



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

Read how the Lord is raising up a generation of leaders!



INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ◆ Adversity leads to . . . growth!
- ◆ Read testimonies of students and see what is happening.
- ◆ Training biblically-faithful leaders is a more vital mission than ever!

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit . . . (MATTHEW 28:19)

Bible Training Bears Much Fruit

Your support increases growth of biblical leaders—despite adversity!

Rev. Larry Duncan
SGA Director of Training Ministries

Adversity in a chaotic world is spurring growth in SGA-supported Bible training across the former Soviet Union. The Lord is giving the fruit both in the churches *and* schools which SGA serves.

The landscape of our mission field is constantly changing. Today, we are seeing suffering in the countries we serve—suffering at a level not seen by some since World War II. Yet much like the early church, God uses such chaotic times to advance and grow His church. Churches are becoming aid centers, and hurting men and women who previously rested in comfort are now seeking hope in Christ. Many have lost everything. They are seeking the treasures this world cannot offer.

And rather than shrinking back in self-protection, faithful believers are stepping forward with hope and the Gospel. SGA has been there with them all along. But the new challenge is that **there are not enough trained men to lead new and growing churches! God is leading us in a marked shift in recent months, from a massive response of humanitarian aid to a massive need for training faithful men.**

This is happening through SGA-supported seminaries and Bible institutes, along with *Antioch Initiative* church-based training. Because of the exploding need, we must expand training of men and women for a variety of ministries in their local churches. Ironically, the main campus of Irpen Biblical Seminary in Ukraine has a lower attendance due to Ukrainians leaving the country in the midst



Graduation ceremony for Ukrainian students at an Irpen Biblical Seminary extension center in Prague.

of war—yet this spurred the establishment of extension centers for Irpen in Poland and the Czech Republic. In Israel, the Russian-speaking department of Israel College of the Bible has started a new

Bachelor of Theology program with 19 students enrolled. This is the first bachelor-level program for Russian-speaking students at ICB, and it started after the tragic events of October 7th. Even with the conflicts in Ukraine and Israel, the overall enrollment for the 2023-2024 term was 1,404. Graduates for the school year stand at 182 from the five schools.

Requests for additional training have come from Moldova, Poland, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Grace University in Chisinau, Moldova, has asked that SGA sponsor training for their pastors and future pastors over the next three years. Thirty men will be enrolled in two levels of training. This is the first training ministry effort in Moldova for SGA. In Uzbekistan, the church leaders deeply desire to train both existing and incoming pastors. In fact, SGA helped build the training center for the Uzbek Baptist Union back in the 1990s. Church-based *Antioch Initiative* training for lay leaders will be the starting point and will convene three times a year for the first few years. Russian-speaking instructors will be invited to teach along with American instructors. In addition, Uzbek churches are excited about engaging in advanced *Antioch Initiative* training to better equip their pastors to be more effective expositors of God's Word. Then in Poland, two such classes are being started for our fellow servants there.

In yet another expansion of *Antioch* training, the Ukrainian Baptist Union is engaged in an effort to train **1,000 men** over the next 12 years to be missionary pastors with **the goal of 1,000 new**



Graduates of Minsk Theological Seminary in Belarus.



(Top to Bottom) *Antioch Initiative* training in Yakutsk, Russia; *Antioch Initiative* training in Azerbaijan; Class at Minsk Theological Seminary in Belarus.

churches! They anticipate as many as **10 locations** for this training. Faithful Ukrainian churches are pressing on—despite adversity and chaos—to train more faithful servants.

To date, Russia has the most *Antioch Initiative* classes. Baptist Union leaders have requested advanced *Antioch* expansion to Tomsk in Siberia. With all the new training requests, the training ministries of SGA will more than double. In addition, SGA-supported Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary is growing with five extensions.

The opportunity is amazing, and the need is great. It is the perfect time and opportunity to invest significant prayer, finances, and personnel to further the training of faithful servants. ♦

From the Students of the *Antioch Initiative*

Here are a few comments from students on the impact of *Antioch Initiative* training that began in Ukraine despite the war. Their location is being shelled daily. Yet the focus in Ukraine is on raising up a greater number of missionary pastors to plant more churches.

