

# The Link

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## ANOTHER AMAZING GRADUATION EVENT



*Graduating Master of Theology Students with the Academic Team*

*For the third successive year IBTS campus was bursting with festivity as we graduated and valedicted thirty students for ministries throughout Europe, the Middle East and North America.*

We were especially delighted to have BWA General Secretary, Dr Denton Lotz, and his wife, Janice, visiting IBTS for the annual Graduation Service. They presented the diplomas and flowers to our graduating and valedicted students.

Nine students graduated Master of Theology and thirteen students graduated from the Certificate in Applied Theolo-

gy course, each receiving diplomas awarded by Dr Lotz. All the graduates also received posies of flowers, a typical Czech custom, from Mrs Janice Lotz and Mrs Denise Jones, wife of the Rector.

Dr Lotz, a former Professor of Missions at IBTS and a good supporter of the



*Graduation speaker Dr Denton Lotz with wife Janice*



Full-time Graduating Master of Applied Theology Students

seminary, gave a challenging address to the graduating students on the opportunities facing Christians in our mission today. Reflecting on the first verses of the Letter to the Hebrews, Dr Lotz encouraged and inspired the graduates to take the knowledge they had acquired and use it in the service of the Kingdom of God.

The Graduating students were presented by the Pro-Rector and Academic Dean, Dr Parush R Parushev.



Graduating Certificate of Applied Theology Students

The Rector, the Revd Keith G Jones and the Kvestor, Dr Petra Veselá, congratulated each of the graduating students after Dr Lotz had presented the diplomas.

The Master of Theology students came from Russia, Hungary, Spain, Poland, Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Kazakhstan.

Certificate in Theology students represented the countries of Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Ukraine, Israel, Estonia and Albania.

Student President, Julie Justus, a former Baptist World Alliance staff member, expressed the thanks of the Student Body to Dr Lotz for partici-



Conferring the diplomas

pating in the graduation. He was presented with a book written by IBTS Senior Research Fellow, Dr Ian M Randall on the *“History of the English Baptists in the 20th Century”* as a preparatory read for the BWA 100th Anniversary Congress to be held in Birmingham, England, in July. Mrs Lotz received a fine bouquet of flowers.

The Rector, the Revd Keith G Jones, announced that at the BWA Congress, Dr Lotz would receive the IBTS Scroll of Honour for outstanding leadership in the BWA and particularly honouring his service over many years to Baptists in Europe as a missionary in Europe and as a Professor at IBTS.

# NEW MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC TEAM

We are delighted to announce the appointment of four new part-time lecturers for IBTS as we continue to develop our academic degree programme.

The Board of Trustees confirmed this imaginative approach appointing four people to replace one Director retiring from full-time lecturing and moving to part-time adjunct lecturing, Dr Cheryl A Brown.

Our four colleagues are not strangers to IBTS. Each is already in a relationship with us, but the appointments announced and confirmed by the Board of Trustees mark a significant new period of relationship. So, we introduce our “new” colleagues who begin serving us in this exciting way over the summer months.

**Lina Andronovienė** is one of our own alumni. A Master of Theology graduate with distinction, Lina is now pursuing doctoral studies with us and has been appointed a lecturer in theology and Course Leader in Applied Theology. Lina is from Klaipeda, Lithuania from a family with a long pedigree in Lithuanian Baptist circles and retains strong connections there. She will continue to offer some service there as part-time acting director of the Non-Residential Lithuanian Baptist Bible School.



Tim and Ivana Noble

**Linas Andronovas** is the husband of Lina and Executive secretary of the Lithuanian Baptist Union. Also one of our graduates, he is continuing in doctoral studies with us and has been appointed Lecturer in Theology, having special oversight of the Christian Leadership module. Linas is a skilled carpenter and an excellent organiser. Within his portfolio of responsibilities, he has the role as director of our library services and in recent months he has made dramatic moves to develop our archive facilities using his planning and carpentry skills.



