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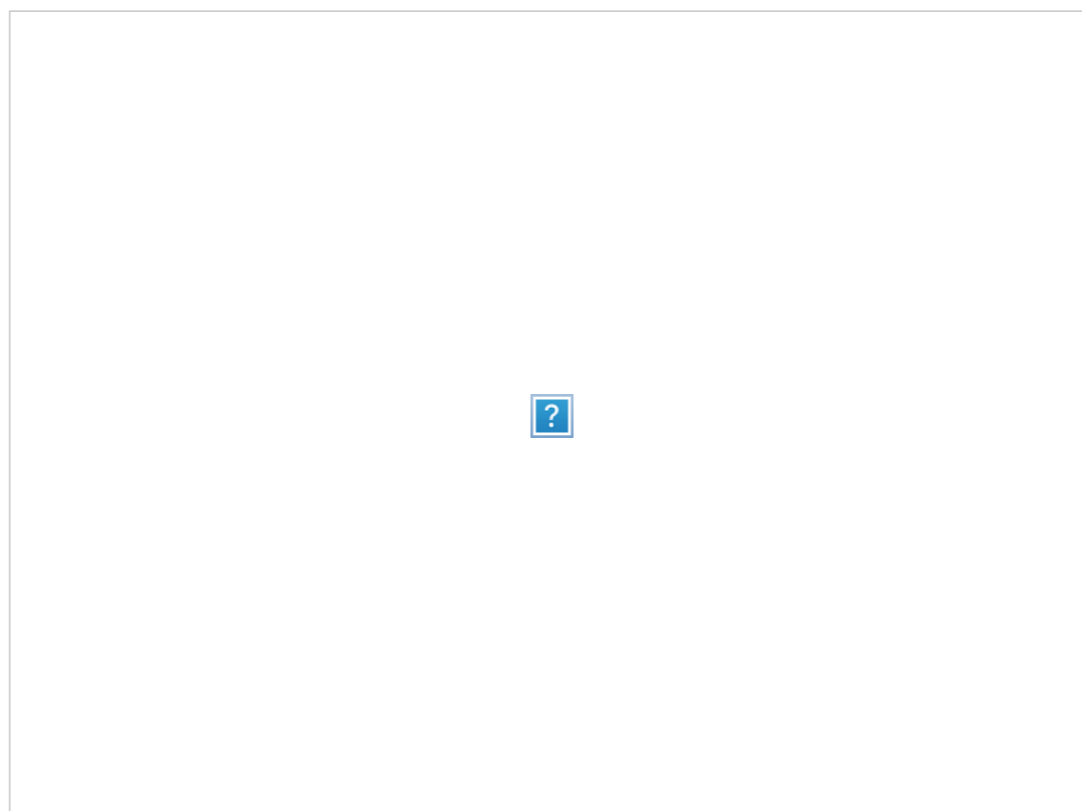
EurECA Conference, May 14 - 15 2015

Mentoring *Support and encouragement in education*

Speaker: Albert Hoekstra

by Kirsti Paterson

The annual EurECA Conference was once again held at Proem Christian Ministries Centre, Poland. Participants represented 17 nations, welcoming new folk from Israel, South Africa and 25 teaching staff from Proem Ministries.



The Conference format focused around the Keynote Speaker's presentations, with opportunities to hear of work in other nations and opportunity to pray for issues in these reports. Time was given for networking with others, enjoyment of the spectacular surroundings of the Conference environs, visits to local landmarks e.g. Jewish synagogue building, historical church building dating to 12th century, world war bunker. The EurECA General Assembly was held on the Friday night: members should be able to access a report on the proceedings from the website, www.eureca-online.org.

Each morning session commenced with Morning Worship led by **Paul Bate**, one of the EurECA Board members. Paul directed our thoughts to mentoring partnerships in the Bible e.g. Barnabas and Paul, Moses & Joshua and the greatest mentor - Jesus. The importance of experiences which God gave us e.g. through nature, being the right person at the right time, enabled us to think of our role as a mentor - serving, praying, networking. Musical accompaniment was provided by the engaging Proem Ministries Worship group.

The keynote speaker was **Albert Hoekstra**, a Dutch educationalist but with a wide international experience. He became a partner of 'xpanD' in 1999 - an international organisation keen to improve personal and leadership development.



Albert's conference presentations on **Mentoring** were broken down into the following areas: **The Mentor** - Role and Personality, **The Motivation** - What drives people?, **The Process** - How does it work? **The Big Picture** - The mentoring context. Albert's experience, his spiritual mindedness, his love to develop peoples' calling and leadership qualities, practical approach to the topic, pervaded each session. There was a good mixture of: listening to an experienced communicator, reflective exercises on an individual and group basis, interactive opportunities with the speaker.

I will attempt to give a flavour of the sessions which Albert organised. One aspect, noticeable throughout each occasion, was how he was able to exemplify professional and educational contexts, relate these to Biblical situations to encourage thinking/working Christianly. **'Education leads to worship - God's fingerprints are everywhere'**. This set us thinking about **our Belief System.... Our, Home /Truth /Destiny/ Treasure....** making us ponder the role and personality of the mentor. We were reminded about Paul's words in Colossians 2 vs 3. 'In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'. One of the reflective exercises on **Mentors**, involved us recounting People who have been/are an example for me, what have I learned from them and two or three things I can integrate into my professional life.

Mentoring- The Coaching Process encouraged us to ask ourselves Am I... Increasing self awareness /Stimulating self responsibility /Increasing level of performance /stimulating self reflection? **Motivation** - what drives people - prompted us to evaluate our calling, our circumstances, our values. During the Sunday worship, Albert spoke to us and shared aspects of the mentoring **Context** - Christ is the centre of the worldview- relational and spiritual - see the world through acknowledging Christ. This was followed by the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Of the twelve reports from different countries, the presentation of the Messianic Jewish Day school was the highlight for me. The head teacher gave a riveting talk on God's calling to that position in 1990. The many answered prayers to the ongoing work of the Messianic Alternative in Israeli education, reassures that God dwells in us but also with us. The other member of staff from that school, speaking fluent Hebrew (we had a translator!) exemplified Christian dedication and how God was investing the talents and energy of the teaching staff, to equip each child academically and spiritually for their future role in Israel'. A visit to the website: www.makorhatikvah.org is a must!

The preparation for this conference by the EurECA Board and Liviu Carpar, secretary, must be acknowledged and was greatly appreciated.