



Running to God

The Fruit of Bible and Ministry Training in Central Asia

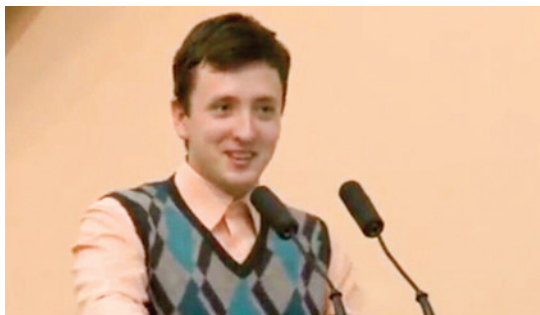
Igor loves to share the story of how he came to saving faith in Christ. Today, he is enrolled at the SGA-sponsored Almaty Bible Institute in Kazakhstan, and is a wonderful example of the type of Bible students preparing for fruitful service. But he wasn't always a believer. It took a personal loss and the persistent testimony of his great-grandmother to get his attention, coupled with the Lord's forceful intervention . . .

I was 19 years old and had met a girl. She became an idol, although I didn't see it then. For me, she became everything in my life. One day, she informed me that she was exchanging me for other friends, and she broke up with me. I was very sad.

My great-grandmother was a believer and as usual, she invited me to church for Sunday services. I went with her for the next three Sundays, and on that third Sunday I repented. The service had concluded and I left the House of Prayer. I walked about 100 meters away, and then the Lord

impressed upon me, "If you do not come to Me now, you will no longer be able to do it. Change your mind and repent!" I turned around and literally ran back into the House of Prayer. I found our pastor, Yuri Vasilievich, and then fell on my knees and repented. After my repentance, the Lord showed me that I needed to be baptized, and I later expressed this desire to obey the Lord.

Today, Igor carries out his ministry in



Igor in his younger years—but his passion for ministry is as strong as ever.

the city of Almaty. He visits the elderly as well as preaches in his local church, and in the villages. He is enrolled in the youth ministry course of study at Almaty Bible Institute, and says it is a huge blessing . . .



Igor's loving and proud parents in Central Asia.

Not everyone is given this opportunity by the Lord. Not only am I learning new things, but I also am more deeply understanding what Christ wants from me personally. I can apply this knowledge in life for the glory of

God. It is not easy to describe. God helps me through the brothers who teach here. Every subject that we had this year, to some extent helps me as I preach the Gospel. I am grateful to the Lord that He put it in the hearts of brothers and sisters in North America to give financially to the cause of Christ, and their work is not in vain in the sight of God! (1 Corinthians 15:58). Personally, it is very important to me that you have given me an opportunity to study. After all, we are doing one work together in order to reach people. Thank you for helping us and may God bless you!



Almaty Bible Institute students and teachers share the Lord's Supper.

A Warm Welcome for the Gospel in Ukraine

While Pastor Pavel Dudka's church is located in western Ukraine, the people in his region are still affected by the war and bloodshed that is taking place in the eastern regions. Churches across Ukraine have been reaching out to refugees and other needy families, and God is using this troubled time to draw many to Himself. Pastor Pavel recently shared a wonderful account of how even city officials are open to hearing of Christ's love . . .

Winter this year has been severely cold, especially over Christmas, but even the severe cold weather and snow didn't stop us from fulfilling the Great Commission—to go and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In January, we had a major evangelical program in our downtown, and I want to share with you just how God worked through that program.

We went out for the purpose of evangelism and invited more than 200 people to our meeting, which we had in the downtown district. I can tell you that the building that we rented for

the meeting was really small. Even so, it was packed with unbelieving people. We had also invited the mayor of our town, and not only did he come, but also all of his assistants! For almost two hours we presented the program we had prepared, and a many people were crying as they heard the news about Jesus. As I preached, I spoke of the terrible situation in Ukraine today with the conflict in the east, and that there is only one hope for Ukraine—the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the solution for our poor and devastated country. Many people were crying as they listened.

At the end of the meeting, I asked our mayor to speak, so he came to the stage and said, "This is the first meeting that I've ever been to, in which I had peace in my soul during this very short time." Then he added, "Please do more such meetings! We need it!"

