

# The Link

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## 58<sup>th</sup> ACADEMIC YEAR ENDS IN CELEBRATION

IBTS was once again glistening with excitement and splendour as smartly dressed students and lecturers donned in robes and multi-coloured hoods filed into the chapel for the 58<sup>th</sup> Graduation and Valediction ceremony for the seminary on Tuesday, 29 May.

Among them was the welcomed guest speaker Dr Simon Oliver, Senior Lecturer in Theology at the University of Wales – Lampeter, who conferred the degrees and delivered the address to the graduates and students.

Eleven students successfully graduated from the Master of Theology programme, some in absentia as they were fulfilling their ministries in different parts of the world. Those who were present at the ceremony were awarded their diplomas by Dr Oliver and had the University of Wales hood placed on them by the Rector of IBTS and the Academic Dean. One IBTS student graduated with a postgraduate Certificate in Theology, four students graduated Magister in Theology and thirteen students graduated from the Certificate in Applied Theology course, one with distinction. A further six students

were Valedicted as they moved to the dissertation writing stage of their Masters, Magister and Doctoral degrees.

The graduating students were presented by the Pro-Rector and Academic Dean, Dr Parush R Parushev. The Rector, the Revd Keith G Jones, congratulated each of the graduating students after Dr Oliver presented their diplomas.



*IBTS students queue outside the IBTS chapel before entering for the ceremony*



*Parush Parushev, Simon Oliver and Keith Jones after the graduation ceremony*

Dr Oliver, who represents the University of Wales in contacts with IBTS, delivered a challenging address to the graduating students drawing them back to the essentials of living out their Christian vocations in our complex world. 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 Master and Magister of Theology students came from the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Germany, Ukraine, Lebanon, Romania, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Serbia, Macedonia, Poland, South Africa, Russia, Armenia and the United States of America. The Doctoral students represented India and the United States of America.

The thirteen students in the Certificate of Applied Theology programme came from Spain, Serbia, Russia, Kosovo, Korea, Kazakhstan, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Ukraine and Hungary.

Amongst a capacity congregation

present for the ceremony, IBTS welcomed Her Excellency, Ms Nomsa Dube, the South African Ambassador and Ms Ekaterina Barancheva, Third Secretary from the Russian Embassy, together with an officer from the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Representatives from the theology faculties of the Charles University and of other English language educational institutions in Prague were also present.

Following the ceremony, all were



*Keith Jones presents Larry and Betty Maddox a plaque of appreciation*

invited to a celebratory buffet prepared in the IBTS dining hall. At this time the Rector expressed the thanks of the whole IBTS community to Dr Simon Oliver for participating in the graduation.

Special recognition was given to Larry and Betty Maddox who completed their time as IBTS volunteers after 10 years of faithful service. Based in Texas, Larry and Betty travelled yearly to Prague for months at a time as long-term volunteers, working in various capacities ~ Larry served as IBTS chaplain and gave lectures to the students, Betty primarily helped in the IBTS Guest Lounge and Bookshop. The IBTS students, alumni and staff were extremely thankful for Larry and Betty's dedication to the seminary during these years.

Next spring 2008 the 59<sup>th</sup> IBTS Graduation ceremony is on the calendar for Tuesday, 27 May. IBTS is eager to welcome anyone who may wish to come and participate in this festive event!

# ACADIA/EBF YOUTH MINISTRY INSTITUTE MEETS AT IBTS

It is said that the third time is a charm and in the case of the latest Acadia Divinity College (Canada) and European Baptist Federation Youth Ministry Institute this was true, as it once again proved to be a motivating and challenging training event. Jeff Carter, Coordinator for Youth Leadership Training for the European Baptist Federation and conference coordinator explained, "As one of the sponsored training events through the EBF Youth Leadership Training Department, this course has risen to be one of our premier events for equipping young leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. It continues to be an event that transforms lives and impacts future directions of not only youth leaders but national movements as well." Twenty-two delegates representing 13 nations came together for 5 days on the campus of the International Baptist Theological Seminary to learn about effective programming by world renowned youth instructor Marv Penner (Canada). Students grappled with practical and theoretical issues of the day-to-day programming of youth ministry and the implications for authentic interaction with youth as leaders of integrity and faith.