Linas Andronovas

**Ivana Noble** has been working with us for some time now as a lecturer in Applied Theology. A pastor within the Hussite church, she gained her doctoral degree at London University and has recently been awarded her habilitation in the Charles University in Prague. She teaches at the Protestant Theology faculty of Charles University and will serve as a Senior Research fellow at IBTS taking a special interest in our doctoral programme, as well as continuing to lecture in our Applied Theology degree.

**Tim Noble**, husband of Ivana, has qualifications in adult education as well as theology and is currently working on completing his doctorate at the Free University of Amsterdam. He has theology qualifications from the United Kingdom and Brazil and has much practical experience in mission. Tim will lecture in theology and contextual missiology. He will also be our Course Leader in the Contextual Missiology degree.

With these developments **Dr Peter F Penner** will continue to serve as Director of the institute of Mission and Evangelism at IBTS (IME) and will serve as Course Leader in Contextual Missiology. **Professor Dr Wiard Popkes**, one of our alumni who has served IBTS with distinction in many roles, will have a special role in directing the Institute of Biblical Studies.

# EBF OFFICES AT IBTS

On the 8th October 1949 a group known as the Committee of Seven met in the new International Baptist Theological Seminary in Rüschtikon, Switzerland. The purpose of the meeting



*Tony and Gergana in the new EBF offices*

was to approve a draft Constitution for the soon-to-be-formed European Baptist Federation. The Constitution was then formally adopted by the first EBF Council which met in Paris in October 1950. So IBTS played a critical role in the birth of the EBF in the war-torn situation of Europe at that time.

55 years later EBF has 'returned' and from October 2004 has found its permanent home in the buildings of IBTS Prague, now wholly owned by the EBF. During much of the intervening period the EBF Office has been located in the home country of the General Secretary. But there was overwhelming agreement among the EBF Unions about the desirability of a European Baptist Centre in Prague with Seminary and EBF Offices located together.

And so it has proved to be. The new General Secretary, British Baptist minister Tony Peck, and the Administrative Assistant from the former EBF Office in Sofia, Gergana Atanassova, have moved to the splendid offices on the first floor of 'A' Building. Tony still has his family home in Bristol, England but is in Prague on average one week in every month. He is often visiting one or other of the 51 member Unions which make up the EBF. Gergana has made her home in Prague, has day-to-day charge of the EBF Office, and has impressed everyone with the speed at which she is mastering the Czech language.

On 19 March this year a special event was held in the presence of the EBF Executive, the seminary community and ecumenical guests, when the EBF Offices were dedicated to God's glory and the service of the European Baptist family.

With its excellent conference facilities and good flight connections the European Baptist Centre has become the natural place for EBF meetings. The full EBF Council will take place there in September.

## Tony comments:

*We are grateful for the warm welcome and practical help we have received from the IBTS community as we have settled in to our new surroundings. Along with mission and evangelism, human rights, and humanitarian aid, theological education is one of the core concerns of the EBF. I have already discovered a growing appreciation among the EBF Unions for the work of IBTS. Being in the same location as IBTS means that I meet many of the present and future leaders of EBF Union who are studying here. We are glad to have established the European Baptist Centre in the heart of Europe in Prague where so many roads cross.*



*Prayer of Dedication at the EBF inauguration*

## Gergana writes:

*When I was first offered to move with the EBF office to Prague I did not think it was a good idea. I had all my family and friends in Sofia and was reluctant to leave them. Now when I look back at that time and the decision I made to move, I know it was the right one. It has been a wonderful experience, an opportunity to learn many things and make new friends for which I am thankful to God.*

We look forward to a growing and developing partnership with 'our' Seminary as together we seek to be effective in serving the Baptist family in Europe and the Middle East.

# Alec Gilmore returns

For a few years now the IBTS library and the Certificate in Applied Theology programme has enjoyed regular two-week visits by the Revd Alec Gilmore from Sussex, UK.

During his stay his primary focus has been working with the archives of IBTS (and EBF). This year Alec was able to complete the greatest part of the archives which now comprise of about 400 boxes each containing hundreds of pages of various archival material covering several decades of Baptist life in Europe and beyond. We hope that he will be able to continue his involvement with us for the next few years as well.

