

The Link

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ONE MORE GRADUATION, ONE MORE FAREWELL

On 27 May 2011, nineteen students graduated at IBTS in different programmes...

Two students received the Certificate of Participation, twelve students gained the Certificate in Applied Theology, three students received the Master of Theology and one the Magister in Theology. Finally, one student gained the Doctor of Philosophy. An additional 11 students graduated during the year but were not able to be present for the ceremony. The valediction of other students also took place.

The address to graduates was given by the Revd Anthony A Peck (EBF General Secretary), who emphasised the community aspect of IBTS. He also participated in awarding the Certificates along with the Rector, the Revd Dr Keith G Jones and the ProRector, the Revd Docent Dr Parush R Parushev.

And so the IBTS community said farewell to another year of excellent students as memories were shared over a buffet meal.



CAT students 2010-11

Warmth Questioning the Unquestionable

“LIVING TO TELL”

From 31 January to 3 February 2011, the campus of the International Baptist Theological Seminary became a centre of warmth in the midst of a cold and windy Prague winter; not the warmth from fire or radiators, but heat generated by passionate discussion and insightful debate as the Thomas Helwys Centre for the Study of Religious Freedom held its international conference entitled *Living to Tell: A Gospel Informed Perspective on Human Rights, Justice and Peace*.



The Revd Professor Glen H Stassen

The conference started with a keynote presentation delivered by renowned ethicist Dr Glen H Stassen from my own theological alma mater, Fuller Seminary. Stassen firmly couched the contemporary discussion of human rights in a historical context which owes much to the efforts of early Baptists and Anabaptists. The concept of universal human rights was thus examined and defined through the lens of Christian truth, Christian conviction, and Christian faith. This theme continued throughout the fascinating presentations in the following days, as scholars from around Europe and the United States scrutinised the idea of human rights as they are being defined and defended in the world today. Some looked at the very concept itself, asking whether we can accept the now-unquestionable idea of “rights” devoid of a Christian, biblically-based definition. Others looked at the efforts by people of faith throughout Europe to preserve and protect the

freedoms of individuals or the peace of communities, while still others discussed historical dimensions of “rights” language and practice.

I found this conference to be an extremely formative few days for my own thoughts about ideas that, for the most part, I take for granted. For example, what use is it to speak of justice today if that discussion does not point to the call for justice that we hear repeated again and again across the pages of God’s scriptures? In what ways have our historical traditions neglected the radical call to peace that Jesus embodies as he proclaims the coming Kingdom? And, drawn from the title of one presentation, when do “rights” become wrongs?

This conference laid important groundwork for all of us attending to rethink some important concepts, and it called for realigning our thoughts and paradigms with the truth revealed to us by our Lord. Our understanding of peace must arise from our knowledge of and allegiance to the one whom we name “Prince of Peace”. In the end, I walked away with a deeper understanding of the call to protect the “rights” of individuals, people made in the image of God. I imagine that this is a call powerful enough, pervasive enough, and challenging enough to make all of our hearts burn with the heat of God’s passion.

Joshua E Raskin



Living to Tell: A Gospel Informed Perspective on Human Rights, Justice and Peace conference

NORTHUMBRIA COMMUNITY AND IBTS

For the last few years IBTS has been enjoying the growth of an informal partnership with the Northumbria Community. This is a dispersed intentional community of Companions and Friends committed to living out the Sermon on the Mount, in different settings but united by the spirit of monasticism which they express as the Rule of Life of Availability and Vulnerability. We have greatly enjoyed getting to know the Community better and discerning many parallels in how both communities go about the Christian life in today's context.

For several years now members of the Community have been visiting Prague and members of the IBTS community on occasions went to see the Northumbrian Community House at Nether Springs. However, the link is more than just annual visits. Each Wednesday we remember and pray for Northumbria in our weekly Eucharist at IBTS, and IBTS features in the Northumbria prayer cycle.

