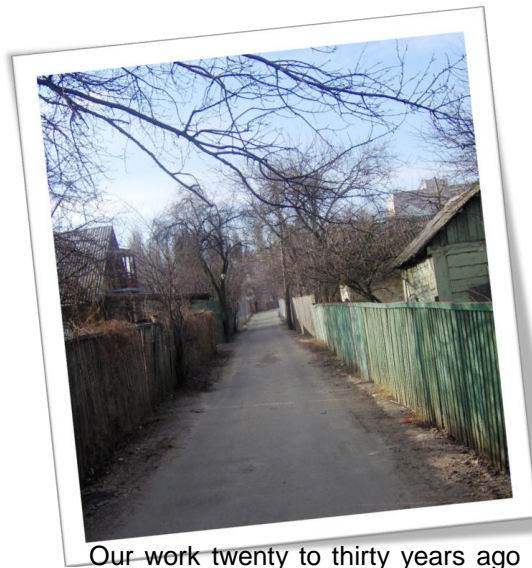
By Rev. Perry Tinklenberg, ITEM Professor

A few months ago my wife and I had the privilege to take our children and their spouses back to Liberia where we served as missionaries for a decade. What an honor it was to see the church that we served in its early days and connect with leaders that we trained in the basics of the Gospel. What a wonder it was to behold the basic steps of exegesis that we taught still in effect shaping sermons and lessons where Christ is the heart and core.

If we could fast forward twenty years from now and look back on the ministries of ITEM in Eastern Europe I think we would see much of the same. Our strategy to train indigenous leaders is sound. Our curriculum is already showing its fruit in many countries and the army of Christians trained in the basics of exalting Christ from His Word is growing because of the generosity of God's people reading this newsletter and sacrificing for the cause of leadership development in a faraway place.

Together we are the scaffolding for a growing indigenous Church. We provide the training and support at the most critical point for the nourishment of congregations in the training of those who will proclaim the Word of Christ in their land. Some of the congregations have been oppressed by hardship and politics, others spring to life and new efforts, but all of them need teachers who are trained to open the Word honorably.

This Reformation week, I have taken a break from my reading *The History of the Reformation*, to write this article. The author has stressed over and over that the true Church has always been known by its doctrine and the quality of the ministers who proclaim that doctrine. That is precisely the call that God has given to ITEM in the service of the Church in Eastern Europe. We get to train the ministers to proclaim the doctrine that will continue to set the church apart from every institution on earth. We get to help make the connection between new congregations and a two thousand year history of the consistent doctrine of the Church.



Our work twenty to thirty years ago in Liberia seemed so small and insignificant, but those humble efforts are producing big dividends today. In my heart of hearts, that is what I believe God is replicating through ITEM in Eastern Europe. We are training the ministers for the service of Christ. If you agree that this is the essence of proper mission strategy I would ask you to extend the community of the Church by investing generously in the training of ministers to serve the Church in Eastern Europe for generations to come. As the Apostle says, "How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" (Romans 10:14-15) We are part of the sending and the preaching in the ministry of ITEM. Will you help us, now?

**Perry Tinklenberg,  
November 2008**

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## WORKING FOR ITEM

By Rebekah Gooden, ITEM Admin Assistant

At ITEM's St. Louis office, we work, Dr. Ludwick, Nadiya and I. I am joyful because in the tiny office where our three desks are crammed, we are a family. The way I met David Ludwick and started working for ITEM is an interesting story I'd like to share with you.

Three years ago I had to do some community service for "Trespassing," it was harmless, I assure you. Anyway, I began working off my community service at the church I attended, Twin Oaks Presbyterian. I was under the supervision of Dr. Ludwick, who was working for the maintenance department of Twin Oaks, with the understanding that Dr. Ludwick would have his ITEM office there as well. I scrubbed baseboards for two weeks; meanwhile Dr. Ludwick would ask me catechism questions and theological brain twisters. To me the work/ service was more fun than anything else. I had told my father that I was doing my community service under Dr. Ludwick and he warned me that "David Ludwick was the smartest man in St. Louis and... Why are you doing community service???"

