



Eugene Bakhmutsky teaching at a youth conference in Russia's Far East city of Khabarovsk

## *The Promise of Russian Youth*

Pastor Eugene Bakhmutsky  
National Youth Director of the  
Russian UECB



**Editor's Note:** This article was adapted from Eugene's remarks during part of SGA's 75th Anniversary Celebration and Conference held at Chicago's historic Moody Church. Eugene's story is a wonderful example of how God is preparing the hearts of young men and women to make an eternal difference across Russia's vast expanse.

*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in*

*the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me (Galatians 2:20).*

I am someone who would not have been born if the Soviet government at the time had its way. Both of my great grandfathers were killed for their faith. Both of my grandfathers were sent to Siberia as young men to die there. Some of their brothers and sisters died in Siberia, while others were just killed in the prison camp. When they reached

*Continued on page 2*

### *In This Issue:*

<i>The Promise of Russian Youth</i>	Page 1-3
<i>News and Analysis</i>	Page 3
<i>From the Harvest Field</i>	Page 4-5
<i>A Prayer for Yaroslav</i>	Page 6
<i>Innercircle Perspective</i>	Page 7
<i>How You Can Help</i>	Page 8

18, some of them were sent for hard labor in coal mines located in miserable places. They were expected to die, and it was all legal.

One of my grandfathers was taken away six times by the Soviet KGB to be killed, but I didn't find that out from my grandmother until he had passed away. Another grandfather just went to be with the Lord last March. Before he died, he gave me a handwritten Bible as an heirloom. When I was a small boy, he would listen to SGA programs with me. He said, "Grandson, I only have one present to give to you, this Bible. His own martyred father had written some notes in it. It's our family heritage now. And I'm very grateful to SGA because they helped my grandparents to be faithful. They helped me to study at a Strategic Bible Institute and helped me to get a seminary degree from Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary. SGA is like my family, and really is family in so many ways.



*Eugene, with his wife, receiving his diploma from Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary*

There is a great future for Russian youth who give their lives to the Lord, and my own story is an example. For most of the last century, Christians were not admitted to the universities, but with the new freedom I was accepted for study and I preached the Gospel to my classmates. When it came time for me to enter the military training department, the colonel said to me, "We are concerned about you, because we hear many men have become Christians because of your witnessing. We've asked you to join us because we need more army men, not Christians. And he tried to convince me to deny my faith by promising me such a great future. Finally I said, "You know, I am a Baptist." He knew then it was useless to pressure me, and asked me to write a letter saying that I freely wanted to leave the army just two weeks before I was to get my lieutenant rank.

## ***Reaching Friends with the Gospel***

One day at the university, I saw my friend Dmitri sitting in the auditorium. He was the only young guy in my class to whom I had not yet preached the Gospel. Before I could say anything, he told me about a special psychological meeting he was to attend — a meeting where he would be "plucked" into "universal knowledge." Dmitri said, "Don't hope to be the first one. I'm the first one and I purchased a really special ticket. I looked at the ticket and said, "Dima, you're too late. I was plucked already." I said that I was plucked into the Bible and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. So I shared my testimony and told him about Christ. Two weeks later, he repented and believed. A few months later, Dima's fiancé also came to faith after some initial struggles.

After I moved to Novosibirsk and was renting an apartment, Dima wanted to come for a visit, but I had to be away at a youth conference. He came anyway and was staying at my place when the apartment owner came by. When I got home, I saw them sitting together at the tea table and Dima said, "Eugene, you need to greet our new sister in Christ." He had been witnessing to her, and she repented and believed. And that's not the end of the story.

Today Dima is the leader of the youth group in his town. He recently told me, "Eugene, young people are coming to faith just like they did when we were college kids." And that is what I want to emphasize to you — SGA's partners in ministry. The young people today are a new generation. They have never heard the Gospel. They're searching for their identity, and yes, they are coming to faith. Every missionary in Russia and the former Soviet Union reports the same



*Russian youth are searching for truth*

thing — young people are coming to faith! They are actually chasing after us just to hear the Gospel.

I recently committed to do one week of

street evangelism. After five days, 14 young men repented and believed, and they were willing to speak about it! We went to a university in Moscow just to share the Gospel. We knocked on the students' dorm rooms and asked them if they were willing to talk with us about Jesus. None of them said no, everyone was willing to talk to us about Jesus. We don't have enough workers now to work with young people who really want to listen to the Gospel. And this is my Macedonian



call to you. Please stand strong and continue to pray, and encourage our hearts to gather this harvest. The Lord Himself is really preparing these young hearts to listen and to respond. So please pray for revival in the former Soviet Union! The best days are ahead for SGA.