This year, in the week leading up to Mothering Sunday, a team of three from the Northumbria Community came to be with the IBTS community for what we now always call "Northumbria Week". For the whole week the seminary sets aside its own pattern of worship and classes for Certificate of Applied Theology students and we follow the Northumbria offices of morning and noon prayer and evening compline. The week gives the students, and whoever else wants to join, an opportunity to get a sense of the work of the Northumbria Community, to immerse ourselves into the Celtic church tradition and to talk about mission in today's Europe. This year's visit also included a concert of Celtic music played on harp and guitar, held in the local Jeneralka restaurant, offering opportunity for some interaction with the village in which IBTS is set (not an easy task in the Czech Republic!) This turned out to be an enchanting evening of words and music, and an encouraging experience, especially for those exploring fresh ways of reaching out into the communities in which their churches are set.

As we were telling the CATs about the upcoming Northumbria Week, one of them exclaimed, "I don't know them yet, but I love them already: no homework or exams for a whole week!" Well, by the end of the week, they seemed to love the "Northumbrians" even more, and not because of an "easy time" without homework. They had discovered there was quite a bit of work to do, even if not the usual essays or reflections. Here are some of the things that left an imprint on them:

IBTS prepared us for the Northumbria week, and indeed I was excited and waiting for it. It was not just a week "without homework". I realized how as Christians we must live as a community and share together but at the same time, be open to the world and reach it. Like [one of the students] said in class: there should be a golden middle between these two.

Poverty and the followers of God: How many times God talks about poverty in the Bible! Jesus was with poor people more than with others. It is good to be alongside the poor bringing to them hope.

I like the idea of a concert in the Jeneralka restaurant. It was a good way to spread the Gospel. Jesus works outside, not only in, the church.

During this week and especially during the worship time around different sacred spaces, I started to think about when I will leave IBTS. I hope that until that time I will gain as many good habits as I can.

"Who is it that you seek? How then shall we live? How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" These questions, central to the Northumbria Community, have become for us intertwined with gratitude for these friends on the journey of following Christ.

Lina Andronovienė and Keith G Jones

What is IBTS for you?

Another academic year has passed. However, it still feels unbelievable to have been here. It is interesting how things happen sometimes. Here in IBTS we have had the experience of living in an international community. It was interesting to see active believers from different countries, who have so many differences, like culture, habits, interests and so forth, but still can be united in one thing for sure, that is our Lord Jesus Christ and the desire to know Him better. Stuff like this usually happens in the mysterious place called G-building, where we CAT students live. By trying to live as one community we were able to teach each other and share with each other not only the material things we have but also our emotional, intellectual and spiritual insights. Sometimes it was difficult, but still we were able to go through it and find points of connection. I think that all of us would



CAT students 2010-11

agree that here we have really learnt the significance of the Bible passage where Paul argues about different members in one body, by trying to implement it in our lives. I guess now we understand better that ‘the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ.’ It is fascinating that some people who we did not know before became our best friends. Also we want to mention our studies here. Maybe someone mentioning lectures, books and homework can sound boring or routine. But we can say that it is not true. It was a very interesting journey through different topics and theological subjects in our classrooms. We found out many useful and important things for our lives. We discovered interesting facets of different theological points. We can say honestly that it was not very easy, sometimes it was very hard. But it was a fascinating journey.

If someone asks: “What is IBTS for you?” I think we can say that IBTS is a place of growth. We were able to grow through our relationships with our friends, our colleagues and our teachers. We grew through our study, our intellectual discoveries. We grew through our spiritual development. This process of growth was not always easy. Sometimes we needed to pass through different trials and difficulties. But it was a process of growth. IBTS already has become an important part of our lives. We will keep it in our hearts - all the experience, all the emotions, all the feelings, which we have had here. IBTS is in our heart...

Alexander Shkut (Russia) and Denys Baranov (Ukraine)

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN...

Last summer, after graduating from my college I didn't know what to do. I was hesitating between finding a job and continuing further studies in an English University. Meanwhile, my brother Benjamin, who had just finished the CAT programme, advised me to come and spend a year at IBTS. After reflexion I accepted without knowing what to expect from this place. I remember that when I arrived Greg and Debbie were waiting for me in front of G-building and after that my flatmates warmly welcomed me and helped me to feel at home. My first days weren't easy because I was surrounded by Russian speakers but step by step I learnt to know more about them during the different lectures that we had together. When I look back I can see that time went fast because we are already at the end of the term and I feel myself transformed by

all the things that I experienced at this Seminary. First of all, the life in community was for me the best thing because it allowed us to share our struggles and happiness in order to build strong friendships. The different lectures gave me the opportunity to know more about my story as a member of a large Baptist family and to grow up spiritually. Furthermore, this year was a chance for me to reflect on my call and duty as a follower of Christ through the different ministries supported by Šárka Valley Community Church in which the students are invited to take part. Finally, I would like to thank God and all the IBTS community for this great experience and I pray that “until we meet again, may the Lord hold you in the hollow of His hand”.