Pavel concluded his report by saying, "We are thankful. God is still working, and people are getting saved, and it is amazing!" We rejoice with thanksgiving for the open door God has created for the Gospel. Please prayerfully consider a gift to SGA's Crisis Evangelism Fund, which helps evangelical churches reach out with the Gospel and physical aid to refugees and other needy families impacted by the Ukrainian conflict.



Pavel's ministry helped bring together a local community shattered by war.

The students at SGA-sponsored seminaries and Bible institutes come from all locations across the CIS and from all walks of life. Here are a couple of personal testimonies to encourage your heart . . .

Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary Expanding Its Reach



As SGA’s *Reach Russia Now* initiative unfolds in Russia’s Far East, the importance of sound Bible training is all the more vital. Teachers from the SGA-sponsored Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary—located in western Siberia—recently traveled to the Yakutsk region to hold first-ever classes for pastors. We are praying for the resources to train even more missionaries to go to the many unreached towns and villages in the Far East. In addition, SGA partners are also making it possible for the reach of NTBS to extend into European Russia, with 23 students enrolled in Voronezh and 15 in St. Petersburg. SGA recently distributed biblically sound books for these students, which was a great encouragement to them, and thankfully received.

**Alyona Brazhnik
Irpen Biblical Seminary**

My mother is a believer and I have attended church with her since my childhood. When I was 10, my father left us and afterward, I saw mother’s faith in practice—how she trusted Him during the darkest times. I saw how God answered her prayers. I also saw God working in my life, how He helped and led me, although I wasn’t saved at that moment. When I was a teenager, the world attracted me and I almost left the church. But I had God’s Word in my heart and mind, and people prayed for me. God worked in my heart and at a Christmas service in 2003, (I was 16 years old then) God showed me my sinfulness and the greatness of His love to me. This is when I repented and dedicated my life to Him. I have followed Him since then and consider it a great privilege to serve Him in His church. I serve in my home church and plan to develop ministry there including training for Sunday school teachers, discipleship of young girls, and participating in women’s ministry.

My education at Irpen Seminary has had great impact on my spiritual growth. It strengthened my theology, gave me a lot of new knowledge and useful tools for my ministry, which helps me greatly. I found answers to questions which bothered me, I know the Bible better and can answer questions. It gave me a lot of practical knowledge for my ministry, including the methodology of teaching and inspired me for developing ministry. It is hard to list all of the blessings of this education for me! Thank you so much for your sacrificial ministry and provision for my education. Irpen Biblical Seminary is crucial for churches in Ukraine and neighboring countries as it trains and disciples many faithful ministers with sound biblical doctrine.



**Alexander Novikov
Odessa Theological Seminary**



My grandmother was Orthodox, so I heard about God and the Lord Jesus Christ from my childhood, even though my father was a member of the Communist Party. I believe she prayed for me a lot, and God heard her prayer. One day, I noticed an old friend reading the Bible. I was 16 at that time and was really curious about religion. I asked him why he was doing it, and later he showed me from the Bible that my way of living was far from the one God wants for me. He invited me to a Baptist church in a small city called Nikopol. Even though that was happening in the latter days of the Soviet Union, it was still a great stress for my parents. But I repented six months later, and was baptized. Then the Lord brought me to Odessa Theological Seminary. It was very important to me to lead worship services in a biblical way. There is a small church in my city that doesn’t have anyone to lead it. Our regional pastor invited me to become the pastor of this church. I agreed, even though it is a great challenge for me! Odessa Seminary “formatted” me, if I can put it that way. I had no idea about the right way to preach and was completely ignorant in the area of biblical counseling. Helping to support the seminary is not just charity or a donation. It’s more an offering or sacrifice that pleases God. I am very grateful to God for the generous and responsible believers who support Bible training!

Enrollment and Graduations of SGA-Sponsored Seminaries and Bible Institutes

	2016-2017 school year enrollment	Total graduates for 2016-2017	Total graduates since the start of the school
Irpen Seminary	400	78	1791
Odessa Seminary	279	110	1515
Minsk Seminary	208	43	1460
Novosibirsk Seminary	123	4	476
Almaty Bible Inst.	98	27	729
Baku Bible Inst	n/a	n/a	60
Tajik Bible Inst.	25	0	53
Israel College of the Bible	73	25	94
TOTAL	1206	287	6178



A God-Planned Roadside Encounter

SGA's Eric Mock recently visited Belarus and missionary pastor Vasily Kuretz, who shared a wonderful story that actually began seven years ago.

