

The Link

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Address correspondence to **The Link**

**International Baptist
Theological Seminary
Nad Habrovkou 3
Jenerálka
164 00 Prague 6
Czech Republic**

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Guest Journalist for this issue:

Clarissa Strickland
Cooperative Baptist
Fellowship

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RECORD STUDENT NUMBERS



The 56th academic year is well under way and spirits are high at IBTS. Why? Because we had some outstanding results amongst our student graduates this past year, we have enrolled a record number of students and the Quinquennial Review by the University of Wales found only one thing to fault us on – we should be recruiting more students because of the excellence of our courses!

On 6 September, IBTS launched the new academic year at a service, where the directors, faculty, staff and students shared in a covenant together, thus beginning yet another year as a learning community in the heart of Europe with 140 students and a community drawn from 40 – yes 40 – nations!

Speaking at this event, Rector Keith Jones commented on the uniqueness of IBTS. Owned by the fifty-one Baptist Unions of Europe and supported by Christians throughout Europe and North America, IBTS draws together a multinational staff and student body in a way and with a structure that no other theological institution replicates.

So, how is this community of students made up and what has happened to those who have left in recent months, having graduated from their courses?

GRADUATES

During the opening service, the degree of Master of Theology was conveyed on Magda Maria Pap (Magdi). A Hungarian-speaking Romanian, Magdi is now



Magdi with the Rector and Pro-rector

leading an important community and social work ministry in Transylvania, partly supported by the Global Women organisation.

Over the summer the following students graduated – Alexandr Flek (a pastor in the Czech Republic); Alexander Popov (teaching Old Testament at Moscow Baptist Theological Seminary) and Alfred Gollosi (a pastor in Albania).

DOCTORAL STUDENTS

We now have thirty students working on Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy degrees: 12 in Applied Theology, 5 in Baptist and Anabaptist Studies, 5 in Biblical Studies and 12 in Contextual Missiology. These students come from such diverse countries as Moldova, Bulgaria, Kirgizstan, Lithuania, Romania, Estonia, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Czech Republic, Liberia, Canada, United States and the United Kingdom.

MASTER OF THEOLOGY STUDENTS

We have 86 students on our five MTh programmes from Armenia, Serbia, Romania, Poland, Croatia, Moldova, Czech Republic, France, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Egypt, Lebanon, Belarussia, Kosova, Ivory Coast, Kazakhstan, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Sweden, India, Slovakia, Israel, Switzerland, Macedonia, United States and the United Kingdom.

CERTIFICATE IN APPLIED THEOLOGY

Unfortunately, because of lack of scholarship money, we have only been able to take fourteen students into the Cer-

tificate programme this year; from Albania, Australia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Israel, Romania and Ukraine.

OTHER CATEGORIES

We are pleased to have students doing special courses with us from Hungary, Italy, United States, Kaliningrad, Croatia and Poland.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

We continue to add further subjects within the academic programme and have welcomed new members to our lecturing team, which itself is drawn from twelve nations.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

In August we held a successful conference on primary and secondary theology within our churches, attended by people from throughout Europe and north America. This was followed immediately by our intensive courses for research students in Research and Critical Thinking and then our Orientation and Intensive weeks, which saw the whole campus buzzing with new and returning students.

FORTHCOMING PLANS

This 56th academic year is full of exciting events. The Hughey Lectures are being delivered by Professor Andrea Strübind from Germany. In January we are hosting a special conference of theological seminary librarians from throughout Europe, under the auspices of the Consortium of European Baptist Theological Schools. In February we have a Directors' Conference on 'Theological Education as Mission: Mission as Theological Education', which is already attracting widespread interest; and in May there will be a special conference of Baptist historians looking at issues relating to writing Baptist history in eastern Europe.

BWA CENTENARY CONGRESS

We know that the BWA Centenary Congress in Birmingham, England, 27 – 31 July 2005, will be a great gathering of Baptists from throughout the world, many of whom are IBTS alumni, former teachers, volunteers and friends. So, we have booked the Birmingham Civic Centre, just next to the Congress venue, for an IBTS Alumni and Friends lunch on Thursday, 28 July, at 12.00. BWA General Secretary and former IBTS Professor, Dr Denton Lotz will speak. There will be a chance to learn of the latest news and renew friendships with those who have had connections with IBTS over its 56 years. People are already booking their seats for that event – be sure to join us. Email Lina@ibts.cz to reserve a place.(see advert elsewhere in this LINK).

QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW VERDICT: YOU ARE DOING WELL, DO MORE!



University of Wales Quinquennial Review

They came, they saw, they liked it! Yes, 23- 26 June was a nerve-wracking time for the IBTS community. This was the moment when we hosted our first official University of

Wales Exam Board (up until now we have had a joint meeting in London each year with Spurgeon’s College) and even more nerve-wracking, our first Quinquennial Review, when the University subjected us to an intense review of all that we do to decide whether we can carry on doing it.

Dr David Ashelby from the University of Wales led the review team, accompanied by assessors from various other Universities and institutes of higher education including Oxford and Durham. In advance we had sent them many pages of reports, records of meetings, facts and figures about our library, lecturing staff, computer facilities, student records..... Our External Examiners, the Review Team and the IBTS Faculty shared two days of meetings, with the review team meeting students and inspecting our facilities.

The outcome was a great moment for us all when the Rector, Pro-Rector and Directors were called back to hear the initial assessment. The verdict – we passed with flying colours and we were told to carry on doing what we do well – and do more! The inhibiting factor on this, of course, is lack of scholarship funding.

CHERYL AND WES BROWN RETURN TO USA

We are very sorry to report that Cheryl and Wes Brown retired from being full-time Faculty colleagues at IBTS and returned to California at the beginning of September. They have served with distinction as American Baptist Churches missionaries, coming to Europe in 1997 to work with the EBF Theological Assistance Group, then later as full-time lecturers with IBTS. Cheryl has served us as Director of Biblical Studies in recent years and Wes as Chaplain and Lecturer in Missiology. They will both continue to do adjunct faculty teaching with us, but we will miss them very much indeed as permanent members of our Prague community.

The whole EBF family and especially



Wes and Cheryl Brown

the IBTS community owe an outstanding debt of gratitude to these two amazing and gifted people. Thank you

Cheryl and Wes for all you have meant to IBTS and EBF.

NEW STUDENT PROFILES

DEJAN ADAM came to the seminary from Serbia, where he came to Christ while serving in a special police unit. He was exposed to much suffering and violence during the civil wars in former Yugoslavia and one of his tasks was to monitor the activities of religious groups. He says, 'in 1999, during the NATO campaign in the State of Serbia, I was almost killed. A few minutes after I had crossed the largest bridge in my town over the River Danube, NATO planes attacked and completely destroyed it – I felt that God's mercy had protected me. After this event, I pondered on how God was involved in my life and how he took care of me. I began to think seriously about the reality of life and death, and the question which emerged was what shall I do with my life? Should my life be God-centred or self-centred, and what is the meaning of human existence?'

Dejan gained the Certificate in Applied Theology at IBTS last year, and through it he felt that God wanted to use him in his home country to bring peace and reconciliation. He is now a full-time Master's student, studying the impact of community and peacemaking in the Anabaptist tradition. He hopes to learn how to translate those ideas into his home culture and become active in politics. His thesis will look at Jimmy Carter and peacemaking in the political arena.

ANNI KUUSIK came to us from Estonia. She came to Christ during an English camp held by Baptist missionaries in her hometown. She saw the camp advertised as she prepared for an English exam. Whilst at the camp she experienced the

love and kindness of others there and the way they lived their lives. After the camp, she took the university exam and was accepted to study psychology. Months later she still thought of her friends from the English camp and their lifestyle and, whilst attending a church where the pastor is a student of IBTS, she accepted Christ into her life, whereupon she sent an SMS message to her friends. From that time on they began to look to her for answers to life's questions and wanted to know what the Bible said. She soon realized that she could not keep turning to her pastor for all the answers that her friends were asking. Although she has been a believer for less than two years, she decided to apply and was accepted on the Certificate in Applied Theology programme. She has been given a year's leave from her university studies but will return to Estonia to complete her psychology degree after she completes her studies at IBTS in 2005.

Anni says, 'I came to IBTS with no expectations. The community has been very good for me as a young believer. At home I have very few Christians around me and they don't understand me. Here, I am with believers from all over Europe and we understand each other because we have the same Spirit. I don't have to explain myself all the time. It has been very good for me to be in this community and experience this kind of love.'

She feels that there is a great need for Christian psychologists in Estonia, and though she does not know yet how God will use her, she looks forward to what will emerge.