Adrien Bruggeman (Belgium)

G-BUILDING IS MORE THAN AN APARTMENT

The programme had already been running for one and a half months, and I was still in Beirut waiting for my visa. I had received some emails from the CAT students and my teachers that made me really excited. I knew that it was going to be a very exciting year, but I did not know that I would meet people that I wished I would never say goodbye to. Time was running, nine months passed just like a glance. G-building was not just a place where we lived, trust me, it was much more than that; it was my second family from seven different countries. We laughed together, cried together, supported one another and prayed for each other. How can I forget the purity of Oksana, the humility of Luba, the love of Aleksandra, the care of Dilfuza, the creativity of Denys, the quietness of Liudmila, the simplicity of Olga, the yummy cakes of Anastasia, the determination of Peter, the intelligent questions of Alexander, the honesty of Diana and last but

not least, the loyalty of Adrien. All our memories are engraved in my heart and my mind. This year has helped me to take a step forward in my life. In the end, I would like to thank IBTS for giving me the opportunity to meet such wonderful people full of joy and kindness.

Lea Sakr (Lebanon)



Students in G-building

MY STAY IN PRAGUE

Before I came to Prague at the end of August 2010, I had already spent a week at IBTS the year before. When I entered the campus that week I immediately started to love the buildings, the surroundings and the beautiful nature around IBTS. However, although beautiful, it will not be the thing that will always stay with me after spending eight months here. What has been most important for me are the people, the friendships and relationships made. These people, from different cultures and with different worldviews, have shown me more about the world than books can tell. The most interesting experience for me was to see the difference between west and east and how blessed I am to be born in a country such as the Netherlands. I can travel easily without too many difficulties with obtaining a visa, and the governmental systems such as healthcare and safety are of a high standard. Now I have seen that this is not so easy for everyone, knowledge that I already had but never experienced so closely. Despite all these differences in background, the feeling that remains with me is one of unity, of love and care. Living in a community has its ups and

downs but in the end when you try to love each other there are no differences too large to overcome. Living together in such a group has proven to be a valuable experience which I will take with me when I go home. In the end it is not the environment which is most important, but the people you relate with. Therefore I would like to give a special thanks here to everyone, teachers, students and staff, for making this such a special experience.

Marjon Pape (The Netherlands)



First time in Prague together

Angelic voices at IBTS

During the month of April, although the weather was not very “spring-like,” IBTS was honoured to host the prestigious Winchester Cathedral Choir and the Lay Clerks (professional singers who provide the Alto, Tenor, and Bass) while they were touring the Czech Republic for the first time in their long history. The choir stems from a long tradition of choral music in England. They perform numerous concerts, produce albums, appear on television, and are one of England’s most recognised cathedral choirs. Much preparation was needed and numerous exchanges of e-mails followed between IBTS and the managers of the choir regarding logistics. The choir gave two concerts in the Czech Republic, one in Brno, the other in Prague, in a very chilly St Vitus Cathedral, although this did not seem to affect the choir, their voices warming the hearts of the listeners.

The choir honoured us by participating in our morning worship by singing “Our Father” to the delight of those who were fortunate enough to hear them.



The Winchester Cathedral Choir

Gruntvig

For the last two years, IBTS has been involved in one of the EU Life’ long Learning projects of Grundtvig (<http://www.sicrieproject.org/>). The SICRIE Project (SICRIE stands for Social Inclusion on the Cultural and Religious Interfaces of Europe) set out to address some of the stereotypes, historical prejudices and ignorance or fear that sometimes hinders meaningful interaction and integration as the movement of people within Europe increases. In other words, it has been an opportunity to find out more about the others and to reflect on our own identities; to explore why we behave or think in a certain way when we meet those who differ from us in ethnic, social or religious terms.