Vasily was driving to the city of Logoysk when a couple on the side of the road flagged him down. He noticed that there were two young children with them—a boy about six and a young girl who appeared to be about four. They had been wandering in the forest along the road and this couple had stopped out of concern. The children pleaded with Vasily to take them to Logoysk to find their parents. Vasily readily agreed.

When they arrived in Logoysk, the kids could only say that they lived where the road is wide and full of holes. Vasily then asked if the children knew where their father worked. Again, they replied yes, and that he worked at a place with a large, green metal gate. Vasily kept driving and finally, the kids recognized a business where a friend of their parents worked. He was able to leave these lost children with the friend, who assured him the children would get back to their parents.

After some time had passed, Vasily

became a missionary pastor in Logoysk. He began his ministry at a transition home, where recently orphaned children are sent before being assigned to an orphanage. As Vasily visited, he noticed that there was one boy who kept following him around. Finally, he stopped and asked the boy why he was following him. The boy responded, *"Don't you remember me? You picked up my sister and me in the forest and took us home."* Vasily then found out that the parents had split up, and did not want their children. And God had provided a sweet and caring face for these dear kids to meet again—as if by chance on the side of the highway, and then—amazingly—at the very children's facility where Vasily would be ministering!

Vasily began sharing the Gospel with this young boy and his sister. They both asked immediately if they could attend the local Baptist church to learn more. But before long, they were transferred to an orphanage. He has not seen these children for a while, but he asks that we join him in prayer that their hearts will turn to the Lord. Vasily is supported in his efforts by the SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* ministry, and he says this support is vital for his work among these children.

CIS in the News



Urgent Needs Still Exist in Ukraine

Although the mainstream media rarely mentions the war in eastern Ukraine, the fighting still rages on and is shattering many lives. To date, more than 10,000 people have been killed in the conflict, which began three years ago, shortly after the country's president was ousted from office and he fled to Russia. The evangelical churches SGA serves have

been reaching out to needy families and refugees impacted by the war and its debilitating effect on the local economy in the east. We established the Crisis Evangelism Fund to help churches provide food, bedding, clothing, shelter, and other immediate needs of the refugees. Please pray, asking for God's provision. Funds have been running low, while the need only continues to grow.

How You Can Help

The fall term of classes will soon begin for the eager, dedicated students at SGA-sponsored seminaries and Bible institutes in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Central Asia. Our mission's top priority is—as always—provision of biblically sound Bible training for future pastors, children's and youth workers, and worship leaders. Equipped in sound doctrine, these servants of Christ will be ready for a lifetime of reaching the lost with the Gospel. Your gifts help accomplish this and so much more. Through SGA, you support Bible training, missionary pastors, compassion ministry, crisis evangelism, provision of Bibles and literature, and many other Gospel resources. Please pray about how you can help today!



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Insight from Michael

This past spring, I traveled with SGA president emeritus Bob Provost to attend the Class of 2017 Graduation Ceremony at Irpen Biblical Seminary in Ukraine.

What a wonderful experience it was for me to see how the Lord has blessed the school through their diligent labors and your faithful support!



Michael Johnson
SGA President

The last time I visited years ago, the renovation and construction on their new building was just beginning with only the frame standing of what was once a very large kindergarten complex. To see the beautiful new building completed and the quality of the students and staff was an encouragement almost beyond words. The students' commitment to the Gospel is total, and nearly all

of Irpen's graduates have continued on in ministry. Most of the students were in ministry already even while studying for their degrees, and their

time at Irpen studying God's Word equipped them for a lifetime of faithful labor. Some graduates have elected to go on the mission field outside Ukraine, dedicated to Christ's command to *make disciples of all the nations* (Matthew

28:19). We will be sharing some of their stories in future issues of InSight.

I can never thank you enough for all your prayers and faithful support of SGA's ministries, and especially our top priority of sound Bible training. The Gospel is advancing across the CIS, and the Lord is gathering a great harvest!



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