

The Link

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A PLACE OF COMING AND GOING

IBTS, was at its festive best on the 30th of May 2006, when BWA President, the Revd David R Coffey (England) visited IBTS for the annual Graduation Service, delivering the address to the graduates.

Five students graduated Master of Theology and were awarded their diplomas by BWA President, David Coffey and thirteen students graduated from the Certificate in Applied Theology course, again, receiving their diplomas from Mr Coffey. A further eight students were Valedicted as they moved to the dissertation writing stage of their Masters and Magister degrees.

Amongst a capacity congregation present for the ceremony was Her Excellency, Linda Duffield, the British Ambassador; Ms Ekaterina Baranche-

va, Third Secretary from the Russian Embassy; representatives of the theology faculties of the Charles University and the EBF General Secretary, the Revd A A Peck. Representatives of other English language educational institutions in Prague were also present.

Mr Coffey, retiring General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, gave a challenging address to the graduating students on the opportunities and struggles for Christians in our mission and discipleship today basing his address on the call of the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 6 and verses 1-8. He encouraged and inspired them to take the knowledge they had acquired and use it in the service of the Kingdom of God as they returned to serve in their home countries.

The Graduating Master of Theology students came from France, Czech Republic, Sweden and the United States of America. The Certificate students from Serbia, Moldova, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Ukraine and Israel.

The Rector expressed the thanks of the whole IBTS community to the BWA President for participating in the graduation and presented a gift of appreciation to Mr Coffey and one to be taken to Mrs Coffey as she was unable to attend.



BWA President, the Revd David R Coffey addresses the graduating students of Spring 2006.



Lecturers, Staff and Students of the 2006 – 2007 IBTS Academic Year

Three months after bidding farewell to the Graduating students of Spring 2006, IBTS again welcomed this autumn an exciting new batch of students eager to begin their studies at IBTS. The new student body includes **17 MPhil/PhD students** from Egypt, USA, Canada, Hungary, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Belarus, Norway, Romania, India; **4 MTh students** from South Africa, Egypt, Denmark, Ukraine; **7 MGr students** from Russia, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan; **12 CAT students** from Russia, Kosovo, Spain, Korea, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic; and **1 Intensive English student** from Korea.

Elisabet Fernandez-Morales recently graduated in journalism from a university in Madrid, Spain and this fall is enrolled as a new student in the **CAT programme**. Elisabet has a very strong desire to serve in ministry and believes IBTS will be the ideal place to train for it. She has been heavily involved in the ministry of her home church and working with Campus Crusade in Madrid. She came to IBTS to learn more about Christianity and how to communicate it better as she seeks and she is eager to use her education from IBTS for ministry in Spain.



In March 2006 **Jiyun “John” Jang** from Yeosu City, South Korea, moved to Prague with his wife and two daughters. John is a student in the IBTS **Intensive English** course. Though choosing to study at IBTS primarily to improve his English, he also desires to build relationships with other believers, and learn to share the Christian faith more effectively. In addition to his studies, John works for the Central European Center of Mission Studies and pastors the multinational Kobylish Church in Prague.



WELCOME AND WELCOME BACK

IBTS is pleased and delighted to welcome new and returning friends into various positions of the seminary staff.

Though *Dejan and Daily Adam* are in their second year in Prague together, for Dejan it is actually his fourth year as he came to IBTS in 2003 as a CAT student, then applied for Magister studies and finished successfully in June 2006. Now Dejan is working as campus steward and student work supervisor, as well as picking up many other miscellaneous tasks around campus. In 2004 Daily started her studies at IBTS as a part-time Master's student in Baptist and Anabaptist Studies. After marrying Dejan last summer she joined him here as full time student. From June Daily began working in library and acting as Deputy Academic Registrar whilst the Registrar is away in maternity leave.



