

# Ministry Report 2008



*You have given a banner to those who fear You, that it may be displayed because of the truth (Psalm 60:4).*

There is little doubt that 2008 will go down in history as a momentous year around the world. In addition to the many key events that captured our attention, we saw historic elections of new presidents in both the United States and Russia. The United States elected its first African-American president in Barack Obama, while Russia elected Dmitri Medvedev to replace Vladimir Putin — the first peaceful, elected transfer of power by heads of state in Russian history. Yet the key story of the year was a massive, global economic crisis that began as the United States entered a recession in December 2007, impacting secular businesses and Christian ministries alike and necessitating significant budget cuts.

## God Continues to Build His Church Despite Renewed Oppression

Over the past year, there were renewed efforts by governments in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to close the door for evangelical ministry. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, new restrictive religion laws were passed with overwhelming margins by the nations' legislative bodies. In Azerbaijan, local governments continued to increase pressure on Baptist churches, with Pastor Hamid Shabanov arrested on false charges after a raid on his home — in similar fashion to Pastor Zaur Balaev's arrest the previous year. In July, another troubling incident took place in the Russian capital of Moscow when authorities tried unsuccessfully to shut down the UECB national conference.



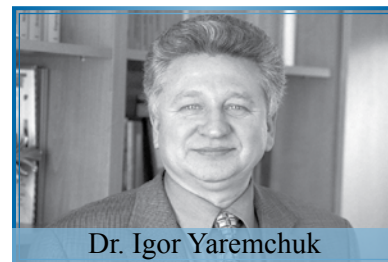
While the past year has presented significant financial challenges for SGA and the churches of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (UECB), there is still much for which to be thankful and rejoice. Indeed, this has been a time to lift high the banner of the Lord, and proclaim His truth at every opportunity He provides. We trust you will be blessed and encouraged as we review 2008's ministry highlights.

## Bible Training — Our Top Priority

During 2008, SGA continued its sponsorship of key UECB seminaries and Bible institutes across the CIS. In May, more than 167 students graduated — 67 with a preaching or pastoral-type degree such as a Bachelor of Pastoral Ministry, Bachelor of Theology or Master of Divinity, 45 Christian Education graduates, 31 music graduates, eight missions graduates, and 16 completing the deaf ministry program. SGA was able to provide gifts of literature for each graduate.

There were significant developments at the SGA-sponsored Irpen Biblical Seminary in Ukraine. Founding president Dr. Alexei Brinza stepped down in the spring of 2008 due to health reasons, and was replaced by Dr. Igor Yaremchuk, who had been serving as vice president. Dr. Brinza's health continued to deteriorate throughout the summer until he went to be with the Lord on October 3.

Another important development in 2008 was the beginning of the International Bible Institute of Ukraine (IBIU), an extension of Odessa Theological Seminary. The purpose of this special Bible institute is to train missionaries to plant churches in some of the least-reached regions of the world. The institute enrolled two students from Syria at the beginning, and expects between 90 to 110 students within a year. We were also thankful for the news that The Master's College in Santa Clarita, California, and Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, have both agreed to make this program available to their students, who would travel to IBIU to study.



Dr. Igor Yaremchuk

SGA continued sponsorship of two Strategic Bible Institutes in 2008. These are located in the Russian cities of Kursk and Surgut, with almost 40 students participating.

With all enrollments combined, there are more than 927 students now studying either full or part time at an SGA-sponsored seminary or Bible institute in the CIS.

# 2008 Ministry Report

## SGA-Sponsored Conferences

SGA partners helped sponsor several overseas conferences during 2008 for the blessing and encouragement of our brothers and sisters in the CIS. With SGA's assistance, the leadership of the Russian UECB held conferences in Moscow during March and October. Conferences for church-planting missionaries and their wives were held in the Russian cities of Smolensk and Ryazan, and in Irpen, Ukraine. Special speakers for the conference were Bob Somerville, associate professor of biblical counseling at The Master's College, and his wife Mary, author of a wonderful book for pastors' wives called *One With a Shepherd*. Russian-language copies of this book were distributed during the conferences. A separate conference for pastors' wives was held in Minsk, Belarus, and led by Lilia Podrez, wife of SGA Minsk Regional Ministry Center director Piotr Podrez.

In addition, an SGA-sponsored music ministry conference was held in February at Irpen Biblical Seminary in Ukraine. Youth conferences are noted in the section on youth ministry.