# NEWS AND ANALYSIS

## *Proposed New Religion Law Raises Concerns in Russia*

Russian church leaders report that the government is introducing troubling new legislation that could greatly curtail religious freedom. Pastor Yuri Sipko, president of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (UECB), has written to Russian president Dmitri Medvedev to express the Union's concerns.

Included among the troubling provisions proposed by the Russian Ministry of Justice are these:

1. Only religious groups registered in Russia for at least 15 years will be allowed to engage in missionary activity. The missionary's "sponsoring body" will also be held responsible for any "infractions" the missionary commits.
2. Foreigners in Russia on tourist visas or other temporary visas would be prohibited from engaging in missionary work. Missionary activities must exclude all "offers of material, social and other benefits."
3. Missionary activity would not be allowed in hospitals, orphanages, homes for invalids or the aged without the approval of the government and institution officials. Such efforts would also not be allowed within or on the grounds of government buildings — or in the vicinity of a religious structure of another faith.

4. Children or minors may not be present at religious activities, nor may they be given printed, audio or video materials, without the express permission of their parents or guardians.

The response from the Baptist Union points out the potential abuses of such a law if adopted. Pastor Sipko added, "Ill wishers could send minors to a church service, and then law enforcement would fine the church for their presence. This will be a convenient and profitable way to ruin a congregation and supplement the city budget. Why should the pastor need to serve as a policeman? Also, why should a teenager need parental permission to attend church when the same is not demanded of theaters, sports stadiums and dance halls? Is a place of worship more dangerous than a secular location? This legislation wants to define religious organizations as harmful, and that is clear discrimination. It also contradicts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations and ratified by Russia, and clearly impinges upon the freedom of the individual to believe as he or she feels fit."

The UECB leadership asked its 1,750 churches in Russia to unite for prayer and fasting in response to this new threat to their freedom. Believers in other lands are also invited to join them in prayer. Letters of concern addressed to Russian embassies worldwide are also being encouraged.

# From the Harvest Fields . . .

## Fruitful Ministry with Children and Youth

Kairat Dosaev  
(Shimkent, Kazakhstan)

We had some 100 youth at our conference, The Meaning of Life is Ministry. After the conference, we could see in our church and in many places across the country



an exciting renewal among the youth in the church — even just a few months later. It was our first Kazakh youth conference since 2004, and one of two young unbelievers there repented and received Christ. These two young men from Muslim backgrounds could see that they are not alone, even if they are viewed as “betraying” their religion of Islam. Praise the Lord, it was only possible by His grace.



*Christ is drawing young people to Himself in Kazakhstan.*

Andrei Grushin  
(Soligorsk, Belarus)

The youth ministry is strengthening and developing. New people appeared. Sveta comes to youth meetings, but her life is hard. She gave birth to a child while at school, and because of this she had to drop out. The father of the baby left and she raises her child on her own. Her aunt told Sveta she should go to church even though the aunt doesn't go. Another young man, Misha, is the grandson of one of our members. He is attracted to our youth group even though his parents often forbid him to come to church. He had made friends with our youth when they all went on a hike. Brother Volodya returned to church after trying to live without God. Now his friend Anatoly comes to church with him. The Lord blesses us with many opportunities to witness about His love and to serve people.



Sergei Chervov  
Yashkino, Russia

In July, we organized the Festival of Christian Creativity and a related project, Make Your Place of Living Beautiful. The children and youth participated, and we chose



a yard in our village that was very untidy. We cleaned and painted the objects that were there, while telling the local inhabitants about Jesus Christ and pasting Gospel tracts on the newsstands. People listened to us as well and saw our deeds, and for them it was a very pleasant surprise. Perhaps they can also see that the stories spread about Baptists by evil people are false. We also had a forest hike where we invited children from unsaved families, which gave us opportunities to share with their parents. I am grateful to the Lord for leading us, and giving us all the necessary things for life and godliness.



*One of the young people helping to paint and clean is telling one of the inhabitants about Jesus Christ*

Velika Lepetikha, Kherson, Gornostaevka and Novaya Kakhovka. The topics for boys were The Secrets of Men's Souls and How to Become a Real Man, while the girls' topic was The True Beauty of a Girl. God really blessed this time, and on the last day, 20 young people repented. Praise God!