Daily Adam working in the IBTS Registrar's office

Ian and Janice Randall returned to the Prague campus in July 2006. They lived and worked at IBTS previously, from 1999 to 2002. Ian, who is a Senior Research Fellow of IBTS, has taken over from Toivo Pilli as the course leader in Baptist and Anabaptist Studies and Janice has taken up the role of head of the IBTS English department. Over the past few years Janice has been teaching English in central London to students from many countries and all walks of life – including doctors, business people, politicians and an Orthodox Church bishop! Ian has been teaching at Spurgeon's College, London, and last year he also managed to produce three books on Baptist history and spirituality. They both enjoy meeting people from different cultures and a highlight early last year was to spend a week in Algeria, North Africa, where Ian was teaching in a Bible school. Janice translated the lectures into French. They are excited that returning to Prague means they will be near their family. Their two daughters, son-in-law and two small grand-children (Theodore and Iona) all live in the Czech Republic.



Ian and Janice Randall during the IBTS Orientation weeks

Matt and Jenny Thomas are in their fourth year of living and serving in Prague. They work with TeachOverseas, a mission agency based in the United States which trains and places Christians to teach English and other subjects around the world. For three years, Jenny taught English at a public high school in Prague before joining the English Department this year at IBTS. Matt began his involvement with IBTS as a Research Associate while finishing his doctorate in the Hebrew Bible and went on to become Associate Lecturer in Old Testament, teaching in the Masters' and CAT programs and supervising student research. This year they are also involved in subediting projects for various Seminary publications. Matt and Jenny are overjoyed to have recently welcomed their first child, daughter Anna Grace, who joined the family by adoption.



Matt and Jenny Thomas with recently adopted Anna Grace

CAT REUNION A GREAT SUCCESS!

Certificate in Applied Theology (CAT) alumni from far and near gathered at IBTS for the first reunion of CAT students since the programme began in Prague six years ago. The IBTS Board of Trustees developed this lay training programme as IBLA (International Baptist Lay Academy) operating in Hungary during the 1980's and early 1990's until it moved to Prague as the CAT programme in 1999/2000.

Alumni came to the Reunion from as far away as Israel, far east Russia, and the United States. Those from nearby included CAT alumni that were currently Masters students living on the IBTS campus. Alumni from each of the six CAT classes since 2000 attended and there was much joy and laughter, hugs and kisses as friends greeted each other and renewed relationships. A total of approximately fifty people including alumni, family, friends, and faculty participated in the activities of the reunion.

The packed four-day schedule had many opportunities for fellowship including a welcoming tea in the guest lounge, lunch and late-evening snacks in G building, a barbecue picnic on the hill, coffee breaks, and meals in the dining hall.

Sunday afternoon was set aside for sharing. IBTS Rector Keith G Jones, welcomed everyone to the Reunion and gave an update on IBTS, its current programmes and future plans which provoked engaging discussions from Reunion participants. The alumni shared some of what they learned as students that proved significant upon returning home to minister. One alumni said, "The concept of 'community' was very

important for me. I learned that this is central in Christianity." Another stated, "I learned that it is OK to have different opinions from my friends and it is OK to express my opinions." A third indicated, "I learned that mission can be understood more broadly. It is more that just leading people to conversion as important as that is. It can also mean such things as caring for our environment."

Later the alumni gathered by classes to share with one another what has been happening in their lives since graduation, then reconvened and several alumni shared humorous memories about life in "G building" – the home for CAT students during their stay at IBTS.

The group shared in worship with the Šárka Valley Community Church led by Greg Nichols on the Sunday morning, Larry Maddox led a special worship service for the alumni on Monday evening and Keith Jones led the chapel services on Monday and Tuesday mornings.

Several learning opportunities were scheduled on the Monday and Tuesday of the Reunion as a total of six seminars were prepared for them by various IBTS lecturers and the EBF General Secretary Tony Peck.

The reunion ended on a high note as the alumni participated in the IBTS graduation ceremony followed by a festal buffet. Each enjoyed the reunion very much and expressed hope and desire for another one in 2010.



CAT Alumni enjoy the BBQ Social on the IBTS hill.