Astrid Raja a participant from Estonia commented, "I really enjoyed the multicultural setting we were studying in. It helped me remember that there are many different ways how to serve the same God and same purposes, yet in totally different ways. For me the study was really helpful. I've never attended a course on youth ministry like that before (I doubt if many Estonian youth workers have). I am really thankful to God for giving me such an opportunity and pray for wisdom now on how to spread the things and ideas I've learned, so that youth ministry in Estonia could be more effective."

Rani Saba from Israel added, "It was a wonderful week with the Canadian, European and Middle Eastern participants. Youth in every place are facing the same problems and fears and they do not deal with them in a right and safe way. This intensive seminar made me think a lot about the youth in the Middle East / Israel / Nazareth / my church. They are facing or may face the same problems and as leaders we must be ready to be with them in facing these issues the best way we can."

Ben Trites, youth pastor from Hillside Baptist Church in Moncton, Canada enthusiastically shared, "We so often assume that people from other parts of the world are less fortunate than we are in the West and that we have so much, but in reality we learned as we visited ministries across Europe, sat together in classes and ate meals together, that we differ perhaps only in our methods and not so much in our passion to work with youth." He continued, "In Canada we know so little about the rest of the world and really have had our blinders taken off, this has opened my eyes and given me a whole new vision for the world and what fantastic things are being done in Europe and the Middle East". Our brothers and sisters here may not have the greatest resources but they have innovation, creativity and enthusiasm on their side!"

This training event was a joint venture of the Canadian Baptist Ministries, the European Baptist Federation and the International Baptist Theological Seminary and Acadia Divinity College.



*IBTS CAT students, Liridon Durguti and Oleya Babina (right) involved in discussions during the Acadia/EBF Youth Ministry Institute*

## IBTS LIBRARY: CHANGES AND DONATIONS

The International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague boasts one of the largest English-language theological libraries on the mainland of Europe. The library began in 1949 as an "Extraordinary Member" of the European Theological Libraries Association (Bibliothèques Europeennes De Theologie - BETH) and grows currently at the rate of over 1,200 books per year.

Highly regarded by theological scholars and those doing research, the library began in recent years to run out of shelving space for new books. In light of this the IBTS Board of Trustees commissioned the Rector and the Academic Team to develop proposals to expand the shelving and create more room for study corrals ~ these plans were presented to the Board and approved in the spring of 2006.

As Special Projects Assistant to the Rector, Linas Andronovas (also an IBTS lecturer in Applied Theology and the Executive Secretary of the Baptist Union of Lithuania) was appointed to develop the project and oversee the practicalities of this great task. The work continued through the autumn and winter of 2006 and on Friday, 26 January 2007, Katharina Penner, Head Librarian, was able to commence reshelving books on to the new shelves which now ensures the expansion of the library for the next 15 years.



*Linas Andronovas with the newly placed shelves in the IBTS library*

That Friday, Rector Keith G Jones commented that "with over 40 part time master and doctoral students due to arrive for intensive study on the 28th of January, we are delighted our colleague, Linas, has been able to complete this project ahead of time and under budget! It is a marvelous achievement!"

Reflecting on the project, Linas Andronovas stated that "this scheme provides extra study spaces for our ever-increasing number of doctoral students and enables us to carry on growing the library towards 100,000 volumes." Part of the funding for the new shelving came from the Lawton Shelving Fund for IBTS, managed by the Cooperative Baptist Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Rector Jones remarked "we are grateful for this financial resource and perhaps others who love our library and want to continue to see it grow will help us meet the costs of this major project."