Together with the partners in the project from Northern Ireland, Bulgaria and Lithuania, we have agreed to collect and share stories and images of the various experiences of integration or exclusion of those living in cultural and religious interface within their communities. Project activities have centred on visits to each of the four partner locations and included cultural tours, shared meals and workshops. These visits have turned out to be a profound experience which included a testing look at the integration of our faith and life. For our share of the project, we have chosen to concentrate on two areas. One of them was developing ties with the Teen Challenge Centre in Prague. The ministry of this Centre reaches out to children at risk for drug abuse and other destructive behaviour. The majority of them are Roma children without adequate parental support. The ministry works to empower these children through education, Bible lessons, and loving relationships so that they may become transformed by Christian care and make wise choices for their future. It has been special to be able to enter the lives of these children and the workers of the Centre. The language differences between our group and the children has been a unique challenge, but we have

also found out how much communication takes place without words especially when working with young children.

The second area of the project has been engaging with the Burmese refugees in the

Czech Republic. The first group of about 50 people arrived three years ago. They underwent a six- month Czech language and integration training provided under the auspices of the Czech Ministry of Interior. After that each family was resettled in their new home locations in different municipalities across the Czech Republic. The second group of about 40 refugees arrived in 2010 and were also were resettled in different municipalities across the Czech Republic. Most of them are of Chin and Kachin ethnic minorities and come from rural areas, devastated by famine and fleeing the persecutions of the military regime of Burma, and almost all of them are Baptist believers. As people of the same faith and with some experience in cultural adaptation, we felt that we were able to contribute to the spiritual support and encouragement of these people. One of the results of the developing friendship has been, through the assistance of the European Baptist Federation and the Norwegian Baptist Union, a recent visit of a Burmese-speaking pastor from Norway for spiritual encouragement and advice to these people.

The project is officially coming to an end, but the friendships which have been started are not likely to stop.

Parush R Parushev, with contributions by Alison Raskin and Peter Zvagulis



IBTS doctoral programme scrutinised

The world of higher education in Europe is in flux! With renewed emphasis on research, many universities throughout Europe are reassessing their research culture and making adjustments to ensure they remain at the forefront of a knowledge-led society. These developments are leading to a shake-up of university life in both the Czech Republic and Great Britain. The University of Wales, who validates our doctoral programme, has recently created a University-wide Research Board. This new Board decided to inspect every “collaborative centre”, a new classification for those offering advanced degrees, and to review every aspect of their research culture, supervision, administration and resources. IBTS is the only institution in this higher classification group for the University of Wales outside of the United Kingdom.

A team drawn from the University of Wales, University of Hull and University of St Andrew’s

(Scotland) read through our pre-prepared “Self Evaluation Document” then visited us, meeting Academic and Administrative staff and doctoral students. It was a thorough and exacting experience, but the report to the full Research Degree Board of the University commended IBTS for many examples of good practice and had relatively minor requirements regarding adjustment of our practices, especially with regard to administration, admission procedures and recording of supervisory events.

This is good news for our many doctoral students throughout Europe, Middle East and North America. At IBTS we are not complacent about the pursuit of academic excellence and we are glad to have this affirmation from a group of renowned higher academics.

Note: A copy of the Report to the University of Wales Research Degree Board can be provided electronically. Please send an email to Registrar@ibts.eu asking for one.

IBTS launches new fundraising

IBTS, like many other similar institutions, relies on individuals, churches and associations of churches, to help fund our work and provide scholarships for those from economically challenged situations who are not able to fund their studies, which enable them to better serve Baptist churches in their homelands. We thank all those faithful readers of “The Link” who each year make a gift for this work. However, there are many who don’t and the EBF Council and the IBTS Board of Trustees have resolved to ask more people to join us in the vital task of providing education in theology, mission, Baptist history and identity for another generation from Europe and Middle East. David McMillan, an IBTS Doctoral Student from Belfast, Northern Ireland, has volunteered to spearhead this campaign, and strong voices of support have been heard from people like David Coffey (former BWA President), Glen Stassen (Fuller Seminary) Carol Woodfin (IBTS historian and former Student President) Asatur Nahapetyan (General Secretary, Armenia and IBTS doctoral student).