Anatoly Orlov  
(St. Petersburg, Russia)



Last summer, our Christian youth visited the Volosovo district with a missionary purpose. They visited villages and small towns. They helped elderly people in their gardens, cut wood, brought groceries and made small repairs to their houses, while telling people about the love of Jesus and that He wants to save them. There were people ready to receive physical help from our youth, and they listened to them intently, even with tears in their eyes. Ten new persons came to the church for the first time. Praise be to God that we can do what He has called us to do!

Victor Levchenko  
Kherson, Ukraine

This past year, we conducted a special trip called Youth for Christ. About 130 children and youth were part of it, and they all came from the villages I serve  
— Mala Lepetikha,



# A Prayer for Yaroslav



Pavel Podbutsky  
SGA-Sponsored  
Missionary in  
Rostov, Russia

*Let your gentle  
spirit be known  
to all men  
(Philippians 4:5).*

I am sure most youth workers who have served at camps or other activities would agree. There's usually one child or youth in almost every group who can be a real challenge. But God's love can do amazing things with even the most difficult children.

Yaroslav was a young boy who ended up in my group this past summer at a camp we held in Volgograd on the bank of the historic Volga River. From the very first day, he came across as self-willed, self-confident and very selfish. He never thought about helping friends in need or in their hardships. For example, in one of our games, the whole group would be lifting a water bucket with their feet, but he would pull loose when the bucket began to lean in order not to get wet, getting the rest of the kids wet in the process. That was his pattern all the time. But the Lord intervened and began to work in Yaroslav.

On the third day of camp, Yaroslav was trying to show off his agility. He wouldn't listen to the warnings or rules of the group leaders, and he eventually hurt his leg after attempting a somersault. It was a big disappointment for him — as well as for the rest of us — as the camp session had just begun. He wanted to go home, but praise God, he agreed to stay until the camp session was over.

God used this incident in amazing ways. He was teaching all of us to be forgiving, respectful and concerned for one another. Yaroslav could hardly move around immediately after his injury, and the other kids who had suffered the consequences of some of his escapades didn't want to give him any attention or help at first. But we talked to them about the Lord and His forgiveness, and that they needed to forgive others. Gradually, more of them began to help Yaroslav, bringing him meals and helping him to get from one place to another. They even began to enjoy caring for someone in need.

But even more striking was the impact on Yaroslav. His attitude toward others began to change. We saw less self-will and self-assertion, and more respect, gratitude and concern for others. He began to ask serious questions on serious topics, and by the end of the camp, Yaroslav had made many friends. And we saw many beautiful character traits beginning to surface in him.



*Yaroslav's heart  
was softened by  
Christian love.*

Yaroslav does not yet attend our church, but his parents are friends with one of our church families. Please remember this young man in your prayers, especially for his salvation and that of his family. It is our desire that more young people like Yaroslav will hear the Gospel through our church. May the Lord Most High bless you!

# Innercircle Perspective



*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved (Philippians 3:17-4:1).*

As we launch into the new year, it is good to catch our breath and assess our perspectives. Daily we are bombarded by the values and philosophies of the world through mass media, our educational environments, employment environments and political structures. More often than we realize, we are being unwittingly influenced like the cold-blooded frog in the warming water in the biology lab experiment.

We can forget that our citizenship on this earth is secondary, and it is fleeting. Our real citizenship is in heaven, where we shall abide in eternal joy with praise and glory to Christ. During a time when economic issues have been impacting our lives, and the direction of our nation is troubling, we can become absorbed by talk radio and TV news and analysis programs. It seems the responsible thing to do, but we can easily become entangled in earthly concerns, when we need to be serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

A trip to Beslan, Russia, serves dramatically to clear the fog and sharpen one's focus. You may recall the horrific evil that transpired on September 1st, 2004, when Public School No. 1 was attacked by Muslim terrorists. Some 1,200 children, teenagers, teachers, school staff, administrators, parents and grandparents were captured at the opening ceremony for the new school year. After three days of thirst and torture, 334 hostages were killed, including 186 children. Hundreds more were wounded or reported missing.

Two pastors and their wives lost six children between them, and another son was shot in the back and lost an eye. Altogether the Beslan Baptist Church lost a Sunday school teacher and 15 children. While in deep mourning for their own lost, the pastors and their wives led the church family in many outreaches to the desperately grieving community.

Since then their regular witness has expanded to all 11 public schools, and their goal is to become an *Antioch* church to reach all of North Ossetia for Christ.