Apart from working with the dusty memories of the past, Alec was taking part in a very lively Communication module of the Certificate of Applied Theology programme to enlighten CAT students in the right and errant ways and of oral communica-



*Alec Gilmore in the IBTS library at the book-signing*

tion and preaching. In this academic year's CAT programme Alec engaged students in a five-day seminar on public speaking.

Alec Gilmore has also authored many books on Christian baptism, preaching, worship, and other important topics regarding life in baptistic churches. The picture was taken at a book-signing event and discussion with some Master students.

# Oncken Pavilion Renovation

*(formerly known as the V Building)*

In late February we put out a plea for volunteers to work in V building. We needed decorators and painters to upgrade this building which provides housing for conferences and hotel guests. There were 14 rooms needing to be repaired, repainted, and decorated before new carpet could be installed. Praise God



*Don King with Hugh and Joan Belshaw in the doorway of the Oncken Pavilion*

that this project has been completed on time!

We had many volunteers come to assist in this work. Don King was here for the duration of the project. His brushwork and determinedness was inspiring. He was joined by Bob McQueen and Miriam Mekin for two weeks of painting. Diane Taylor and her husband Richard made a return trip to make new window curtains for the freshly painted rooms. We were also blessed to have Hugh and Joan Belshaw visit to lend a hand with numerous projects around campus. IBTS chaplain, Larry Maddox returned from a trip to Bosnia to put up the curtain rods and continue assembling and installing coat racks. Benjamin Svistek, one of our CAT graduates, dedicated his time to assist in the final week of renovation.

Others that have recently been on campus include Alec Gilmore who joined volunteers Bill and Nancy Lively in the library. Barbara Sawyer, Paula James, and Betty Stone offered their time with preparing decorations for graduation.

We are thankful to each of these volunteers and the churches which supported them during these projects. **IBTS needs volunteers.** We currently have several projects waiting for teams or individuals. If you are interested, please view our web page or contact the seminary directly.



Board of Trustees

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES HOLD SPRING MEETING

Our Board of Trustees gathered on campus in April to take stock of all the work and activity of IBTS. It was a full agenda with the Board work on a whole series of special tasks looking at how IBTS projects itself in the public domain and the nature of the support from the EBF Unions for our activities.

## ACADEMIC ISSUES

Special meetings of the Academic Advisory Committee looked at the overall academic programme of the institution and considered a range of new modules which will be introduced from the Autumn Trimester 2005. There is considerable excitement about IBTS courses with regular enquiries from all over the world to study with us. However, the Academic Team are constantly at work offering new ideas and themes of service to the churches, mission agencies and partner seminaries.

The work of our Research Institutes also featured with encouraging reports on the developing range of research publications and the increasing importance of our *Journal of European Baptist Studies*.

The Board also made key appointments to the lecturing team (see page 3) and re-appointed our Kvestor, Petra Veselá, for another five-year term. Vanessa Lake, recently joining the IBTS team as Personal Assistant to the Rector, was also recruited as the new Clerk to the Board of Trustees.

## FINANCE

On the Finance and Administration side, our Auditor, Dr Mejzlík attended the Finance Committee meetings and pronounced another clear year audit-wise, demonstrating that once again our control and management procedures are in good shape.

Of course, 2004 proved a very difficult year for us financially with an operating loss of over Kc 9.5 million Czech crowns. Costs were kept within control, below budget and, indeed, lower than 2003 by almost 5% thanks to careful management of the Prague campus. We are delighted to report donations from European Baptists were up by Kc 408,000, though the support from the USA declined by over Kc 1.6 million crowns.

This means the Seminary is having to consider many ways of raising income to continue our record level of scholarship support to students coming from central and eastern Europe and the Middle East.



Dr Wieser, BOT Chair, presents flowers to Lina Andronovienė, retiring as BOT Clerk, on her appointment as an IBTS Lecturer.