These meetings and trainings inspire me and help me understand my calling and God's mission for me. I see myself as a leader in nurturing and forming future leaders. - Kostya

This training inspires me. We started a home group with non-believers—something I hadn't thought of before. This training disciplines me and helps me grow spiritually. - Emmanuel

Through this training, I learned the importance of evangelism and organizing new churches. - Yura

I heard about training aimed at establishing new churches and evangelism, and it greatly inspired me. A big thank you to you for the opportunity to have this training and fellowship. - Dima

We have had the opportunity to learn, and it is very valuable and inspiring for us. We sincerely thank you for your prayers and the opportunity to learn and serve the people who need it today. Please continue to pray for us. - Yegor



Students of the *Antioch Initiative* training in Ukraine.

MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel (Philippians 1:27).

For those who do not believe in Jesus Christ, a local church can seem to be a strange place. Beliefs are questioned, and ideas of either legalism or fanatical teaching often circulate in gossip. But the church is not a building, social club, or theater, but a people. A church is a visible witness of Jesus to a lost and hurting world. We are His ambassadors to show the world what He is like.

Vitaly is a village pastor in Belarus whose church is a visible and daily witness of Christ. And recently he saw God at work in one family in a powerful way. *“Yuri, Valentina, and their daughter Tanya are one family who came to God very curiously. A brother from our church had often invited them to the service. They refused to come for a long time. He frequently helped them for free, so they decided to come once out of respect for him. At first, Valentina entered the church with certain worries. She thought that if something bad happened in the church, she would leave quickly, and tell the husband not to come to us. Something incredible happened! When she entered the church, she felt love, joy, and acceptance. Valentina decided from the first minutes that this church would be her church for the*

rest of her life. Since that day, she has not missed church services. Thanks to our almighty God for everything!” Valentina entered the church expecting the worst. But once she came, she experienced and saw something profoundly different, warm, and loving. She saw something she had never seen in the world around her. God then used her to bring her husband and daughter. *“It was a great joy when Yuri, Valentina’s husband, came forward to repent at the service. He had been going to our church for six months. He told me now that he wants to be baptized this year!”*

The Apostle Paul admonishes us . . . *Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel.* (Philippians 1:27). The believers in Philippi were a delightful group. They were a source of much joy for Paul and his ministry team. They had a zeal for the Gospel, for growing in Christ because they had a hunger for God’s Word. They manifested a joyful and gracious disposition to one another and to the population of Philippi. Paul

knew that any instruction he provided would be embraced by this delightful local assembly. The encouragement that Paul brought to them affirmed their pursuit of the will of God for their lives. Pastor Vitaly and his little church family are a joyful group of believers who enjoy their fellowship together in Christ Jesus. Their godly lives and their love overcame the false conceptions local people had about believers. Thank you for praying for these and other faithful servants across the former Soviet Union. Much prayer, much power! ♦



The repentance of Yuri, Valentina, and Tanya.

Bible Training in Israel Leads to Growth!

Your Support Helps Equip Russian-Speaking Pastors and Church Workers

Dr. Oleg K., SGA Director of Bible Training in Israel



Students of the Bachelor of Theology program.

Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters in Christ. I want to share with you a little bit about what God is doing in Israel through our ministry. Despite difficult and unpredictable times in Israel, we continue to serve the Lord. Our students continue their studies at the Bible College. We have a wide range among the students—**pastors, rehabilitation center directors, children’s ministry workers, etc.** They are in the second semester of the Bachelor of Theology track, nearing the end of the first year of the five-year course of study. In addition to **Israel College of the Bible**, ministry continues in **Bible schools that are located in various regions of Israel**. People from various churches study here. Some are already involved in ministry. Others will begin soon, by God’s grace.

I am teaching an abbreviated course on **Eschatology**, where we talk about recent events and the imminent coming of Jesus Christ, which is very relevant, especially today. In Ashkelon, approximately



Students in the Eschatology course.

24 students from three congregations who want to study the **principles of Bible study** and **Homiletics** come to classes. We just started this past May. Additionally, in April of this year the Lord gave us the opportunity to spend two days on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. This was the first meeting of our church fellowship pastors with their wives since the outbreak of war on October 7, 2023. There were a lot of questions about service, and we just needed to be together after everything that has happened in Israel since the beginning of the war.



Meeting of church fellowship pastors and their wives.

Our students are involved in studying and planting new congregations. They share the Gospel and help those in need of food. Our student pastor recently baptized several men who joined our church. I hope that the Lord will use them for His glory.



Baptism of several men.

Blessings to you all and gratitude for your prayers and support of my ministry! *Nevertheless, I am continually with You. You have taken hold of my right hand. With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterword receive me to glory (Psalm 73:23-24).* ♦

Your Support Delivers Aid Today—and Helps Plan for Outreach Tomorrow

Alexander B.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Udmurtia, Russia



Visiting elderly people with aid.