The new shelving and space expansion came in good time, as in early Spring 2007, IBTS received a gift of the complete set of the People's Bible Commentary from Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF), a registered charity in the UK. On behalf of BRF, Alec Gilmore, an IBTS visiting lecturer in Education, Preaching and Pastoral Ministry and archivist for the European Baptists presented the Commentaries to the IBTS library.

"These books will be a good addition to our library," said Katharina Penner. "Our students are already familiar with some of these authors through their other publications and will be pleased to have this further input. Most of them will become ministers or lay leaders in the churches of Europe and those with higher degrees may well expect to take up positions of regional or national leadership, so who knows where the People's Commentaries will turn up in future."

While contributions like this have allowed the IBTS library to develop and increase the collection of theological materials, the library equipment has received less attention.

One area that had not seen an upgrade since the seminary's move from Switzerland is the equipment that reads microfilm and microfiche. Currently the library has many books, journals and dissertations which are on either microfilm or microfiche. The only way to view these microformats has been by using an outdated machine with poor visibility and lacking the ability to print.

Recently, through a generous donation from US missionary Gregory Nichols and the Greater Europe Mission, the IBTS library has been able to update this equipment. The library now possess a high quality unit which is an all-in-one microfilm and microfiche reader, printer and scanner. This piece of equipment allows the residential students an easy method of viewing and printing formerly unused materials. It also provides the non-residential students, who are the bulk of the IBTS student body, the ability to scan and electronically save microfilm and microfiche materials which they can later read and use for their research at home.

Other benefits which come with the receiving of this



*Gregory Nichols and Katharina Penner with the new IBTS library scanner*

equipment is that the library staff can now order materials from other libraries which are only lent in microfilm or microfiche form. Overall this is a great addition to the IBTS library which the staff, students and library guests are very thankful to have access to.



*IBTS library main entrance*

## IBTS CONFERENCE ON “WORD AND SPIRIT”

‘I found the papers interesting and stimulating and especially valued the inter-cultural contact with people from so many different nationalities and backgrounds.’ ‘I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the conference. This has been a wonderful dialogue community.’ ‘Thank you for an excellent conference this week. It has been a great few days that sped by all too quickly!’ These were some of the comments from those who participated in the conference on ‘Word and Spirit in European Baptist Life’, held from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May at IBTS organised by the Baptist and Anabaptist Institute.

Baptist life across Europe has been characterized by a strong commitment to the Bible. At the same time European Baptist communities have engaged with issues connected with the Holy Spirit. In some parts of Europe, Baptists contributed to the Pentecostal movement as it emerged in the early twentieth century. Other Baptists opposed the movement. Since the 1960s, with the emergence of the charismatic movement across Europe, Baptists have again been wrestling with a variety of issues connected with the Holy Spirit. This conference offered theological and historical insights, especially from a European context.

As usual in conferences at IBTS, spea-

kers were drawn from a number of European countries, which always has an enriching effect. The first speaker was Keith Jones, Rector of IBTS, who gave a masterful survey of the situation across Europe, drawing from historical experiences and suggesting new ways forward. Nigel Wright, Principal of Spurgeon’s College, London, who has recently written *God on the Inside: The Holy Spirit in Holy Scripture* (2006), brought highly significant theological insights in two papers, ‘Baptists and Charismatic Renewal’ and ‘Open to the Spirit: Charismata and Baptist Worship’.

After each of Nigel’s papers, and again at the end of the conference, the participants were invited to consider case studies. Toivo Pilli, Rector of the Estonian Baptist Seminary, probed ‘Word and Spirit in Estonian Baptist Life’, looking in detail at the communist period in Estonia. Tanya Petrova, Rector of the Bulgarian Evangelical Theological Institute, who is also pursuing doctoral studies with IBTS, considered the very relevant topic of identity in her paper, ‘Common Evangelical Identity: Baptists and Pentecostals in Bulgaria’. The final main case study was a fascinating joint presentation by Theodor Oprenov, General Secretary of the Baptist Union

of Bulgaria, and Parush Parushev, Academic Dean at IBTS, on ‘Word and Spirit in the Practice of Communal Discernment’.