So when my required work was just about up- I was asked if I would continue to work for ITEM. I agreed. Soon after we were going through files and writing documents and it has been that way ever since. We have grown to be a somewhat synchronized team, working well that if one were to stop the others could not go on so well. Learning all that I have has been wonderful. ITEM is a fascinating organization. The purpose is genuine and accessible. It is filled with so many different types of people, who all love God and want to do His work. We interact with people all over the States and Europe, through hand written letters, emails, faxes and phone calls. I must say that I have grown accustomed to interpreting many different accents! I have worked since the office was located in Twin Oaks church and Nadiya joined us in the early spring of this year. We have discussed all sorts of wonderful things at work, like predetermined lives, politics, Ukrainian upbringings, KFC vs. Hardees and many more work related topics as well.

Each day is different. I never know if I will go home at the end of the day with tired hands from typing all day or with a new book to read that he has recommended; but either way this is the most rewarding job I have ever had... by far!

I have worked at ITEM for three years now and it continues to be quite the journey.

**Rebekah Gooden, November 2008**

# SEMINARY'S 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY AND CONFERENCE

prepared by Martins Martinsons, Interim Director of the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary

Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary was started in Riga in September 1998, running the full theological Master's degree program which was supplied by I.T.E.M. visiting professors - more than 50 classes over these years. During this foundational phase there have been a number of pastors and elders and lay people trained for local churches in Latvia and Lithuania. In addition to that, there are graduates capable of becoming the core local faculty of the next phase.

In order to celebrate the anniversary of the seminary and also to continue to build it, BRTS through the help of I.T.E.M. and together with the

Reformed churches of Latvia and Lithuania organizes an international conference "Staying Faithful to the Word in the Changing World". It will be held on November 15, 2008 in the historical Reformed church building in Riga, Latvia. The goal of the conference is to show the importance of the faithfulness to the principle Sola Scriptura (and indirectly to other Solas as well) and demonstrate how in every age the Word of God has been the sure foundation of the Church and hence how important is the ministry of the Word. We anticipate that the conference will encourage our current and new students to devote themselves to the theological studies, and help the people in our churches to see the importance of these studies. A number of representatives from other Evangelical organizations of our countries, churches as well as individual friends from other denominations have been invited to the conference in order to increase awareness of the education that BRTS provides.

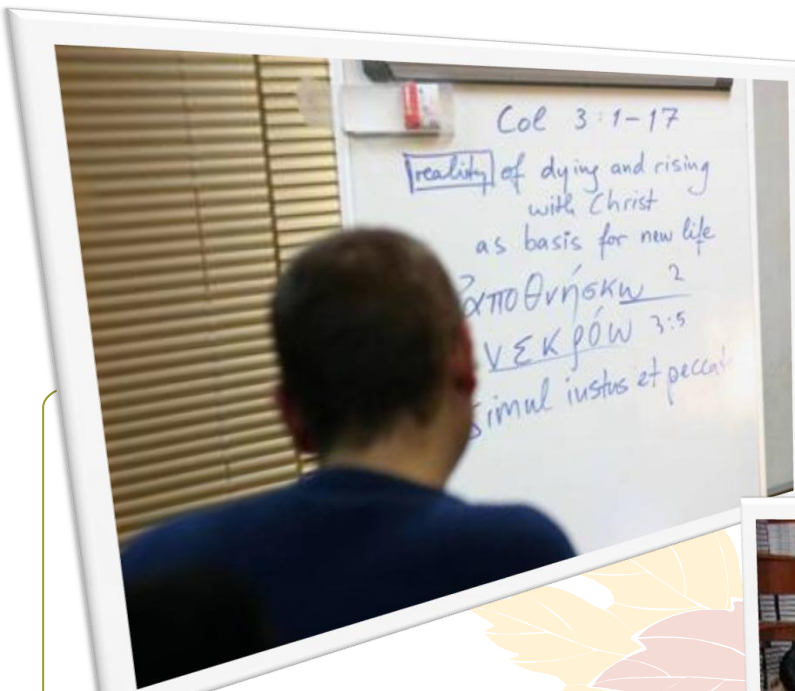
The professors will bring four lectures to the conference:  
- 1st century: God has spoken - Jesus, Scripture and the New Testament Authors  
- Reformation: How did the preached Word change Europe?  
- Our day: Challenging Word in a Challenged World  
- The necessity of theological education in the 21st century

