



SERVING CHURCHES — REACHING RUSSIA

August 2015

Standing on God's Inerrant Word

... but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which was preached to you (1 Peter 1:25).

By Dr. Bob Provost
SGA President

to stand firm against the attacks of false teachers.

This past spring, a landmark event took place that the Lord blessed—and continues to bless—beyond measure. Thanks to the prayers and generosity of SGA partners, we were able to bring many faithful Russian-speaking pastors and leaders to participate in a special week of meetings focused on the inerrancy of the Bible. Monday was both an International Symposium at Calvary Church in Burbank, and a special meeting of the Euro-Asiatic Baptist Federation leaders held at The Master's College.

The Bible has always been under attack throughout church history. While the manner of attack has differed from generation to generation, the objective of the enemy is the same as it was in Genesis 3—to engender doubt in the truthfulness and reliability of God's Word and God Himself. We count it a wonderful privilege to help encourage the faithful pastors and churches we serve across Russia and her neighboring countries—and to equip them

All the Baptist Union presidents from the nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) attended. Grace Community Church pastor/teacher Dr. John MacArthur joined us for the first hour and joyfully answered many difficult theological questions. Then Pastor Alexei Smirnov from Russia and I encouraged them from God's Word. For the rest of the day, each leader reported on the progress of the Gospel in his respective country. This was only the second time in history that the Baptist presidents from all 12 CIS nations were able to be together in one place for fellowship and study.



Breaking bread together and celebrating the Bread of Life found in the Word of God.

As part of this event, we held a Biblical Inerrancy Banquet attended by 61 guests plus 30 additional SGA partner pastors who were attending the Shepherds' Conference. The Russian men sang joyfully, filling the room with their powerful voices, Dr. Richard Mayhue



Dr. Richard Mayhue

preached a great short message from 2 Timothy, then we honored SGA Bible



Honoring SGA's Dr. Roman Dechtiarenko for 40 years of faithful service to Christ.

teacher Dr. Roman Dechtiarenko for more than 40 years of faithful service to Christ. We presented Dr. Cliff McManis' new book, *Biblical Apologetics*, in Russian to

the Russian speakers and in English to our guests from Israel and North America. In addition, we gave the Russian speakers new MacArthur Study Bibles and several copies each of *The Heart of the King*, a book written by Israeli Jewish believers to evangelize other Jewish people.

The rest of the week, we had the privilege of joining together with nearly 5,000 other men for the main Shepherds' Conference, the Inerrancy Summit. It was an awesome time of great teaching and tremendous fellowship for all. On behalf



The Shepherds' Conference and Inerrancy Symposium required several overflow areas to accommodate all who attended.

of our Russian and Ukrainian brothers, I want to thank all who helped make this historic event possible. Please join us in prayer for a continued fruitful harvest from our time together. Also please pray for a special follow-up Inerrancy Retreat for seminary leaders to be held in Ukraine this November.



Our Russian guests and SGA staff at the Shepherds' Conference

Finding Eternal Meaning and Purpose in Christ

Ivan Klimkin
First Year Student at Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary

I grew up in a home where my father was an atheist, and my mother was culturally Russian Orthodox. Her beliefs formed my understanding of God and I sometimes prayed to Him.

When I was in high school, I thought about my future prospects in life. As I thought about myself and looked at other people, I came to the conclusion that life was senseless. The depression this conclusion caused in me made me idle and unwilling to move on and grow. I became basically inert and my life went downhill. I didn't want to accept that life was senseless, and thought that the answer should be somewhere on a spiritual level rather than physical.

During my third year of college, I saw an announcement posted: "Welcome to Our Alternative Café!" I read, "We will speak about different topics, including spiritual matters." Christians were the hosts of the café, and this is how I met believers. God began working on my heart, and these meetings were the best time I had ever had. At last, I was seeing light instead of darkness!

Six months later, I repented and trusted in Christ. As He came into my life, so did

purpose, meaning, life, and grace. Through the Bible, I learned why I live. The Lord gave me the motivation that had been so long absent. As I grew in faith, I eventually decided that I should seriously commit myself to ministry. As I studied the Bible, I realized that my faith lacked depth and confidence. I started a correspondence Bible program and through it, learned that I was a child of postmodernism. Secular thoughts and philosophies were hindering my growth and my trust in God's Word. I repented of such thinking and then began to think of my next steps.

I prayed and considered, and the desire for pastoral ministry grew in me. I knew that the responsibility of being a pastor called for serious and skilled preparation. The Lord led me to the SGA-sponsored Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary—a school about which I had only heard good things!