As well as these main papers, there was a splendid range of short papers: Brian Talbot on ‘An Excessive Zeal? The Contribution of Francis Johnston in the mid-19thC Scottish debate on the Holy Spirit’; Craig Millward on ‘English Baptists and Charismatic Challenges’; Daily Adam on ‘The Life and Ministry of Emilie Bertelson in Russia and Estonia’; Greg Nichols: ‘Word and Spirit in the Experience of Ivan Kargel’; Bill Clark on ‘Anabaptist Spirituality: Born of the Spirit and Obeying the Word’; Lydie Kucová on ‘The Use of the Bible in Early Czech Baptist Life’; Alexander Markov on ‘Missional Experience in the North-east of Russia’; Diana Melkonyan on ‘Ethics and the Spirit in Ukrainian Mission’; Jim and Julia Binney on ‘Living Liturgy: Bringing Word and Spirit Together in Worship’; Alan Baileys on ‘Word & Spirit: Reflections of a Preacher’; Dejan Adam on ‘The influence of Pentecostalism among Serbian Baptists’; and Toivo Pilli on ‘Interpreting the Word in the Soviet Context’.

About forty people took part in the conference, from fourteen different countries. The contributions made in the final open forum reflected the diversity within Baptist life over the issue of Word and Spirit, and yet there was also a strong sense of unity. A number of those at the conference added some days to the conference, either before or after, to enjoy Prague. Greg Nichols organised a tour of Reformation sites in the city. Some who stayed after the conference ended were able to worship with the Šárka Valley Community Church, the multi-cultural Baptist congregation which meets on the IBTS campus. And so an enriching few days came to an end, but with much that was thought-provoking to take on into the future.



*Nigel Wright, Parush Parushev and Teddy Oprenov during a conference session*

# STUDENTS SERVING BACK HOME

**Tina and Marko Grozdanov** were among the first group of students to successfully complete and graduate from the Magister in Theology programme at IBTS. As full-time residential students they lived in Prague for over a year in order to work on their degrees before returning home to Macedonia. When asked about their time of study and living at IBTS, Tina reflected as follows:

We feel very blessed to have had the opportunity to study and complete our Magister degree at the IBTS. Both Marko and I, were able to find areas of study offered by the Seminary that complemented our calling and interest.

We are now very glad to be back in our home country of Macedonia and serve our Baptist community here. Marko has been ordained as pastor, taking on the role of leading the church and spiritually nurturing it. I have been engaged in administrative work, helping in worship, teaching Sunday school, as well as involved in different projects through which our church is helping our wider community.



*Marko and Tina Grozdanov*

We have found our time at IBTS incredibly helpful for our calling in ministry. Not only was the research and study rewarding, but it was the richness of the community life with Baptists from around the world that made our stay even more pleasant. Our study at IBTS will certainly be a pleasant memory for years to come.

## IBTS FRIENDS' NEWS

### OBITUARIES

**Hans-Harold Mallau**, the well-known Baptist theologian who taught for many years at the European Baptist Federation's (EBF) International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) in Rüschiikon, Switzerland died of cancer in Reutlingen, Germany on 25 October 2006. Born in Königsberg, East Prussia, he spent his entire career as an avid academic. After studying theology in Kiel, Boston and Hamburg, he worked initially as Theological Assistant at the University of Kiel. In 1969 he served briefly as Guest Professor for Old Testament at IBTS. He then taught from 1970 to 1977 in Buenos Aires before returning to IBTS, where he served as Professor of Old Testament until his retirement in 1995. He spent his retirement in the Baptist congregation of Reutlingen, where he was actively involved in congregational life.

Following a distinguished teaching career in Argentina, Mallau then chose to share his knowledge with the Baptist students of Europe and had decisively shaped academic life at the International Baptist Seminary. Present Rector of the Prague seminary Keith Jones called Mallau "a faithful servant of Jesus Christ" as he had pursued his objective with faithfulness and competence with many generations of students profiting from his scholarship.