### Graduation 2008

Combined with the conference we will also have a graduation of two pastoral track students who have diligently studied at BRTS during the last 6 years and this will be the occasion for their examination by a committee of professors. The seminary studies have enabled these students to be actively involved with the work at the local Reformed churches and now they will be able to pursue further ministry goals.

Psalm 127:1 says: "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain." Therefore we ask you to continue to pray for the upcoming events at BRTS and its future work!

Martins Martinsons, October 2008

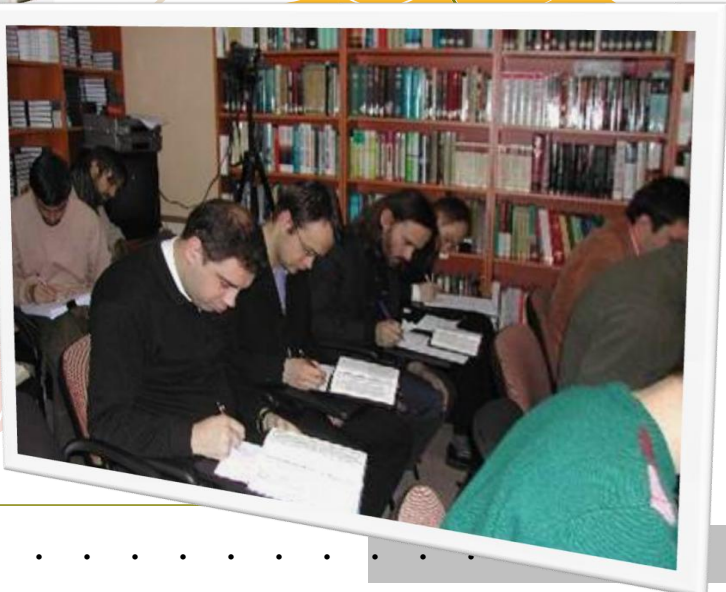


*"On our 10th anniversary, we would like to thank I.T.E.M. for establishing and sustaining the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary and equipping it with resources, the many professors who have travelled to Latvia and Lithuania to teach our church ministers and future leaders. We want to thank all those who have supported and prayed for this work!"*

Alvis Sauka, BRTS Chairman of the Board of Directors

*"We believe a thorough knowledge of and submission to God's Word, together with a solid grounding in its essential doctrines, is requisite to plant new and build up already existing churches in the Baltic region. Some of our students already have planted several growing Reformed churches; others serve as leaders in those churches. We can't thank you enough for being partners in our mission to build Christ's Kingdom in the Baltics."*

Alvis Sauka, BRTS Chairman of the Board of Directors.



