

The Link

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COLOURFUL BEGINNING TO 59TH ACADEMIC YEAR

IBTS has commenced its fifty ninth academic year in late August with new students arriving from fifteen countries. The intensive orientation period now starts on the last week in August with special lectures for new students in Research and Critical Thinking.

The IBTS residential Academic Team are joined in this important month-long period by members of our adjunct faculty. This year we were delighted to have our good friends Professors Glen H Stassen and Nancy Murphy (Fuller Seminary, Pasa-

dena, California); the Revd J Andrew Kirk (Lechlade, England); The Revd Dr James G Purves (Edinburgh, Scotland); the Revd Dr Robin L Routledge (Rotherham, England); Dr Rollin Grams (Gordon-Conwell Seminary, USA); the Revd Dr Derek Murray (Edinburgh, Scotland) and Dr Hannes Wiher (Basel, Switzerland) in our team.

Commencement and Graduation Ceremony

Our Commencement Service was held on 11 September 2007 with an acade-



New incoming Certificate of Applied Theology (CAT) students



A few new and returning Postgraduate male students enjoying short break between seminars.

mic procession full of multi-coloured robes and hoods of our academic team drawn from throughout Europe and the USA. The address was given by world-famous Baptist ethicist, Professor Glen H Stassen. During this colourful occasion, Professors Stassen and Murphy conferred the degree of doctor of philosophy on our Academic dean, Dr Parush R Parushev. This degree awarded by Fuller Seminary is the second earned doctorate of Parush and was gained with distinction – a great accolade for our scholarly dean!

The Revd Dr Ian M Randall (Deputy Academic Dean) and the Revd Dr Ivana Noble (Senior Research Fellow) then conferred the degree of doctor of philosophy on our Rector. This degree has been awarded by IBTS and the University of Wales for work on the theology and ecclesiology of trans-local interdependency amongst European Baptists.

IBTS own doctoral programme!
This was the second doctorate

awarded under the University of Wales validated doctoral programme. Earlier in the summer former IBTS staff member, Toivo Pilli, now Rector of Tartu Baptist seminary, Estonia, was awarded the degree for his historical work on Estonian Baptists. These two



Professor Glen Stassen and Professor Nancey Murphy with IBTS Academic Dean Dr Parush R Parushev after the graduation ceremony for his Doctoral degree

awards mark a new era in the life of IBTS. For our first fifty eight years we have not been able to supervise doctoral students through to completion, only having courses at Certificate, Bachelors and Masters level. Now, with over fifty five students in the programme preparing proposals or engaged in writing their dissertations, this is the largest cohort of students at IBTS.

New Students 2007

So, in our four weeks of intensive activity on the IBTS campus we welcomed new students from Albania, Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the United States (you can read about some of them in the following pages in this Link).

New Course for 2007

This orientation also saw the addition of another validated post-graduate programme to the IBTS port-

folio of courses available. The Post Graduate Certificate in Theology is designed for those who have Master’s level qualifications and want to go on to see if they can work at a research degree (MPhil or PhD). It is a partially taught certificate which helps people explore issues of how we do research in theology, methods of critical thinking and qualitative and quantitative research and how a student might prepare a proposal for a dissertation. This certificate has already

proved to be a ground-breaking course which is being well received in academic circles far and wide and at IBTS we believe it adds a key element in helping those intending to do higher degree academic work build sure foundations.

Commenting on this development the Rector said “Parush Parushev and his team have really produced an excellent post graduate certificate course which we believe many people will

want to do. It also provides a model for developing similar courses for those engaged in ministry and leadership who want to add further skills as part of continuous professional development. This is exactly the sort of purpose for which IBTS exists to serve our Baptist community in Europe and beyond. I expect us to be announcing further developments in this area in future years, especially as we celebrate 60 years of IBTS !”



Dr Pilli (third from the right) being congratulated by his wife, IBTS Rector, IBTS Academic Dean, Dr Ian M Randall (his supervisor) and the external examiners.