**Wiard Popkes**, a retired professor at the Baptist Seminary of Hamburg and long-time trustee chairman of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, died at the age of 70 from a heart attack on 3 January 2007. As chairman of the IBTS Board of Trustees, Popkes also oversaw the school's purchase, renovation and the 1996 move to a picturesque 19th-century campus in Prague, Czech Republic.



*Wiard Popkes 1937 - 2007*

Popkes was one of European Baptists' best-known New Testament scholars, and besides his own IBTS degree, Popkes received his doctorate in New Testament from the University of Zurich. Among his teaching responsibilities at the Seminary he also taught at the University of Hamburg. Popkes was a long-standing member of the BWA's Academic and Theological Education Workgroup, as well as the Commission on Doctrine and Interchurch Cooperation. He was involved at IBTS as a Research Professor and Co-Director of the Institute of Biblical Studies. He is survived by his wife, Irmgard, and his son.

On Sunday, 5 November 2006, **Britta Hildebrandt** passed away; the funeral service took place on the 8th of the same month. Her husband Klaus was a student at the Seminary in Rüschtikon 1966-1969. Klaus served churches in Canada as pastor of the Immanuel Baptist Church, Vancouver, B. C.; Zion Baptist Community Church, Edmonton, Alberta; Central Baptist Church, Kitchener, Ontario; Bothwell, Ontario; and several Baptist Churches as interim pastor since retirement and is still living in Bothwell. Klaus remembers Britta as an excellent wife, partner in ministry, mother to her three daughters, grandmother to her seven grandchildren.

**Frank Adams**, the General Secretary of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship died on Wednesday, 27 December 2006 in Kumasi, Ghana, after suffering from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig's disease. Adams, who also served as Baptist World Alliance Regional Secretary for Africa, was previously General Secretary for the Baptist Convention of Ghana. Until his death he continued to be involved in IBTS as a member of the doctoral supervision team. Adams was buried on Saturday, February 3, in Kumasi, Ghana. That day a Thanksgiving Service was held at Grace Baptist Church in the same city. He was a graduate of Baptist Theological Seminary in Rüschtikon, Switzerland, and the Oxford Center for Mission Studies in the United Kingdom. Surviving him are his wife Selina, two sons, and one daughter.

Long time IBTS volunteer **Wayne Ferguson** from Texas, died of natural causes on Sunday, 21 January 2007. He is survived by his wife Georgeanne, one son, two daughters and several grandchildren. Another long time IBTS volunteer, Larry Maddox officiated the funeral service on the following Thursday.



Wayne Ferguson (bottom) with another volunteer at IBTS

**John Merritt**, General Secretary Emeritus of the International Baptist Convention, died of cancer on 30 December 2006 at the age of 76. In 1972 he became the General Secretary of the European Baptist Convention, an association of English-speaking congregations in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. (It has since changed its name to the International Baptist Convention in 2003.) Merritt retired from his position in 1996. A memorial service was held at University Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He leaves behind his wife, Elizabeth, and two sons.

## BIRTHS

IBTS Academic Registrar **Martina Fialová** and her husband Milan welcomed to their family a daughter Tereza on 6 October 2006. Since then Tereza has made many trips to IBTS with Martina.



Martina Fialová with Tereza at the May Graduation

**Sashi Jamir** (MTh 2005) and his wife Ellen had a little daughter Yusenti born to them on 8 December 2006. The name 'Yusenti' is derived from her paternal great-grand father's story of generosity and kindness he was known to show to his villagers while he was alive.

IBTS Kvestor **Petra Veselá** gave birth to a little boy, Eliáš, on Wednesday, 21 March 2007. Eliáš was born premature, but was released from the hospital a few weeks later to join his father Honza and older sister Rebeka at home.

**Katka and Norbert Csényi** (MTh 2005) added a little girl to the quickly growing wider IBTS family. Odette Csényi was born on Saturday, 21 April 2007. The Csényi family lives in Voznice, a small village outside of Prague.