FIRST GRADUATES OF THE MAGISTER PROGRAMME

June 14th saw the first ever examinations in IBTS for the Magister degree, the Czech accredited programme, which has been running since 2004. Three students presented their work – Dejan Adam from Serbia, Marko Grozdanov from Macedonia, and Krzysztof Sielicki from Poland. Each of them underwent an hour’s oral examination before a commission of three or four of IBTS’ teachers.

As these are public examinations, there was also a good representation of well-wishers, including Daily and Tina, both IBTS students and spouses to Dejan and Marko, and Małgosia, Kris’s then fiancée.

In the first part of his examination, each student had to present a brief summary of the main motivations and findings of his dissertation. This entailed the unenviable task of distilling months of blood, sweat and tears into

about ten minutes. The main examiner in each discipline was then able to ask further questions, and push the students on the less clear parts of their work, or encourage them to develop some of the ideas further. This first part of the examination, the oral defence of the dissertation, lasted about half an hour.

The second half-hour was given over to responding to broader questions based on the student’s work over the past two years. This involved responses from the student and questioning from the examining committee, chaired by the Pro-Rector, Dr. Parush Parushev, assisted by our Senior Research Fellow, Ivana Noble, together with the relevant member(s) of the teaching staff (respectively Peter Penner, Toivo Pilli and Tim Noble). All three students acquitted themselves well, with marks ranging from distinction through Very Good pass to Good

pass. Their success marked another milestone on IBTS’ journey, and an even more important one for Dejan, Marko and Kris in their journey of service of the Lord.



Marko Grozdanov receives his Magister diploma from Rector Keith Jones during a special service in Skopje, Macedonia, Marko’s home city.

IBTS LECTURER’S NEW ROLE

The Revd Dr Docent Ivana Noble, IBTS Senior Research Fellow, has been elected President of the internationally prestigious Societas Oecumenicas.

Dr Noble, a minister in the Czech Hussite Church, is a Senior Research Fellow at IBTS and also lectures in the Protestant Theological Faculty of the historic Charles University. She holds degrees from the Hussite and Protestant faculties of Charles University and from the University of London. A noted philosophical theologian who has published and edi-



ted several books, Dr Noble was elected during the 14th Academic Consultation of the Societas held recently at IBTS. She has taken over from Bernd Jochen Hilberath as President.

Amongst those delivering papers at the Academic consultation were Professor Geoffrey Wainwright of Duke University, North Carolina; the Revd Dr Docent Parush R Parushev, Academic Dean of IBTS; Dr Andrew Piece of the Irish School of Ecumenics in Dublin; Professor Christoph Schwobel of the University of Tübingen and the Orthodox scholar, Dr Antoine Arjakovsky of the University of Lviv.

Ivana Noble was born in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, in 1966, studied theology at the Hussite Theological Faculty in Prague, did her doctorate at Heythrop College of the University of London, and habilitation at the Protestant Theological Faculty in Prague. She has taught in fundamental theology, systematic theology, and philosophy at The Institute of Ecumenical Studies, Protestant Theological Faculty and International Baptist Theological Seminary. Her main interests are philosophical critiques of ideology, relationship between theology and culture, ecumenism and sacramental theology. She is an ordained priest in the Czechoslovak Hussite Church and helps at the parish of Zbraslav near Prague. Ivana is married to Tim Noble, who also teaches at IBTS.

IBTS AS A DEVELOPING “ECO-SEMINARY”

Flowing from the IBTS Mission Statement, IBTS recognises the responsibility to care for the gift of creation and witness to the Šárka Valley region the importance of educating and enabling the staff, students, visitors and neighbours in the stewardship of God's world. The IBTS Board of Trustees and the Rectorate Team are committed to striving to form IBTS into an community and an institution which holds its Environmental Policy as a governing factor in its management systems.

Thirty eight theologians and environmentalists from many different Christian traditions gathered at IBTS, for the four day conference designed to create material to introduce a theology of creation care to seminaries, colleges and institutions all across Europe and to provide insights and material for the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Romania in 2007.