Dejan Adam



Anni Kuusik

AZAR AJAJ is from Israel, where he grew up in a nominally Christian home. At the age of 14, while he was studying at a Baptist school in Nazareth, one of his religion teachers inspired him to begin thinking about his life. He came to realise that any good in his life was not because of him, but because of God in him. He went on to university to study mathematics and, whilst there, he felt God calling him to minister to students in Israel. His church recognised this and ordained him to fulfil that calling. Soon, he realised that he needed further theological training. It was recommended that he come to IBTS. This was a good option for him because he is also a husband, father, pastor and administrator in the Bible Society of Israel. He commenced the Master's degree in Biblical Studies in September 2004 on a part-time basis, which will allow him to continue with his current responsibilities as he trains to equip other leaders in ministry in Israel.

TINA and **MARKO GROZDANOVI** have come to IBTS from Macedonia. Though married for four years, they have known each other since childhood, their parents being life-long friends and spending family holidays together.

Their home church in Skopje is very supportive – Marko has been working with young people, whilst Tina has been developing children's work. As Tina and Marko study, they continue to think of their home church and how they will help them when they have finished their degrees. Their small Baptist church in Skopje averages an attendance of 70, but they decided to invest in the Grozdanovs and sent the young couple to seminary in Croatia, where they recently graduated with Bachelor's degrees. Whilst in Croatia, Marko and Tina learnt about IBTS from visiting lecturers from IBTS, and they began to realise that they would need further education to meet the changing needs of present day Macedonia.



Azar Ajaj

They came to IBTS because it offered the kind of individual attention that they both needed for their further study. Tina is happy that she can adjust the Applied Ethics programme to provide the resources she needs to learn how to bring Christ to the children of Macedonia. Her dream is to create an all-day Christian kindergarten which will provide the kind of care and training that will be an example to others. Marko will pursue his interests in Biblical studies, particularly the Pauline writings.

They will be in residence here in Prague for 18 months, though they plan to return to Macedonia for the summer of 2005 to participate in youth camps and to provide some leadership in their church. In December 2005, when they complete their studies, they both want to return to Skopje, where Marko hopes to be ordained and work as a pastor in his home church. Tina hopes to open her kindergarten and begin her ministry to children. Marko has also noticed the great need for Christian literature in Macedonia and would like to explore options for translation and publishing.

Marko says, 'The resources here at IBTS are better than anything I have seen before. There are good books and good companions, and we receive good guidance.' Tina says, 'I can achieve my goal, which is to research children's ministries and look at it from a Macedonian perspective. I have great people around me who are providing good ideas and letting me pursue ideas that I feel I need to explore.'

As a married couple on campus, they bring a balance to the overall community, and other Christian families at IBTS can help them develop into a well-rounded unit that God will use in his kingdom-building in Macedonia.



Tina and Marko Grozdanovi

VOLUNTEERS HELP DEVELOP THE “A” PARK

We are pleased to announce that the front garden of our campus has been completed. This project was one of the last large volunteer projects outstanding from the time we took possession of the property. Many of you will remember the uneven ground and weeds that were an eyesore to anyone entering our campus. This untended ground was also a problem with the local officials who wanted us to bring to completion the projects we had submitted in 1994 when we purchased the property.

It was truly an answer to prayer. Wheaton Bible Church approached us asking if there were any projects they could be involved in. The team was originally to be twelve adults who could commit to two weeks of hauling dirt, planting grass, clearing rocks, and laying paths. When the plans were finalised, they could only provide seven adults for seven days. Two of these seven adults were promised to

the data conversion and archives work of our library. When our Czech gardener heard that there would only be five adults doing the work, he was sure they would never finish and he would have a mess on his hands when they left. By God’s grace, Jerry Mantooth, a Baptist pastor, and his family, had come to IBTS on sabbatical. While they were here, they asked if there were any work projects they could do as a family, and we knew what to suggest! Greg and Debby Nichols also decided to lend a hand.

On the first day, the team stood and looked at the yard. It was an uneven piece of ground, about the size of a football field, full of weeds, roots, buried paths and overgrown trees. The team worked hard raking, hauling, digging and trimming; sharing their life stories with each other as they worked. Towards the end of the week, their muscles were sore and they were tired, but by the time of the last ride back from the dump at 16.15 on the Friday afternoon – the task had been completed with an hour to spare.