One principle development agreed upon was to brand our guest accommodation provision as the “Hotel Jenerálka” and provide a three star service. Publicity material and a new web site is already leading to an increased bed occupancy rate in our guest rooms. Hopefully in 2005 this will be of help to us in generating more income to continue our high level of student scholarship support.

# IBTS GETS A SPRING CLEANING

This spring the IBTS community organised a campus Clean-Up Day one warm Saturday in mid-April. Let's reflect on some individuals who joined the cleaning crew this day.

First, for two-year old Jason, son of Peter Smith an on-campus PhD student, it seemed the perfect opportunity to ride in the 'car' all day. Jason was part of a group which specialised in manoeuvring the battery-powered cart around IBTS to retrieve and dump full bags of waste. For Jason this was serious business and it was a delight for the rest of us to see him helping with his small hands and big heart.



*Parush Parushev, Tina Grozdanova and Rasha Tannous assist in the Campus Spring Clean up.*

Secondly, it was a unique opportunity to see our Rector Keith Jones with a back-pack full of supplies, working together with

students and colleagues, as he collected the leaves and rubbish from the gutter alongside the road. Definitely he was pleased to have the campus in order before the Board of Trustee meetings.

Thirdly, we must mention and say a great 'thanks' to Denise, Helle and Kris who were responsible for providing a refreshment break and lunch to the hungry crew. This proved to be a source of needed rest and reinvigoration.

For all this day was an enjoyable time of experiencing a real sense of community while contributing to the ecologically-friendly attitudes

that are nurtured at IBTS. If you are in the Prague area next spring and see us working hard don't hesitate to pick up a rake and join the fun.

## STUDENT REFLECTIONS

It is amazing how the year has flown by! Graduation was only a few short days ago and full-time students have begun trickling back to their home countries or moving on to their next big adventure. The year was a wonderful mixture of academic achievements, community interaction and spiritual



*Evnika Kobatsi*

growth. Not one student has left IBTS unchanged as the unique experience of living, worshipping and studying alongside students and faculty from around the world has impacted each in a special way. Here is one of our CAT students from the Ukraine, Evnika Kobatsi's reflection on the year:

*Before I came to IBTS I worked as a secretary and partly as a translator in the Carpathian Bible College, Mukachevo, Transcarpathia. Always being around students and sometimes taking part in the lessons continually raised a desire in me to continue my studies in theological education. I heard about the CAT programme at IBTS and with lots of prayer and blessings from my church, I applied for it and was accepted. The year that I spent at IBTS was a tremendous blessing. Thanks to God and the seminary my faith has grown and deepened. IBTS has helped me expand my views on various things, even though sometimes it was not so easy for me to accept different understandings of some theological issues. I look forward to returning to my country, church and work in the college and share new insights and discuss questions that have been raised here at IBTS.*

# ALUMNI NEWS

**MWADZI family (1990's) - JAMES** is now lecturing at Kenya Baptist College and Everlyn working towards her Bachelor of Theology degree.

**ANTONIA LUCIC (1990's)** - continues doctoral studies at Fuller. She is engaged to be married to Jonathan E Gonzalez.

**JOHN BAYES (1960's)** - is now serving as one of the Regional Ministers of the East Midlands Baptist Association in England.

**ALEXANDR CHEREVKO (2000's)** - is now serving as Dean of a Bible school in the Ukraine. he and his stu-

dents were very active in Kiev during the "orange revolution".

**OLEG GRYTSK (CAT student 2000)** - has been doing mission work in Bulgaria.

His brother, **IGOR, (CAT student 2001)** is much involved in developing the Russian -speaking Baptist church here in Prague, together with our part time student, **GEN-NADY GAVRILOV**. Igor and his wife, **NATALIA** (CAT student 2001) now have a lovely daughter, Erika.

**RHODA SAA'D (CAT student 2003)** - is studying English at the University of Haifa.

**TIMOFEY CHEPRASOV (MTh 2005)** - was married on 21 May 2005 and came with his wife Yulia for his graduation ceremony and as a stop for their honeymoon.



## 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 Rüschtikon 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](http://www.bwacongress2005.org.uk).*