Professor Graham Ashworth, President of the Federation for Environ-

demy at Vilemov in Moravia described their work in theological education and also reported on their practical use of renewable energy through a wind turbine, hydro electric, bio-mass heating, solar panels and photo voltaic panels.

Petra Veselá and Lina Andronovienė from IBTS described the course in theology of creation care offered to Certificate and Masters students at IBTS and also the practical work of the seminary in creating an ecological environment, recycling and the development of an eco-campus. Dr Martin Hodson from Oxford Brookes University reported on the course he leads in Rural Environmental Studies. Details of the work of the Christian conservation group, A Rocha, working in the Czech Republic and sixteen other countries also featured along with details of projects in Italy, Slovakia and Albania, together with a report from Dr John Biggs of Cumbria, on the work of eco-congregations. Paula Clifford from the British Aid and Development Agency, Christian Aid, spoke on the impact of Global climate change on the poor.

Afternoons were spent in workshops on theology, mission, and ethics and worship these produced material which will be published for use in colleges, seminaries and education institutions in Europe to stimulate and provide a curriculum for a theology of creation care.

IBTS Rector Keith Jones commented “this has been a very dynamic and exciting conference. All of us present shared in making commitments in the final act of worship to return to our on activities and redouble our efforts and concern in this area.”



Creation Care Conference participants hosted by IBTS

The IBTS Environmental Policy embraces the notion of Sustainable Development, which is different from sustainability and more accurately reflects the seminary's understanding of being made in the image of God and invited by Him to be partners with Him in both the maintenance and development of His creation.

As an outgrowth of this deep conviction, in August IBTS was the venue for theologians and environmentalists from all over Europe to gather for a conference focussed on “Creation Care: Christian Environmental Stewardship”.

mental Education, opened the Conference with a challenging address on the importance of the church being involved in environmental issues. He helped delegates recall some of the horrific statistics about the declining supply of potable water in our world, the challenges of the destruction of the natural habitat of animals and the rapid erosion of non-replaceable fossil fuels.

The communication of a theology of the environment to students was the theme of a comprehensive paper by the Revd Dr John Weaver, who lectures on science and theology in the University of Cardiff. Magister Roman Juriga from the Orthodox Aca-

IBTS VISITORS: A MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT

It is a delight for IBTS to welcome people from all around the globe to participate in the community life of the seminary in many ways. From sabbatical visits and volunteers, to hotel guests many people pass through the IBTS courtyard, relax in the Guest Lounge with a cup of coffee and converse with the various members of the seminary community. IBTS is enriched by these visitors and the stories, experiences and insights they bring with them... and leave behind. One such couple was Sarah and Emrys Tyler from the US who came to IBTS primarily as a place for Emrys to spend time in independent study, but their involvement in the wider community was a mutual encouragement for those at IBTS and for the Tylers. Below is copied a letter of Emrys' reflection after leaving IBTS.

To the Faculty, Staff, and Students of IBTS:

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I want to offer you my thanks for an enjoyable and unforgettable experience during our stay with you at IBTS. When I began to communicate with you about coming to IBTS as a research student I had in my mind a vision of IBTS that was the same as the other seminaries and universities I have attended and visited. What I found with you, however, was very different. In the things that make IBTS different I have discovered a gorgeous member of the body of Christ. Thank you for offering me and my wife a quiet place to be for two months in Prague, a place of worship and prayer, and a place with a good library and librarians. Thank you also for offering us fun faculty and staff who do their work dependably and with joy.

I think the ministry of IBTS is something that our world very much needs. I think those called to both pastoral and academic ministries need a place where they can live out the cycle of reflection and action required by the Holy Spirit. I think daily, communal, worship, and prayer—with daily communal coffee time—is an integral practice for those who wish to con-

template our Lord and dare to speak about the Triune God and the Church. Therefore, let me encourage you to carry on the ministry you have found. If any doubt resides within you or among you about the validity of your work, please accept my word of validation as one person who has been richly blessed by your life and efforts. Let no such doubt exist. Our Lord is with you and among you.

We look forward to the time when we may return to Prague and spend time with the IBTS community again. Perhaps next time we will be able to bring others with us, in order to scatter the Father's blessings in an even wider arc.