## Youth and Children's Ministry

SGA's partner churches and individuals across North America again generously supported SGA-sponsored children's ministries throughout 2008. During *Immanuel's Child* Christmas outreaches between December 2007 and January 2008, a total of 14,588 children were reached, with 262 churches and locations participating in nine countries. Of that number, 640 children and 107 adults repented, and 1,030 children started attending Sunday school. This was a tremendous increase from the previous year, for which we praise the Lord! Countries participating in *Immanuel's Child* included Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.



Ministry also continued through the SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* outreach, conducted by churches in five countries — Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia and Kazakhstan. A total of 13,003 children in approximately 135 orphanages and children's homes received visits from faithful church workers who have dedicated themselves to reaching these young boys and girls with the love of Christ.

The effectiveness and fruitfulness of summer camp ministry was also confirmed again in 2008. SGA partners helped sponsor Christian children's camps in eight countries,

reaching 13,203 children compared with 8,836 children last year. Most importantly, more than 2,700 children received Christ as their Savior during the 202 children's camps that were held. Among that number, 266 children who came to faith in Christ were from Muslim countries. Since the launch of camp ministries in 2001, the Lord has granted a steady increase in the number of children participating.

Youth ministry continued to develop across Russia in 2008 under the leadership of Eugene Bakhmutsky, national youth director for the Russian UECB. SGA partners assisted by sponsoring six youth director leadership training conferences, beginning with a January 2008 conference on ministry to teenagers. This was followed by the February UECB national youth conference, a youth leadership conference in April, a youth journalism conference in May, and finally a youth training conference held at Moscow Seminary in September. SGA also continued sponsorship of UECB youth staff and regional youth coordinators.



## The Fruitful Labors of Church Planters

The global economic challenges of 2008 presented significant challenges for SGA and our partners, yet we were still able to sponsor a peak of 403 faithful church-planting missionary-evangelists and their families. Specifically at year-end, there were 185 church planters sponsored in Russia, 121 in Ukraine, 57 in Belarus, 18 in Kazakhstan, 6 in Uzbekistan, 2 each in Tajikistan and Azerbaijan, and one each in Albania and Armenia.

The economic downturn coupled with the continually rising cost of living across the CIS continues to challenge our resources, and increases the need for additional support for church-planting ministries.

One new way our partners are helping to support church planters is in the area of assisting them with urgent medical treatments. In 2008 alone, we assisted four church planters in Russia and Ukraine with medical issues that had arisen.

## Strengthening Antioch Partnerships

For the SGA-sponsored *Antioch Initiative*, the year 2008 saw continued strengthening of partnerships between Russian *Antioch* locations and their supporting coalitions of churches in North America. From the beginning, the goal of *Antioch* has been to equip a strong central church in each designated Russian region to plant effective daughter churches, thereby reaching their regions more effectively



for Christ. This has primarily been done through effective pastoral and ministry training, the support of church planters, and the joint participation of North American and Russian churches in ministry projects and meeting tangible needs.



As of 2008, there were 21 *Antioch* locations across Russia, supported by 21 regional North American coalitions of churches. These coalitions are made up of 108 congregations, whose pastors and teams participated in supporting *Antioch* ministries in a number of important ways. Here is just a glimpse of what has been accomplished since 2003:

Participating North American churches	108
Training courses completed	109
Church planters supported by coalition churches	51
Ministry teams sent	27
Construction/Renovation projects	21
North American church overseas trips (combined)	144

## New Russian-Language Christian Literature in Production

There were several exciting developments in the area of SGA-produced Russian-language Christian literature during 2008. Now that the needed artwork and permissions have been received, production is beginning on a Russian version of the *Faith to Grow On Bible* for children by Dr. John MacArthur. This will be the very first complete Bible prepared for children in the Russian language. Translation is underway, and our goal is to have an initial print run of 50,000 copies by the fall of 2009.

SGA printed and distributed Volumes 3 and 4 of the MacArthur *Commentary on Matthew*, along with *New Man in Christ* and *The Holy Spirit* by Dr. Roman Dechtiarenko, SGA's itinerant professor of Bible. A generous donor also enabled SGA to print an unabridged version of Dr. MacArthur's *Safe in the Arms of God*. Our prayer is that God will use this as a great tool for ministry to families who have experienced the death of a beloved child. Another book for children — *Adam and Eve* by Mrs. G (Kitty Griffiths) — was translated and published by SGA, with 15,000 copies going to Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. In addition, SGA distributed Mary Somerville's *One With a Shepherd* to the wives of pastors and church planters. Copies of Dr. Walter Kaiser's *Toward an Exegetical Theology* were purchased for students at SGA-sponsored seminaries in the CIS. Finally,

SGA received a donation of 129,000 copies of Russian-language children's Christian literature from David C. Cook International. Some of the titles SGA had actually translated in the early 1990s, but they had been too costly for us to keep in inventory. This huge gift permitted major literature distributions by evangelical churches across Ukraine.