With the continuing help of the IBTS gardeners, the area is now covered with grass, shrubs, and nicely trimmed oaks. There are pathways, benches, and a patio in which our staff and students can now relax and enjoy God’s creation.



“A” park developed

VOLUNTEERS AT IBTS

In addition to the Wheaton Bible Church and the Mantooth family, we have had other volunteers recently contributing to IBTS. Stanley and Patsy Crabb worked in the library and interviewed students. Curtis and Sarah Moore, along with Diane Taylor and Naomi Gazzard, worked to upgrade rooms in F building. Ron McBain and Dejan Adam have been wielding paint brushes, along with Don King who is on his 9th volunteer visit! Clarissa Strickland created a banner for the chapel and interviewed students. Nick and Ann Skipper came to make a promotional video, and Larry and Betty Maddox have continued their various voluntary activities. Pat Ericson and Ellie Eklund worked in the library along with George Matas who is in his fourteenth month of volunteering.

Volunteers will always be an intricate part of the life of this seminary. Currently we are looking for the following tasks to be accomplished by volunteers. Please check the seminary's web site for current updates and needs. There, you

will also find our new system of prioritisation of the volunteer projects based on current needs and associated costs of each project.

CURRENT NEEDS

- English Language Teachers, 3 months or longer for next Academic year
- Archivist to work in the library, minimum 2 weeks
- Database Consultant, to design and transfer an existing database, 1 week
- Indoor Painters, 1 week or longer
- Outdoor Painters, 1 week or longer
- Gardeners, 1 week or longer
- General cleaners and maintenance people, 1 week or longer
- Builders to rebuild the Reception area, 1 week
- Builders to construct two shelters around campus

Please feel free to contact the seminary at Volunteer@IBTS.CZ regarding these projects or other questions you might have regarding volunteers.



Even volunteers need a rest

ALUMNI NEWS

ANNA MAFFEI (BD 1982) has been elected President of the Italian Baptist Union, the first woman to hold this position. She has also been appointed Chair of the External Relations Division of the EBF

TONY PECK (Sabbaticals, 1986 and 2002) has been appointed General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation. The EBF office is now based in "A" Building at IBTS. For information about the EBF and news of Tony see www.ebf.org

HIKMAT KACHOUH (MTh 2003) and his wife, **KRISTA** (CAT student 2003) and their son Markus, are now in Birmingham, England where Hikmat is pursuing doctoral studies.

AAD KIK (BD 1964) This autumn Aad will be retiring from his present position as Coordinator of Inspirational Programs at

the Geert Groote Institute at Windesheim Christian University in Zwolle, The Netherlands. After a long ecumenical career in youth work, development cooperation and religious formation courses, Aad was called into Windesheim University to rewrite its Christian mission statement. While working on that assignment, he discovered a great need among the employees for reflection and inspiration. He suggested to the Board of Directors to establish a Center for Identity and Inspiration in the heart of the university. The Board welcomed the suggestion and later gladly accepted Aad's concept for such a center. In 1996 the then named Geert Groote Institute started. After a break as result of a stroke, Aad was blessed with a new balance and from 1999 able again to develop and lead periodical retreat courses for the employees to reconnect to their sources of inspiration. Last year Windesheim received the Willis Harman Award, granted by the Association of Spirit at Work, for Aad's accomplishments. For this year he was invited to serve on the Award Selection Committee. Surprisingly so the 2004 Awards will be granted during a Spirit in Business Forum in.....Rüschlikon ! A surprising round-up after 40 years.



BWA CENTENARY CONGRESS

The BWA Centenary Congress is being held from 27-31 July 2005 in Birmingham, England. Baptists from throughout the world are already making plans to converge on Birmingham to celebrate 100 years of the Baptist World Alliance.

We expect to see many Alumni, former faculty, volunteers and friends of IBTS at this event, so we have booked Birmingham Civic Centre – right next to the Congress venues – for a special reunion lunch on Thursday, 28 July, from 12.00.

The speakers will include Dr Denton Lotz, former Professor of Missions at Rüschlikon in the

1970s, who developed the SITE programme (now Directors' Conferences) and who is one of two former faculty of IBTS to be General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance (the other was Dr Josef Nordenhaug).

This will be a unique chance to meet up with people from our IBTS family around the world and learn about IBTS today.

Reserve your place now by contacting Lina@ibts.cz, or send a letter to 'IBTS Re-Union' at our Prague address.

For more information about the Centenary Congress go to www.bwacongress2005.org.uk.