I have been a student at NBTS for a while now, and I am amazed at the faculty's high level of understanding the Bible. They inspire me, strengthen me, and encourage me to study diligently. The professors help us grow in maturity and knowledge of God's Word. I know now better than ever the importance of biblical education for church leaders, and am confident that the way to proper worship of God is through proper understanding of Scripture!



We are thankful to the Lord for your faithful partnership and support for SGA-sponsored Bible training across Russia and her neighboring countries. The eager students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and their testimonies are different, but they are united in love for Christ and a deep desire to see their people won to saving faith. Several have shared their stories with us, and we'd like to share them with you. May you be blessed and encouraged as you read!

From the Orphanage to the Bible Institute!

My name is Serik, and I am a student at the Almaty Bible Institute. I was raised at a Christian orphanage, where our relationships were so different from other orphanages. We were brought up with love and care. Christians from the church would visit us, singing songs and sharing their time with us. Later, I was able to attend church and realized that I was in need of God. I repented, and today I am so thankful! God gave me wonderful teachers in the Christian orphanage, and even without parents, I was given all the care I could get from the children of God!



Serik

Kaldybai's Story

I was born in a Central Asian nation. All my surroundings were Muslim and all of my education was under the influence of Islam. I heard the Good News of Jesus Christ in 2008. I was shocked to find out that God forgives sins and that I could be His child! I repented that year, and since then my life has changed—filled with joy and happiness. I have dreamed and prayed about how to study and grow in the knowledge of God, and I was so happy to learn about Almaty Bible Institute. I want to carry the Gospel to all people, and I believe my education will help me accomplish this.



Kaldybai

Prayer Request from Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary

Beloved in the Lord,

We realize our dependency on God and have firm confidence in the significance of prayer and intercession for one another. Please pray with us for:

- Fruitful church ministry for both students and faculty
- For the continued development of sound biblical theology in our churches
- Ongoing resources for the seminary and for reconstruction of the third floor
- For wisdom in equipping our churches and pastors to stand against false teaching
- For the families of our students, graduates, and teachers

May the Lord bless you in all of your ministry and walk with Him!



Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary

A Word from Russian UECB President Alexei Smirnov



Among evangelical Russian pastors, faith and reverence for the Word of God are traditionally absorbed like a mother's milk. Those of us who grew up in Christian families have no doubt in the trustworthiness of God's Word. However, in Western Europe and North America, there are ongoing challenges. Several speakers here at the Inerrancy Symposium demonstrated that all liberal ideas start with a professor who passes it to students, as well as pastors, who then take these unbiblical ideas to their churches. Eventually, the churches turn into a community where the Gospel is no longer valued, and certain biblical truths are no longer welcome and are removed from church teaching. Biblical doctrine is being increasingly challenged by modern society.

During this Symposium, we fellowshiped with those who affirm the inerrancy of Scripture, and we decided that such a conference should be held in Russia. We will be planning for it to take place in Moscow at the end of 2016. It is necessary for today's generation of believers to know, because the previous generation has no doubts about the inerrancy of Scripture.

It is important that the minds and hearts of today's believers are guarded from the effects of liberal theology. Young people are being fed with information from the Internet and other sources that contain more and more liberal views. For example, they hear that not all of the Bible is the Word of God, or that the Bible only contains the infallible words of God. Such ideas are discussed in academic circles and can penetrate the hearts and minds of young people. Therefore, we will not only hold a conference dedicated to the Bible, but 2016 will also be called the Year of the Bible. This will demonstrate our heart attitude toward the Bible. For us, it is the infallible Word of God!

The Joy of the Young in Christ!

Alexander Spichak

SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Ivanovo, Russia

For I am the Lord your God, who upholds your right hand; who says to you, "Do not fear, for I will help you" (Isaiah 41:13).

We thank you for your prayers and financial support for our ministry! The past year has been one where my wife and I became "younger." And that is because we have been surrounded by young people in our church! A good example was our New Year's celebration, where 12 of us gathered together at the church. As the time counted down to midnight, we all shared how God had blessed us and then



Pastor and Mrs. Spichak (second and third from right) are encouraged and energized by the eager zeal of young believers in the church.

prayed, asking God for his guidance and protection in the coming year.