CHANGES IN THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The European Baptist Federation (EBF) Council appointed new Trustees to the Board of IBTS when they met in Budapest in September 2007. Hans Guderian (Elstal, Germany) who chairs the EBF Nominations Committee, thanked Council members and the EBF member bodies for the many names which had been proposed as possible members of the IBTS Board of Trustees. This represents a lively

interest in the work of the seminary within our European Baptist family. Out of the many names submitted, the Nominations Committee proposed a balanced group of people representing the different regions of Europe to serve on the Board. The following were elected to serve without dissent:

- Dr **Peter Mitskevich** (Rector of Moscow Baptist Seminary)
 - Dr **Stan Slade** (American Baptist Churches, USA)
 - Dr **Christoph Weichert** (Germany).
- Retiring members of the Board of Trustees, Edgar Mažis (Latvia), Dr Alexander Kozyenko (Moscow) and Dr Reid S Trulson (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania), were thanked for their service.
- The Revd Dr **Toivo Pilli**, (Rector of Tartu Seminary, Estonia)



The 2007 – 2008 IBTS community

IBTS was again pleased to welcome students from around the world who have enrolled at the seminary. Students were drawn from as far as Australia to Canada into the various study programmes that IBTS offers. This autumn IBTS accepted 12 Certificate of Applied Theology (CAT) students from 9 countries, 3 students in the Intensive English Pro-

gramme from 2 countries, 11 students in the Master and Magister of Theology programmes from 6 countries, and 6 PhD students each from a different country.

On these two pages we would like to introduce friends and supports of IBTS to some of these students.

Andrew Dyck lives in Abbotsford, British Columbia, **Canada**, with his wife and 3 sons. He works as a part-time pastor of a small church and teaches a course at a local Mennonite Bible college. Andrew has begun the Postgraduate Certificate in Theology studying towards PhD. He hopes to do PhD in evaluation of how the Mennonite Brethren church can adopt practices of contemplative spirituality. In the Mennonite Brethren Church there is an ongoing debate about such practices and he hopes to be able to significantly contribute to this discussion and the development of the church in this area.



Radostina Mukanova has begun her education at IBTS in the Intensive English programme, which means upon the improvement of her English she may choose to be transferred into one of the M-level courses offered. Radostina was encouraged to enrol at IBTS by friends who had previously studied at the seminary. Upon completion of her study at IBTS, Radostina plans to return to her church in **Bulgaria** and work with the young people there. She also plans to continue working in a Christian television programme, where she realises that her having a theological education will be highly valuable.



Nicola Piscicelli has been serving as a **Belgium** Baptist pastor since 1996. He now lives in the small town of Aywaille with his wife Joelle and their 4 children. Nicola is in the Magister of Theology programme with concentration in Anabaptist and Baptist studies. Being a Baptist pastor he has chosen this programme because he wishes to do research into the roots of Belgium Baptists. He envisions this study to be very helpful for the growth and development of their churches in Belgium.



Anastasia Romashkina is a **Moldovan** who now lives in Russia student in the CAT programme who was encouraged to enrol in IBTS because of close friends of her who studied at the seminary previously. She came to IBTS because of her vision to work as a Sunday school director in Russia. She also hopes to improve her English skills and international understanding so she can assist as a liaison between various countries regarding orphanage work.



Rodolphe Hayek comes from the Switzerland of the Middle East – **Lebanon**. He lives in Beirut with his wife Rana and a 2-year old daughter. Rudolphe is heavily involved in youth ministry at Badar Baptist Church in Lebanon. He received a BA through the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary and was recommended then for further study at IBTS. Rodolphe is part of the MTh programme in the Baptist-Anabaptist studies. He decided to study in this program because he is excited about his Baptist heritage and desires to know more about Baptist history and theology.



Danijela Markovic is a **Serbian** missionary who has been working for six years among the gypsy communities in her country. She is presently a fulltime student in the Certificate of Applied Theology programme. Danijela entered this programme eager to develop friendships with a broader international community and gain insights from them. She is looking forward to improving her English and her interest in Theology and is also excited to have time to reflect on her years as a missionary and see how God will lead her after her education at IBTS.



Jean Francois Lekeu is in the Magister of Theology programme at IBTS. He lives in Liege, **Belgium**, with his wife and three sons. He came to know about IBTS through his involvement with the work of the European Baptist Federation youth ministries. He presently is serving as a pastor of the Protestant Baptist Church of Liege Academie. He hopes to be refreshed as a pastor and a servant of the Kingdom of God through his studies at IBTS.