Appeal literature is going out to all our alumni, individuals and churches throughout the area of the EBF who have some association with us and individuals

and churches in the USA and Canada who have a prayerful interest in our work.

Thanks to volunteer help and the commitment of the current IBTS staff, this appeal is made possible without a great strain on IBTS resources so that the vast amount of all money given will go towards assisting students from parts of our EBF family which need the greatest help to study here.



David McMillan

THE AMAZING DR RANDALL!

2010 was a record year for our Senior Research Fellow, Dr Ian M Randall. In the course of one year he saw no less than nine of his doctoral students complete their dissertations and be successfully examined!

We think that must be something of a record and we congratulate Ian on this amazing achievement. Six of those achieving their Doctor of Philosophy degree were IBTS students, two were from Spurgeon's College in London and one from the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

Ian's painstaking supervision clearly pays off! Topics from the dissertations have included research on Baptist life in Romania, Poland, Russia, the work of the Women's Missionary Union in the USA and Baptist life in the United Kingdom.

Whilst Ian continues to supervise students at doctoral level, he is now spending some time in local church leadership, ministering in a church in the Cambridge area of England, where he and his wife Janice have established their permanent home. Ian continues to commute regularly to Prague for our intensive weeks, as well as providing much on-line supervision for his doctoral students spread across the northern hemisphere.



The Revd Dr Ian M Randall

STUDENT & ALUMNI news

We are pleased to announce:

- the birth of Sofie, born on 15 September 2010, to **NATALIE VALKOVA** and her husband.



- the birth of Yeho, born on 9 April 2011, to Ruth and **CALVIN KIM** (PGTh student)



- the marriage of **OLGA NAVCHUK** (MTh student) to Allen Hull on 31 July 2010.

- Dr Jan Hábl graduated IBTS with his PhD degree in 2008 has published his first book on the basis of the results of his doctoral work.



CONDOLENCES

ROBERT E. PIPER

Date of Birth: March 1921, Richmond, Virginia. Date of Death: July 20, 2010. Married to Marie Claypool in November 1971.

Robert graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in Richmond, Virginia in 1938. He graduated from the University of Richmond with a degree in Physics in 1942. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1945.

After the War, he taught at the University of Richmond from 1945 to 1947. Other activities included service as a pilot with a charter air service, chief pilot for the Titmus Optical Company in Petersburg, Virginia and a computer programmer with the Miller and Rhoads department stores in Richmond. Upon his retirement, he served as a volunteer computer programmer at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Switzerland and Prague, and the Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond. He and Marie were members of the Second Baptist Church in Richmond where he served as a Deacon, taught Sunday School, taught ESL, sang in the Choir and drove the Church bus until he reached the age limit. Bob was a lover of trains and railroads; prior to his move to a retirement home, he had a room full of model trains with all the scenery and landscapes.

EKKEHARD KRAJEWSKI

In our local newspaper I found the obituary of Dr. Ekkehard Krajewski. He was a student at IBTS Rüschtikon. We both graduated in 1954. He continued his studies at the University of Zürich where he received his doctoral degree in November 1957. His dissertation entitled "Leben und Sterben des Täuferführers Felix Manz" was published by Oncken Verlag Kassel, the publishing house of the German Baptist Union. Ekkehard Krajewski served as a pastor of the Baptist Church of Rüschtikon, Switzerland and the Baptist Church of Zillhausen, Germany. For some years he was chief editor of the German Baptist journal "Die Gemeinde".

On August 11th, 1956 he married his wife Bodil, daughter of Dr. Johannes Nørgaard, member of the Board of Trustees of IBTS and rector of the Danish VA Baptist Seminary.

On May 7th, 1967 Ekkehard Krajewski was ordained as a minister of the German Lutheran Church and served as a minister in Düsseldorf, Hammerstein and Nümbrecht, where he retired in 1984.

On January 29th, 2011 Ekkehard Krajewski died in Waldbröl, Germany.

Günter Weichert (graduate of 1954)

In its drive to become an eco-seminary, IBTS prints each copy of the LINK on 100% recycled paper.

