

New WBI Extension School in Ivano-Frankivsk is Off to a Great Start

A lack of funding did not stop students from attending the first class of the Western Ukraine WBI extension. The school began quickly because so many students eagerly anticipated starting their studies. Howell Ferguson and I traveled to Ukraine in October of 2016 to explore the need for a school, and we quickly realized just how useful this school could be. In most cases, we need a year of preparation before the first class even meets, but these brethren were so eager that they wanted to begin in January 2017. We have so many opportunities to see new congregations planted in Western Ukraine, but the lack of preachers who speak Ukrainian has hindered us.



In the above photo, you can see three men and three women who have enrolled in the Ivano-Frankivsk school to prepare themselves for work in God's kingdom. Andrew, setting in the front with a blue sweater, is a licensed attorney. He was baptized in 2009, and he and his wife desire to establish a congregation in the neighboring city of Yaremche. Yaremche, a city of over 10,000, was established in the 18th century and is less than an hour from the school. The city's hospital has donated a building and land to the church of Christ. The hospital's generosity stems from generous gifts to the hospital from American congregations (including gifts of x-ray machines and furniture). No congregation currently meets in Yaremche, but Andrew hopes to change that with the help of the Ivano-Frankivsk congregation. Pat McIntosh, Howell Ferguson and I will all be teaching in the school in February.

Dr David Hamrick, WBI President

Howell Ferguson Report

After months of careful planning, I was able to visit Costa Rica. Rafael Barrantes of the North Jackson church had met on many occasions to talk about the need for a new preacher-training school in his native country. More than 10 years ago, Rafael, Katia, and their children began a Hispanic ministry at North Jackson. Rafael has also led campaigns and served as a translator for English-speaking preachers for North Jackson in Spanish-speaking countries. In early January, he led a campaign to Costa Rica. As a convenience to Rafael, I scheduled a four-day visit beginning the day the campaigners were leaving.

The next day, Rafael and I met with three preachers from the San José area. We met in the San José suburb of Coronado, in the building where Eduardo Rodriguez Compos preaches. Two other preachers, Geovanoy Astorga Castro of the Pavas church and Ricardo Salas Mata of the Rivcon de Salas congregation, also attended.

About four million people, most of whom are Catholic, call Costa Rica home. As a Central American country, it is second in wealth economically with a GDP of \$12,900 and is politically peaceful.



With Rafael translating, we began our meeting by introducing ourselves. I outlined the objectives of a WBI extension school, what a typical school looks like, and how a school operates. In return, the preachers explained the religious and political climate in Costa Rica. Rafael explained the issues within the approximately 55 churches of Christ in the

country; many congregations have problems with Pentecostalism and error on marriage, divorce, and remarriage affects a much smaller number.

A highly positive quality of Costa Rican churches is their financial ability to do much for themselves. WBI's purpose in establishing extension schools is to create self-supporting, self-leading, and self-propagating schools; the sooner schools can depend upon themselves (not independent from God), the more permanent and effective these schools will become in teaching and promoting the gospel of Christ. As an example, the Coronado church of Christ not only has bought and paid for their land, but they also are currently making mortgage payments on their building which is currently being expanded with new classrooms.

Much more research will have to be conducted before we attempt to move forward with such a program. But all indications are that a new WBI extension school would attract a full regiment of students with a handful of experienced preachers willing to increase their educational qualification and make themselves ready to teach. Your prayers, interest and support will help in a large and vital way for the future planning of such a training program.

Ivano-Frankivsk Report from Howell Ferguson

WBI-IF director Ivan Skoleba reports that WBI-IF classes started on schedule January 16th, and that the classes are well underway. Eight students are presently enrolled which is about what we expected. Our first (and only) meeting in Ivano-Frankivsk took place in September of 2016 and the first day of class took place on January 16; this is a very short time to envision, discuss and begin a new extension program. So far, so good! We thank God for directing our steps (cf. Prov. 16:9). And we pray His hand will continually be with us.

David Hamrick will be teaching the first short course, "The Church," during the week of February 13 – 17. Pat McIntosh will be traveling with David to teach a masters level course on the book of Daniel. The purpose of offering masters classes is to qualify the instructors to be able to teach undergraduate level courses. The long-term purpose, of

course, is ultimately to turn WBI-IF into a self-taught and self-propagating program. After David completes his class, I will be traveling to Ivano-Frankivsk February 20-24 to teach the second undergraduate course, "Life of Christ."

Naturally it will take time for WBI-IF to grow and develop itself to full potential. With only two instructors, Ivan Skoleba and Volodya Didukh, there is a great need for American short course teachers to fill the gap. That is one of my many goals for the year. As time and opportunity avail themselves, and as interested students graduate, we will be able to add new talent to the teaching pool. Accordingly, we also ask that you please pray for, encourage, and support this new extension school as it moves past its infancy to becoming a haven from confusing man-made religions and an effective resource of true biblical teaching. May its effects be far-reaching to the saving of many souls!

Dr. Pat McIntosh Report

David Hamrick, Howell Ferguson and I recently attended the Freed-Hardeman Lectures to promote WBI and recruit graduate students.

My travels will take me to Ghana at the end of April to begin a WBI graduate school. Many students around the world wish to further their education with graduate degrees.

I continue to research accreditation and seek the best way for WBI to receive appropriate academic standing.

Research also continues on the best way to implement an online counseling degree program.

Empowered Hearts Seminar in Canada — Edwin Bacani

I made it to Surrey church of Christ in Canada! We have been planning this for a long, long while but now it is history!

The Empowered Heart Series lectureship hits Surrey church of Christ last July of 2016. Two weeks of encouragements for the brethren of Surrey church, leaving them with a

great challenge to open a Bible School and do evangelism through internet broadcasting.

The best part of this trip is the fellowship I had with this congregation which is now my home in Canada. Thank you to the elders of Surrey for the very warm welcome. Special thanks goes to the house-hold of bro Joey Bautista for serving as my gracious host. Let me thank also my family in Canada. Thank you brother Vince Genabe and Sister Shiela Genabe. It was a great reunion seeing your family. Thanks to my niece Pearl and her husband Daniel and Quino too!

The members of Surrey church are really awesome! You deserve to have your own Bible School which you can pass on to the next generations of Christians in Canada.

The Empowered Heart Lesson Series left with three baptisms and huge challenge to continue serving God with a BIG HEART for evangelism. See you again sometime!

Dr. Justin Imel, Sr. Report

WBI will soon have a series of Bible class curriculum appropriate for early teens to adults. Each 13-lesson series, written by a member of the WBI staff, will expound on God's truth in an easy-to-read and practical manner. We pray that this effort will richly bless the Lord's people. For my own part, I am writing series of lessons tentatively titled *The Badge of Love*, a look at what Scripture says about whom and how we should love.

As the Director of Technology for World Bible Institute, I want to see much accomplished in this new year. I anticipate enlarging our social media presence by launching into different platforms. As we increase our visibility across a spectrum of media, I earnestly pray that we will take the expertise of the WBI staff and make that knowledge readily available in down-to-earth, practical ways. We, after all, long to see the borders of the kingdom increase, and we constantly seek new ways of doing so.