IBTS TRIP TO AN ANABAPTIST HOUSE

As part of the vision of IBTS to stimulate interest in the Anabaptist story in Europe and to draw from Anabaptist spirituality, the seminary is involved, along with the Baptist Union of Slovakia and Wokingham Baptist Church (UK), in seeking to



IBTS staff and student group with Slovak Baptist Union President Tomáš Kriška standing in front of the Anabaptist House in Sobotište, Slovakia.

restore a seventeenth-century Anabaptist house in the village of Sobotište in Western Slovakia. This house, in a village which was a centre of Anabaptist life in the seventeenth century, is now under the trusteeship of a local Slovak Baptist church.

In the 1520s Moravia, in the western part of what is now Czech Republic, became a ‘promised land’ for Anabaptists, because of the degree of religious freedom that was afforded there. Anabaptist communities that settled there included the Hutterites, who were the followers of Jakob Hutter, the Swiss Brethren and the followers of Pilgram Marpeck. The Hutterites practised economic sharing - community of goods. One of their centres between 1565 and 1620 was near present-day Mikulov, where Balthasar Hubmaier led a very large Anabaptist community. But these Anabaptist communities were scattered as a result of a Turkish-Hungarian war followed later by the Catholic Reformation. In 1620, at the battle of the White Mountain (near IBTS in Prague), the Protestants were defeated and all non-Catholics, including Anabaptists, were expelled from Moravia.

There had been Anabaptists in nearby Slovakia since the 1520s, one of the best-known leaders being Andreas Fischer, who was executed for his faith in 1539. More Anabaptists began to settle in Western Slovakia later and their numbers swelled to several thousands. In Slovakia and Hungary they were often given the name Haban, probably taken from the German word haushaben. The Habans became known for their many products and skills – their fine pottery, their water systems, their mills and their practice of medicine. One Haban settlement was Velké Leváre, where a Habánske múzeum

(Museum of Habans) was opened in 1972. The Haban yard there, built around the local square, dates back to 1592, when these yards were known as ‘brotherhood yards’.

This area of Slovakia, where there were many Protestants, offered safe refuge for a time for those Anabaptists, especially Hutterites, fleeing from Moravia in the 1620s. Andreas Ehrenpreis, who was born in Moravia and who was a miller by profession, was elected a Hutterite preacher in 1621, while still in Moravia, and was confirmed in this office two years later in Sobotište, which became a centre for members of the Moravian Hutterite communities who had become refugees. For the rest of his life Ehrenpreis remained in Sobotište, and it is here that the Anabaptist Haban house, which was part of this Hutterian community, is situated. In 1639 Andreas Ehrenpreis was elected bishop of this community, and he served in this capacity for twenty-three years until his death.

Following the inclusion of Slovakia into the Austrian empire and the subsequent re-Catholicization of the population as a whole in the 1660s-70s, many of the Anabaptist communities moved to Russia and later North America, while many of those Anabaptists that stayed in Slovakia converted, under pressure, to Catholicism. In Slovakia today there are communities that still identify themselves as the descendents of the Hutterite population, such as Sobotište and Velké Leváre. The original houses, other buildings and pottery of the Hutterites can still found in these communities and until the end of World War II many of the Habans continued to speak German.

The Anabaptist house in Sobotište, when it is restored, will serve as a museum and also as a centre of renewal, challenging us today to be community of disciples in the tradition of these Anabaptist foreparents.



IBTS course leader in Baptist and Anabaptist studies, Dr Ian M Randall, inside the Anabaptist House.

Professor Norman Kember calls for non-violent peacemaking

Christians should 'act peaceably and take a non-violent stand for world peace'. The British peace activist **Professor Dr Norman Kember** (London) called for this during a seminar held by the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) in Prague. During the first week of October, the Baptist professor was given star booking in the IBTS Wednesday workshop, with visitors from other institutions in Prague joining the regular IBTS community to hear this peace activist hero.

Norman Kember was accompanied by his wife Pat and spoke on the theme "The Cost of Non-Violent Peacemaking" to 60 students, IBTS-staff and local guests. He also described his own personal experiences through a lifetime of being a Christian Peace activist. As an observer spending time with a Christian Peacemaker team, he had been taken hostage in Iraq in November 2005 along with three team members, by an Islamist group calling itself "Swords of Righteousness". He was kept hostage for nearly four months before being freed along with two other Canadian peace activists. Lamentably, the American hostage James Fox (54) was taken away from the others and was murdered before the hostages were released. Norman Kember is a longstanding member of the British Baptist Peace Fellowship and the international Fellowship of Reconciliation. In the ensuing discussion following his presentation at IBTS with the assembled audience Kember rejected the theory of a "just war". In today's world "just war" is impossible. He argued that no current conflict meets the full "Just War" criteria. Kember regards the "just war" concept as



Professor Norman Kember with his wife Pat during their visit to IBTS

obsolete in today's military activity where it is impossible for civilians not to be engaged.