Grace and peace to you all, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Emrys Tyler



Emrys and Sarah Tyler participating in an IBTS community social event

ALUMNI & STUDENT NEWS

SUSAN LINDERMAN (2002 – 2005) former head of the IBTS English Department has been jointly appointed by the American Baptist Churches of the Dakotas and the American Baptist Churches USA International Ministries as a commissioned missionary. She is presently living and working in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria.

SINISA (MTh 2002) and Alla Klem welcomed to their family on 21 April 2006 a beautiful baby girl whom they named Nika.

CAT alumnus **VITALII CIORNII** was married to Irina in Chisinau, Moldova on 1 July 2006.

KRZYSZTOF SIELICKI (CAT 2004/MGr 2006) married Małgorzata Latanowicz on 15 July in Poznań, Poland. Kris is an assistant pastor in the Baptist Church in Poznan, works with the homeless and with Bible translation. His wife is a musician and composer of gospel music, doing workshops around Poland.



Kuchařová and Csényi 'Service of Blessing' in the IBTS chapel

Also on 15 July **NORBERT CSÉNYI** (MTh 2005) married IBTS Administrator **KATKA KUČAŘOVÁ**.

The ceremony took place in Dobříš, Czech Republic, with a Service of Blessing in the IBTS chapel on the following Sunday.

23 July, **SIMEON VLECHKOV** (CAT 2004) was married to Penelopa in the IBTS chapel. They live in Prague and are involved with the work of Project Hope which reaches out to women who are caught in prostitution.

JOSEF FORSLING married this summer to Maria in the outskirts of Stockholm, Sweden. Josef's father performed the ceremony.

DR TORSTEN BERGSTEN a Rüschiikon alumni recently sent his greeting to the extended IBTS community. He and his wife Helga regularly read the LINK and enjoy seeing the development and activities of the seminary.

THEODORUS VAN DER LAAN who also graduated from IBTS in Switzerland from 1955-59 sent a note of appreciation to IBTS, Prague this past Spring for the publication of the LINK and the Journal of European Baptist Studies. Theodorus was one of the founders of the Nordenhaug Lectures and did his major with Nordenhaug in Sociology of Religion.

RAIMUNDO C. BARRETO Jr. (1997-98) has successfully completed the doctoral program from Princeton Theological Seminary, being awarded a PhD in Christian Social Ethics. Raimundo is currently living and working in Brazil as the senior pastor of the Igreja Batista Esperanca, in Salvador, and teaches ethics at the Faculdade Batista Brasileira. He is also the coordinator of the Martin Luther King Center for Social Ethics in Brazil.

Professor JOHN J KIWJET passed away in Fort Worth, Texas on 2 October 2006. He is survived by his bride of 55 years, Margaret, five children, Eva, Talitha, Nicoline, Henry and Pieter, and ten grandchildren. John was an alumni of the European Baptist Theological Seminary when IBTS was located in Rüschiikon, Switzerland. He was a leader among Baptists in the Netherlands and his wife Mar-



John J Kiwiet, 1925-2006

garet is the daughter of a fine Dutch Baptist pastor. John gained a doctor of theology degree from the University of Utrecht in The Netherlands, and a doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Zurich before going on to teach for many years at various seminaries in the USA as well as becoming a noted author.

From 1967 John held various positions Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas before retiring in 1990. John served as an adjunct lecturer in theology in the first semesters IBTS was relocated to Prague. John and Margaret's interest in IBTS remained strong throughout the years and continued to believe in the strategic mission of IBTS. John and Margaret's broad cultural perspective and deep commitment to the Lord have inspired many throughout the years and John's memory will continue to do so.

You will notice the significant change in this issue of the LINK. Following on the development of IBTS becoming an eco-seminary, we have decided to use paper for the LINK which is more environmentally friendly.

The paper is 100% recycled with no bleach and no other changes made to the surface. It is called RecyStar - white 115g/m² with the Nordic Environmental label made by Schneidersöhne.