## Church Construction

During 2008, SGA continued to assist in the construction and/or remodeling of churches and Houses of Prayer across the lands of Russia. In all, we assisted a total of 43 projects, including 21 in Russia — 18 of which were related to the SGA-sponsored *Antioch Initiative*. There were six projects in Belarus, 15 in Ukraine, and in Uzbekistan we helped in the purchase and reconstruction of a building for ministry to homeless children. As noted before, in the Russian culture, it is very important for a church to have its own building. Typically, groups not having such a structure or house of worship are viewed with suspicion, and are often labeled as cults or sects.

In addition to church construction, SGA also continued assistance in the ongoing construction of a sports ministry center for the church in Kirovo-Chepetsk, Russia, as well as the Golgotha Baptist Church in Moscow.

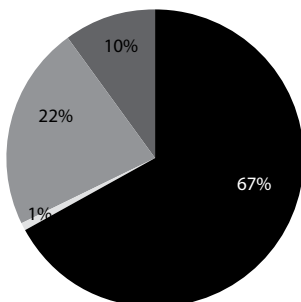
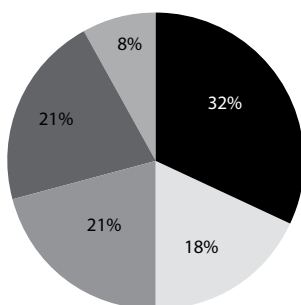
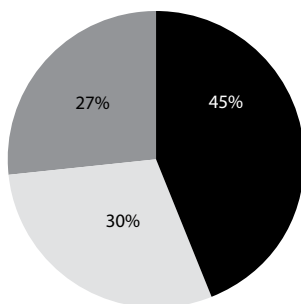
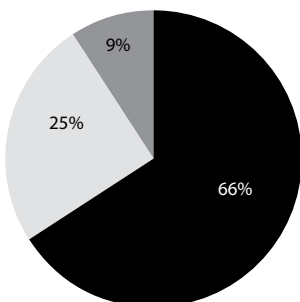
## Ministry to South Ossetian Refugees

SGA partners enabled us to help Russian evangelical churches respond in a significant way to a refugee crisis that was sparked by the brief August 2008 war between Russia and the former Soviet republic of Georgia. The conflict began when Georgia launched an offensive to retake control of its breakaway South Ossetia region, which borders Russia. Russia then responded with overwhelming military force and drove Georgian troops out of both South Ossetia and Abkhazia, another separatist region.

Evangelical churches in several southern Russian regions reached out to the thousands of refugees fleeing the war zone. SGA partners helped send funds to the churches for humanitarian aid, along with Russian-language Christian literature. These gifts helped provide an open door for the churches to share the Gospel and the love of Christ with the refugees — many of whom had fled with only the clothes on their backs.



# 2008 Ministry Report



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION  
6151 Commonwealth Drive • Loves Park, IL 61111  
815-282-8900 • [www.sga.org](http://www.sga.org)

## Statement of Financial Position as of 6/30/08

### Assets

• Current Assets	\$2,445,200	66%
• Land, Buildings & Equipment	948,537	25%
• Other	333,709	9%

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,727,446</b>	<b>100%</b>
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### Liabilities and Net Assets

• Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,664,613	45%
• Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	1,071,044	30%
• Liabilities	991,789	27%

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,727,446</b>	<b>100%</b>
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## Statement of Activities for Year Ended 6/30/08

### Expenses

#### Ministry & Supporting Activities

• Equipping	\$3,329,019	32%
• Training	1,865,553	18%
• Evangelism-Church Planting	2,208,622	21%
• Advancement	2,131,391	21%
• Administration	801,776	8%

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,336,361</b>	<b>100%</b>
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Ministry Activities	\$7,403,194
Supporting Activities	2,933,167
Non-operating Activities	0

<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$10,336,361</b>
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### Revenue

#### Partner Support

• Individual Support	\$6,939,841	67%
• Donated Materials & Services	67,219	1%
• Churches	2,264,326	22%
• Foundation Grants	1,062,430	10%

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,333,816</b>	<b>100%</b>
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Partner Support	\$10,333,816
Other	57,902
Non-operating	<10,539>

<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$10,381,179</b>
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\*Financial figures on this page solely reflect SGA ministry activity for the fiscal year ended 6/30/08. However, all activities within the ministry report itself reflect the 2008 calendar year.

\*\*Full audited financial statements are available on request.