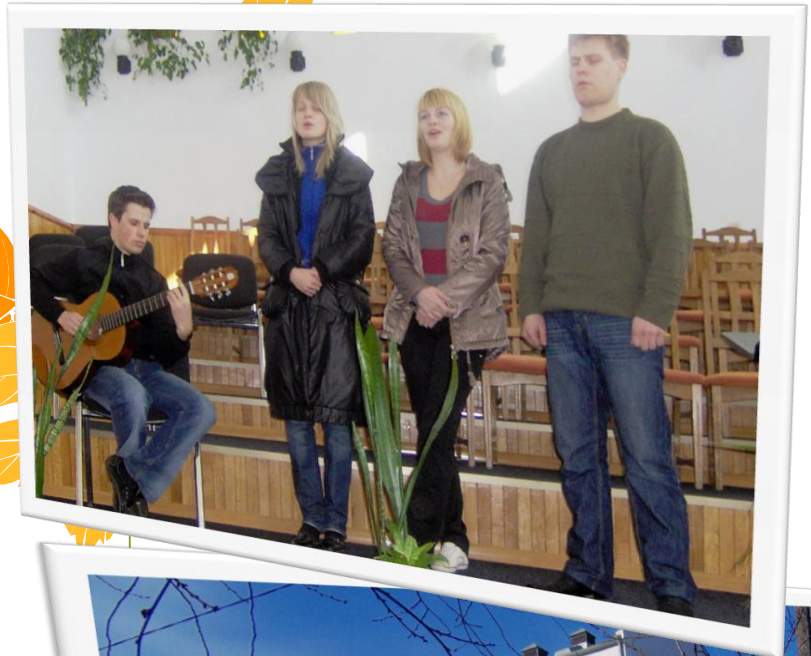
# INVESTING IN HIS ETERNITY

By Nadiya Yarmola, ITEM Admin Assistant

It is a great privilege to be called a Christian. It is by His grace that He chose us, redeemed us and calls us His children. As you know, Ukraine, as a part of the former Soviet Union, had a period of time when the people of God were mocked, tortured and killed. In spite of that the Church survived, grew and matured. As an example, the father of our family friend (a member of my church in Ukraine) was sent to Siberia for preaching the gospel. He was a pastor, and a father of 6 little children. One day, when he was preaching, several men came through the church door, took him by his hands, and dragged him to prison. Sometime later he was sent to Siberia as an "enemy of the Soviet people." It was not only difficult to preach the Gospel; it was difficult to gather together openly without being afraid to be taken to prison. In such a situation believers did not have an opportunity to "dig" into the Word of God deeply to get all the treasure from it. But the Church prayed and God gave us an opportunity to study the Bible freely and intensely caring on this great tradition.

It is the main goal of Kiev Regional Bible College through ITEM to provide an opportunity to study the Word of God and to have lay leaders who are able to bear the needs of God's people and spread the Gospel. All of the graduates at Kiev Regional Bible College are involved in church activities and ministry. Some of them, along with their families, moved to different places and started new churches there; others organized and headed different youth ministries such as sports youth clubs and "Awana." One of our graduates organized two different types of church orchestras: a string orchestra and a brass-swing orchestra, and in this way he involved many young people to serve the Lord.

Kiev Regional Bible College has started a new program: Musical Education where students will be able to get musical education along with theological education. Next year they are starting another program: Organizing Church Libraries.



Furthermore, Kiev Regional Bible College has students who came from far away areas, and for that reason accommodations are being made which would permit those students to stay at the college until the end of the teaching term. This campus will be able to host more students so better trained leaders will go into the mission field.

Another significant point about Kiev Regional Bible College: now after 70 years of "spiritual prison" Christians are given an opportunity to teach the Bible in public schools! Imagine that! I do not know how long it might last, but I know that we have to use this opportunity to sow the seeds of God's Word in the hearts of young people. And this is a main purpose of KRBC in preparation of teachers/theologians to teach in public schools.

Kiev Regional Bible College programs are focused on the preparation of leaders for a variety of services in God's Kingdom.



In this difficult time when the entire world's economy is down and people are frustrated and desperate, it is especially important to feed His people with the living Word of God. As a former student through ITEM I would like to encourage you to support your Christian brothers and sisters in Ukraine as they are laboring for the Lord. Your support and contribution in something that is not built using hay and straw but gold, silver and precious stones. You will contribute in education. Those being taught the truth will be able to teach and lead others. Is it not a great opportunity for you to invest where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal? You are investing in His eternity!

**Nadiya Yarmola**  
November 2008