As we were sharing our joy, one young man named Dmitri said that the Lord had convicted him for what had been an indifferent attitude. He had delayed being baptized, and had not yet fully committed his heart to Christ. But the Lord used our celebration to bring him to repentance and he is ready to be baptized! This, in turn, has motivated more young people in the church to be baptized, and they are now in Bible study to prepare.

Youth Reaching Children

The young people in our church love to tell younger children about the Lord. They organized our Christmas outreach, telling the kids about the Lord's birth, distributing gifts and playing games. Some children who came to the Christmas program also came later to the church. But apart from that, other new young girls began to come. One of them is named Eve, and she comes from an unsaved, dysfunctional family. Even though her own behavior is not perfect, she began inviting



Church youth have a fruitful ministry with younger children in the congregation.

other kids to come to the church! Our daughter Tatyana has found a ministry working with these children, teaching them crafts and telling them of Christ's love. My wife is teaching two other girls—Paulina and Kate—to play piano. Please pray for these children, that the Word of God will take root in their young hearts! May the Lord bless you, and thank you for praying for our ministry!

CIS in the News



Economic Pressure Hits More Russian Families

The Moscow Times and other media report that millions of Russians are edging toward poverty again as an economic crisis grows in the country. There are currently 16.1 million people living below the poverty line in Russia, and some economists are predicting that number will climb by almost 10 million people. Sanctions imposed by Western

governments over the Ukraine crisis have had significant impact, as has the sharp plunge in oil prices. A significant amount of Russia's economy is driven by oil exports.

Poverty and economic turmoil are not new to the Russian people, although relative prosperity in recent years with high oil prices helped many to reach a higher living standard. Our concern is—as always—the impact on the evangelical churches we serve, and for our brothers and sisters as they advance the Gospel. SGA-sponsored Compassion Ministry is helping the churches reach out to distressed families with food parcels, evangelistic literature, and the love of God. Pray for the resources needed to help reach even more men, women, and children with the Good News of salvation in Christ.

How You Can Help

Soon, summer will be giving way to the cool, crisp temperatures of fall. The diligent, zealous students at SGA-sponsored seminaries and Bible institutes across the CIS will be headed back to class. For these challenging days—the next generation of pastors, children's and youth workers, and worship leaders must be prepared for fruitful ministry. Your gifts help accomplish this and so much more. You're supporting Bible training, missionary pastors, compassion and humanitarian aid ministry, provision of Bibles and literature, and many other resources to advance the Gospel. Please pray about how you can help today!



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Canadian Connection

by Allan Vincent

... for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up ... (Acts. 20:31-32).

Effective training of pastors and church leaders is much more than courses and grades. It is passionately imprinting lives with the Word of God with the result that the process continues.

To that end, SGA/Canada is developing THREE strategic training and equipping partnerships.

Paul's pouring himself and the Word of God into the elders at Ephesus over three years, reminds me of the heartbeat of these partnerships, and especially two dear brothers. **Francois**, the President of SEMBEQ, and **Gilles**, the President of AEBEQ, **have been wonderfully used by the Lord to facilitate the training of fruitful pastors and church leaders in French**



Canada.

1. SEMBEQ provides a unique combination of theological training, resources, and templates enabling local pastors and churches to train their next generation of reproducing leaders. Our Quebec brothers refer to this paradigm as **Church-Based Coaching Training**

(CBCT).

With the Lord's help, SGA/Canada has begun a partnership with SEMBEQ to take CBCT to Russia and, in time, other parts of the CIS. Please pray with us for the resources to bring six or seven key young leaders to Montreal in early October. **Not only will these leaders be taught the biblical basis for CBCT and how it works, but more importantly, they will visit vibrant churches where successive generations of leaders are pastoring and planting healthy reproducing churches.**

2. "9 Marks" is another partnership that we are developing. This is in response to the request of key pastors with growing churches whom we serve in the CIS. **"9 Marks" clearly articulates the characteristics of healthy churches.** This is done from a biblical rather than a pragmatic perspective. With the help of ministry partners, we want to provide the ten "9 Marks" books CIS pastors have requested for their ministry tool box.

3. The Gospel Coalition (TGC) resources have also been requested. Ministry partners have helped us provide Dr. D. A. Carson's *The Cross and Christian Ministry*. **With Dr. Carson's scheduled ministry in Ukraine and Russia in the fall of 2016, we have also been asked to provide Dr. Carson's book *Basics for Believers* plus Kevin DeYoung's *Taking God at His Word*. Don's being from Canada makes this a special partnership.**

Please pray with us for resources and wisdom to further develop and deliver these strategic training partnerships.



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

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