Now, five years later, the Sunday worship was glorious – especially the singing, the special recitations of many children, and the extended prayer time. That evening the fellowship with 20 faithful men went on for five hours, with singing, sharing and a wonderful meal prepared by the ladies. Families that were devastated are still grieving, but they have found the Lord's grace sufficient to sustain them. Serving Christ and reaching out to the lost is their passion. They pay no heed to economic and political developments. Even tragedy-related health issues do not deter them. They just keep standing firm and pressing on, following the example of the Apostle Paul.



**Dr. Robert W. Provost**  
SGA President

As for me, each time we drove past the ruins of the school building I found myself looking away. Imagine having each day to pass by the bombed-out school building where your precious children were tortured and killed, and the cemetery where they are buried. Knowing they are with the Lord is a great comfort, but the heart-felt grief is never truly gone.

Just to spend time with these precious Christians and experience their faith and love is a deeply humbling experience. Their hearts remain filled with gratitude to all the SGA partners who helped them in their time of great need. Please keep the two Totiev families and the entire Beslan Baptist Church in your prayers. Pray that the Lord will fill their hearts with peace and joy that overcomes their sorrow. And pray for the Montana *Antioch* Coalition that is equipping their church to train and send church planters throughout North Ossetia.



# How You Can Help

Help SGA sponsor and equip dedicated Russian missionaries . . . and so much more!



Across the lands of Russia, youth are searching for meaning in life. In their search, many have turned to drugs and alcohol. The Russian evangelical churches SGA serves are reaching out to this lost generation with the Gospel through various outreach ministries, including church youth groups, Bible-based substance abuse rehabilitation programs, camps and special youth ministry conferences.

## Help Russian-speaking churches share the Good News with those waiting to hear ...

Young people across the former Soviet Union — as well as other age groups — urgently need to hear the Good News! Your gifts help Bible-preaching churches minister to youth, children and adults in their communities through ...

- Missionary Work – through evangelism and church-planting
- Bible and Christian Literature
- Orphans Ministry – through *Orphans Reborn*
- Children’s Ministry – through Sunday schools, summer camps and follow-up outreaches



*InSight* is published to report religious news about Russia, the rest of the CIS and the ministries of:

Slavic Gospel Association  
6151 Commonwealth Drive  
Loves Park, IL 61111  
www.sga.org  
E-mail: insight@sga.org  
Phone: 815-282-8900  
Fax: 815-282-8901

Slavic Gospel Association — Canada  
55 Fleming Drive, Suite 26  
Cambridge, ON N1T 2A9  
www.sgacanada.ca  
E-mail: Canada@sga.org  
Phone: 519-621-3553  
Fax: 519-621-7571

To start, cancel or change the mailing address on your subscription to *InSight*, please send your name, your old address, and your new address to the address listed above. Please allow six to eight weeks for the fulfillment of your request.

### International Offices

Australia / Dr. Nikolai Porublev  
Canada / Rev. Allan W. Vincent  
England / William Smylie  
New Zealand / Richard Hemmingsen

### U.S. Board of Directors

Warner Tillman, Chairman  
Harry Leopold, Vice Chairman  
Dr. Richard Gregory, Secretary  
John Wauterlek, Treasurer  
Evon Hedley, Director Emeritus  
Dr. Robert W. Provost, President  
Dr. Bill Atkinson  
John Blackman  
Rev. Bruce Love  
Jack Tedford  
Rev. Allan W. Vincent

### Canadian Board of Directors

Ivan Barber, Chairman  
Dr. Stephen Code, Vice Chairman  
Carol Dean Jeffries, Treasurer  
Rev. Allan W. Vincent, Director  
John C. Goetze  
Walter Gnida  
Arnold Heron  
Michael Nichols  
Dr. Robert W. Provost  
John Zielonko

SGA is a member of:



Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability



CrossGlobal Link  
Formerly called IFMA

## Thank you!

Please return the enclosed reply form with your gift.



Your gift can help share Christ's love across the lands of Russia.

- Dr. Provost, here's my gift to help reach the many still waiting to hear the Gospel. I'm enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (11000)
- I would like to stay better connected! Please e-mail me with periodic ministry updates, key prayer requests and needs. (400) My e-mail address is: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sign me up to be part of SGA's special e-mail Prayer Team. (400) My e-mail address is: \_\_\_\_\_

To make your gift by credit card, see reverse side. >