



Summer 2010

What distinguishes Evangelical School of Theology in Poland ... from other theological schools?

Wrocław, Poland - Evangelical School of Theology (EST), previously Biblical Theological Seminary—was born of dreams, personal sacrifices, and a commitment to teach and train men and women to serve Jesus Christ in Poland, Central Europe, and countries to the East. Many years of Nazi and communist rule created an environment of suspicion and distrust, even towards one's friends and neighbors. In the late 1980's, it was in this political atmosphere that God placed in the heart of Dr. Zygmunt Karel the dream to raise up an interdenominational seminary in Poland. It would be the first seminary of its kind in this country. Another key person in the development of BST/EST was Dr. Mark Young, an educator from the United States.

The philosophy, courses, and organizational structure led to the creation of a school that would minister among Poles, in the Polish language, appealing to its own people. What resulted was a commitment to a threefold philosophy of training and programs designed to help students: 1) grow in biblical knowledge, 2) development of Christian character, and 3) experience in ministry. Established in 1990, hundreds of students have participated in various academic and training programs. Many of the graduates are serving Christ as pastors, missionaries, with Christian organizations, leaders in churches and communities, and as faculty members at EST. Graduates are also pursuing additional education (masters, doctorates, and post doctorate degrees). Also, students and graduates are involved in business, medicine, teaching, and other aspects of the marketplace where they can have an influence on society. The purpose of EST is strengthening the Evangelical movement in Poland by equipping Christians for effective service. The unique aspects of EST are as follows:

Interdenominational character: In the past, the Polish Protestant community was splintered into many small groups, hindering growth. EST addresses this problem by bringing together people from different churches and backgrounds. EST students and graduates represent various denominations throughout Poland. They discuss and debate in the classroom and they work together in ministry activities. In this way they learn mutual respect and a value for cooperation, which carries over into their relationships and ministries. *(Photo on right, Dr. Wojciech Szczerba, Rector)*



Teaching Program: The Church today is faced with major challenges. To prepare students for ministry opportunities, EST offers a wide variety of courses in Biblical studies, evangelical theology and practical theology. We also train our students in biblical analysis and exegesis, leading them to a deeper understanding of the Bible and skill in its application to Christian living.



Discipleship program: The Department of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation is being reworked to be one of the main components of our school. Its purpose is to focus on the discipleship of our students, and also the spiritual growth of the faculty and graduates. We see the need to establish an effective and adequate program that

will serve as an example and paradigm for churches and other evangelical organizations and have a broader impact in Poland. Also, faculty members and staff are serving together in local churches, church plants and fellowship groups in Wroclaw and throughout Poland. *(Photo: Showing of movie 'Luther' at the Lutheran Church in Wroclaw.)*

Growth through practical experience: Throughout their studies, as an integral part of the program, EST students are required to do a practicum in ministry that engages them in a wide variety of Christian service.

Fully accredited program: In October 2006, EST received official accreditation from the Polish Minister of Higher Education and Science. It is the first non-public; professional theological school based on the *Law on Higher Education Law*. This type of legitimacy has opened up new educational opportunities, scholarships and vocational training for students of our school and enables them to continue studies at other universities in Poland and abroad. *(Photo: EST students in class.)*



Evangelical Educational Center: In addition to the BA program, EST has developed an Evangelical Educational Center with different activities and courses for a wider group of people.

- ❑ Festival of Protestant Culture –Wroclaw has a rich Protestant heritage, which has been generally unknown. The festival broadened the city's knowledge of its past, stimulating ecumenical dialog and understanding. Numerous churches and para-church organizations cooperated with EST to bring together a variety of events in this weeklong Festival, which was partly sponsored by the city government.
- ❑ School of Leaders - new program launched in October 2009 for pastors and church leaders and includes men and women from Christian organizations.
- ❑ Christian conferences and seminars.
- ❑ Academy of Third Age (targeting 60+ age group) – regular meetings that include talks on the Bible, medicine, and psychology as well as concerts, crafts and other activities. EST cooperated with other churches, city officials, social agencies and specialists in planning the program. *(Photo: Talk from the Bible for Academy of III Age.)*
- ❑ Days of Reformation – celebration of the beginning of Reformation movement (social activities and theological academic sessions).
- ❑ Open Theological Academy - Program for evangelical churches that offers teaching a series of lectures on various topics at the church campuses.
- ❑ Jonathan Edwards Center (in partnership with Yale University) was officially opened to spread the Evangelical Protestant heritage among wider circles of Polish society.
- ❑ Unity Week of Prayer among churches in Wroclaw – EST was one of the coordinators.
- ❑ EST evangelical journal, *Theologica Wratislaviensia*. The aim of this theological journal is to promote evangelicalism as a movement in Poland that has academic credentials.
- ❑ Various e-learning courses.





Since 1990, there have been many changes in Poland: free parliamentary elections, Soviet forces no longer in Poland, membership in NATO and European Union, financial and political stability, lower unemployment, and foreign investment in banking, building, commerce and education. During this time EST continues to stay focused on its core purpose and goals but also sees the need to make adjustments and be creative to meet the changes in Poland and its

people. In addition to the BA program, EST has added new programs and courses to train and develop those who are involved in churches, parachurch organizations, education, ministries to the poor, and market place opportunities. These new and developing programs and events allow a broader number of people to be influenced in ways that bring lasting changes to their lives both spiritually and practically. *(Photo: EST students during chapel service.)*

We are grateful to the Lord who has faithfully provided for the financial, spiritual and practical needs of EST over the last twenty years. Please pray with us as we continue in His service "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." (Ephesians 4:12).

God's blessings,

Faculty, staff and students

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Evangelical School of Theology needs to raise an additional \$8,000 a month for the work of this ministry. Funds are needed either in one-time gifts or in monthly support.

In the US gifts should be directed to:

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