We greet you, our dear friends! The church in a nearby town raised funds for 15 grocery parcels, which were distributed to single and needy elderly people. Some of them live in terrible conditions, below the poverty line.

I visited these families with the food gifts, and made a list of things they need most of all. We planned to help them over the summer according to our opportunities. However, one of the elderly men who we visited on Christmas has died. **His wife remains alone and has practically lost her eyesight.** They were ashamed to receive aid.

Please, pray for the elderly people that our words about Jesus touch their hearts and that, at the edge of death, they will be able to become reconciled with God.



(Above Left) Grocery parcels; (Above Right) Visiting a family with a bag of groceries.

We also bought grocery parcels for needy people and large families. **Several families we helped came to the church with their children. Glory be to the Lord!**



We have many plans for the rest of this year. We already carried out another joint playground with the local administration after the spring holidays—a sports playground in the center of the village. I will serve as a director in our camp ministries. **The Lord blessed us to form a big team.** If God wills, we hope to welcome more children—40 from unsaved families and 40 children from Christian families. We hope we will also have enough funds for the children from a village where we are ministering, as their parents cannot afford funds for meals.

Please continue to pray for all of our ongoing

ministry activities. Pray also as we continue to build good relations with the regional administration, which will help us to keep having summer tent camps. **Pray for those being reached—the children and the needy, the elderly, and youth. May the Lord bring them to repentance.** Especially intercede for the children, that love for Christ will grow in their hearts and that the world will not attract them. Please pray also for our spiritual health, that we will not get discouraged. **Your prayers and support are near and dear to us—they are always timely!** ♦



Ministry to children and youth.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Since the fall of communist rule in Russia and her neighboring countries more than 30 years ago, SGA—with the faithful help of our partners—has had the wonderful blessing of supporting **doctrinally sound Bible training through in-country seminaries, Bible institutes, and church-based Antioch Initiative training.** Thousands of pastors and church ministry workers have been trained, and the churches have been greatly encouraged and strengthened.



Antioch Initiative training in Yakutsk, Russia.



Children's ministry in Kazakhstan.

Your prayers and support also make possible the provision of Bibles and Christian literature, children's ministries, Compassion Ministry, summer camps, and so much more. We are so deeply thankful! Please pray about how you can help today. ♦

Insight FROM MICHAEL

Training biblically-sound leaders is even more vital!

Through the years at SGA, we have often said that **biblical and theological training is our highest priority**. With all of the ongoing turmoil not only in the former Soviet countries as well as in Israel, it is easy for that top priority to fade from view. To be sure, we have been deeply occupied with helping churches respond amid the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. Then in October of last year came the horrific attack on Israel by Hamas terrorists. We are thankful for the opportunity to help Russian-speaking congregations there in reaching out to their fellow Israelis in the love of Christ. We have seen much fruit borne out of these ministries for the glory of Christ.

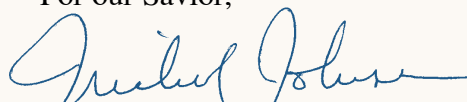


But none of that has diminished SGA's commitment in providing urgently needed Bible training across the former Soviet Union. If anything, our commitment to the seminaries and Bible institutes that you help support has gone up. **The churches we serve have not wavered in their commitment to training future generations of church leaders in sound doctrine no matter what faces them.**

The SGA-supported Irpen Biblical Seminary in Ukraine is a wonderful example. The school took a direct hit from a missile in the early days of the war, with extensive damage to their building. **Not only did the seminary continue with classes, but they also reached out to their neighbors offering shelter, food, and other aid—all the while working on rebuilding their badly damaged building.** What a great testimony to the power of Christ's love and provision, opening doors for the Gospel that no one can shut!

I can't overstate how important Bible training is for the future of the church should the Lord tarry in His coming. **New churches are being planted, more men, women, and children are coming to faith in Christ. More and more trained pastors are needed to shepherd and disciple these new congregations.** Receiving sound theological training also helps inoculate the churches from being led astray by false doctrine. People who are firmly grounded in biblical truth have a solid shield to hold up when the enemy attacks, also armed with the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God. I can never thank you enough for standing with us the way you do in your prayers and faithful support. Much is being accomplished, and you are all part of it!

For our Savior,


Michael Johnson, President



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