

Lithuanian Baptist News *Epiphany 2005*

Dear Friends,

New Year celebrations usually urge us to look back at the passing year in an attempt to evaluate its highlights and struggles. As we look back to what has been happening in the Non-residential Bible School of the Baptist Union of Lithuania (*NEBIM* in Lithuanian) over the last year, we also want to share with you our gratefulness for what God has enabled to happen in and through the school.

With the inauguration of the Diploma programme in December 2003, NEBIM had its first full year during which 4 sessions or seminars were held with 7 lecturers working with the students.

- In February, we had Introduction to the Old Testament I with Dr Cheryl Brown of International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) and the Revd Albertas Latuzis, the Chairperson of the Baptist Union of Lithuania;
- In April, we gathered for the Introduction to Ethics with the Acting Director of NEBIM, Lina Andronoviene, and the Executive Secretary of Lithuanian Baptist Union, Linas Andronovas;
- In July, we held Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics with Dr Parush R Parushev of IBTS;
- In October, we joined the Nordic-Baltic-Poland Missions Conference held in Klaipeda, Lithuania. The students participated in the sessions and also had some special time with Dr Peter Penner of IBTS, the main lecturer for the conference. Henrikas Zukauskas, our indigenous missionary in the North-West of Lithuania, was also lecturing. Being a part of an international Baptist conference was a very helpful experience for our students, enabling them to share their own experiences and hear from others about the missional challenges in the countries neighbouring Lithuania.

- We have started NEBIM Library to which now books are being steadily added. Our special thanks goes to those friends who have helped with this, both helping to acquire new books as well as donating valuable books from their own libraries;

- We have continued to furnish NEBIM office. The same office functions as NEBIM centre as well as the library.

- We have continued with the writing and translation of teaching materials. We hope to be able to do even more in this area next year with some translations of significant theological works for the larger circle of readership and thus help to enhance the Baptist presence in the Lithuanian society;

- We have started to work on the website of NEBIM which will be a part of the website of the Baptist Union of Lithuania. This would be one of the ways to be present in the society in which communication increasingly takes place by the way of internet.

Our next session, the theme of which will be Contemporary Renewal Movements and Ecumenism, will take place in February 2005. We are delighted to have the Revd Keith Jones, the Rector of IBTS, with us as the lecturer.

Looking back, we can see how rich this year was with events to take part in, stories to listen to, and people to meet. Many times we were discouraged by the difficulties in this venture that is so new to us. Yet many times we were encouraged by the eagerness of the students to learn as well as the joy of fellowship of believers from diverse backgrounds. Finally, with self-admonition of James 3, 1 we would like to say thank you to all who faithfully supported our vision of education and discipleship.