IBTS Rector, Keith Jones, was delighted by the opportunity to have the couple visit the seminary campus. He reminded the listeners that the IBTS community had prayed regularly for Professor Kember and his wife. The Revd Dr Jones said that it was a very special honour to have the couple participate in the community life of IBTS for a week. During that time the Kember's had innumerable discussions with students and community members and stressed the importance of non-violent peacemaking. The IBTS family assured the couple that they will continue to firmly support peace and reconciliation around the globe.



Rector Keith G Jones in his office at IBTS

The Council of the European Baptist Federation unanimously re-appointed the **Revd Dr Keith G Jones** as Rector of the International Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Council, which met in Budapest, Hungary, received a full report from the IBTS Board of Trustees Chairperson, the Revd Dr Ruth M B Gouldbourne, on the evaluation and appraisal procedure followed by the Board. This led to the unanimous recommendation to the EBF Council to re-appoint Dr Jones.

He was originally appointed in 1998 when the seminary had two M-level programmes and 12 students. Under his leadership the seminary now has a lay certificate programme, five M-level degrees, a post graduate certificate in theology and a doctoral programme. It is now accredited by the Czech Ministry of Education and an associated institution of the University of Wales. The seminary currently has 140 students and looks forward the future years under his guidance.

STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS

Good friend of and frequent visitor to IBTS, **Pastor András Szirtes** (Hungarian Baptist Union) after battling a serious illness, passed away on 11 July 2007, he leaves behind his beautiful wife Tunde (CAT 2001) and daughter.

Norbert Csényi (MTh 2005) has taken up the position as Research Course Administrator and has started his studies at the doctoral level at IBTS, Prague.

Master of Applied Theology graduate **Fedir Raychynets** (2003) is the Academic Dean of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Kiev, Ukraine.

Kristof Sielicki (Mgr 2006) is an assistant pastor in the Baptist church of Poznan, Poland where he focuses on youth work and reaching out to the marginalised in their community. Kris has recently completed a lexicon of the New Testament in Polish (Onomastykon Nowego Testamentu) which has been published by the Bible League.

With a team of twelve others, Kris has been invol-

ved in translating the first Polish 'baptist' translation of the New Testament (Nowe Przymierze. Pismo Święte Nowego Testamentu), also published through the Bible League.

Timofey Cheprasov (MTh 2005) with his wife **Yulia** (CAT 2006) have returned to IBTS, Prague for the year 2007-2008. Tima is the teaching assistant in Applied Theology and is undertaking PhD studies at IBTS, while his wife Yulia is volunteering in the Guest Lounge and IBTS bookshop.

Former IBTS Course Leader in Applied Theology and recent PhD graduate **Toivo Pilli** has taken the position of Rector of the Tartu Baptist Seminary, Estonia.

Carol Woodfin (Rüschlikon alumnus 1980s) is now on the history faculty at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, where she got her undergraduate degree. Her new address is 309 Westview Dr., Abilene, TX 79603, USA, and her e-mail is: cgwood50@gmail.com.

IBTS PUBLICATIONS

Eastern European Baptist History: New Perspectives

Editors: Sharyl Corrado and Toivo Pilli
2007, 255 pages, 250 Czech Crowns + p&p
ISBN 80-87006-02-X

Ethical Thinking at the Crossroads of European Reasoning

Proceedings of the Third Annual Theological Symposium of the International Postgraduate Theological Fellowship
Editors: Parush R Parushev, Ovidiu Creangă and Brian Brock
2007, 222 pages, 250 Czech Crowns + p&p
ISBN 80-87006-06-2

Currents in Baptistic Theology of Worship Today

Editors: Keith G Jones and Parush R Parushev
2007, 180 pages, 200 Czech Crowns + p&p,
ISBN 80-87006-05-4

The Place of Environmental Theology

A guide for seminaries, colleges and universities
Editors: John Weaver and Margot R Hodson
2007, 130 pages, 200 Czech Crowns + p&p
ISBN 80-87006-04-6

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