

State License Creates Opportunities

North Caucasus Bible Institute Director Andrey Kravtsev on becoming recognized by the state.

Five years ago, the deputy of the local minister of education in our Kabardino-Balkaria Republic threatened that he would not tolerate the existence of our school in a Muslim republic. Today, we are fully licensed with the Ministry of Education in Moscow. God was gracious to us during the five hard years it took to obtain a state license to operate our school legally. The North Caucasus Bible Institute is an affiliate of Moscow Theological Seminary and exists to train leaders to serve the churches in our region.

The licensure achievement is significant for several reasons:

First and foremost, it gives us full rights to function as an educational institution and grant diplomas to our students. The future of our school depended upon acquiring a license. Having obtained a license from the federal government, we can continue our work safely.

Second, the license recognizes our school among other educational institutions in a secular society. Even though our diplomas are not yet considered equal to those of state

universities (one more step is necessary for state accreditation), we are listed among those under the federal Ministry of Education. This will give us more opportunities to take part in social activities, especially those related to the education and upbringing of youth in our region.

Third, the license process has made us reevaluate our academic programs. It has spurred us on toward improving the quality of education we provide our students.

Fourth, the license opens the door to state accreditation. As there are no evangelical schools in the region accredited by the Russian government, it will take at least another five years of work. Provided the Board of NCBI considers this a worthy goal, we will be ready to start working on it.

Finally, it is one more milestone for Evangelicals in our society, which tends to marginalize Evangelicals who comprise less than one percent of the population. Becoming licensed will provide us with more opportunities to change our country for the better through the Gospel of Jesus Christ!



ANDREY KRAVTSSEV

MTS Chita Learning Center

The first class of graduating pastors.



The first graduating class of pastors from the Chita Learning Center was an impressive group of leaders comprised of two superintendents and pastors of two leading churches in Russia.

Chita Center Director Alexey Sarapulov indicated that because of the great distance and cost of travel from Siberia, it would not have been possible for students to receive a seminary education without the MTS Chita Learning Center.

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Preparing Leaders for the Church in Russia

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My Son Was My First Instructor

Christian ed student Tatyana Shmykova on becoming a Christian.

I was born into an Orthodox family. From early childhood my grandmother told me stories about God. In times of trouble, my grandma prayed for me, and I was confident he would help me.

Grandma also told my sons about Jesus. By age eleven, my oldest son was baptized into the Orthodox Church. In the fall of the same year, my oldest son got sick. He was diagnosed with cancer, and it had already metastasized. I immediately began to pray to Grandma's God.

My son was transferred to a cancer clinic. During this time, we viewed the Jesus film. I thought it was just a movie, but my son insisted it was about the Son of God. My son implored me to go to the local Baptist church. There were about 2000 people at the service. Three preachers talked about Christ's crucifixion. When the first two preachers spoke, I didn't understand. But as the third preacher

spoke, I realized my sinfulness. When I heard a call for repentance, I rushed toward the pulpit and fell on my knees, crying in shame before God.

That Sunday my son also was saved. God granted him

several more months of life. Daily, my son told me about Jesus, and when he became too weak to continue, he gave me his New Testament. He said all the children of our town should know about Jesus. I did not know how I could do it—I barely understood the New Testament.

My son strengthened me in my faith; he was my first instructor.

After my son's death, I attended many seminars so I could bring the Gospel to children. Now I serve in children's ministry with the Society of Children's Evangelism. Studying at the Moscow Theological Seminary in Leninsk-Kuznetsky helps me put my knowledge into action to reach children with the love of Jesus.

He said all the children of our town should know about Jesus.



TATYANA SHMYKOVA

10 Years and Going Strong

RLM Executive Director Ted Rodgers on the Chelyabinsk Learning Center.

Good news abounds in the remote areas of Russia. September 11-13, 2009, I had the privilege of visiting the Chelyabinsk Learning Center along with RLM Board President Ian Chapman, Board Member Ron Harris, and Moscow Theological Seminary President Peter Mitskevich. Chelyabinsk is located on the eastern side of the Ural Mountains; from Moscow, it is a two and a half hour flight.

Our hosts were Igor Maksakov, Russian Baptist Union Regional Vice President and Director of the Chelyabinsk Learning Center, and Vitaly Sobelov, the pastor of Good News Church, the largest church in the region with 400 members. Both are young, edu-

cated, and capable leaders. We listened to their stories of how God's provision of educational facilities is helping to train future leaders. Hearing their ideas for maximizing the impact of the Learning Center in the future was exciting and reminded us of the tremendous opportunities for the Gospel.

Established ten years ago, the Chelyabinsk Learning Center facility was purchased and renovated by the Free Will Baptists. The Center houses up to 37 students plus professors. For more than ten years, cohorts have been meeting bi-annually, and two groups in Pastoral Ministry (with 16 and 14 students) and one

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group in Christian Education (11) have graduated. Presently two groups are enrolled: Pastoral Ministry (18) and Christian Education (14).

Plans are underway to launch a second pastoral group next year with an anticipated enrollment of at least 15 new students.

Vision for What's Next

As they look to the future, the Center's leaders are contemplating that this group may meet in one-week sessions, rather than two-week sessions. They've discovered that this may be easier for students in their region. It also means students would not miss a Sunday at their home church.

The Center's vision for its future also includes the launch of the Pastoral Master's Program. They hope to begin four-day continuing education conferences for graduates, offering seminars in evangelism, counseling, and family life issues, as well as curriculum from the Religion and

Law program that is starting this fall in Moscow.

Growing Pains

Because of the strong local leadership and its long affiliation with the Moscow Theological Seminary, this region has potential to expand. But with expansion comes increased needs.

Besides direct financial support for the current programs and operations, the biggest need they expressed is for text books—both for the students' personal libraries and the Center's library. They give or loan most of the books that they have available. Also, Internet access is still spotty and expensive, especially for those students who live in the more remote areas of this region.

God is at work in Russia. Our visit to the MTS Learning Centers gave us insight into the future of MTS and encouraged every member on the team to pray fervently for the students and the dedicated leaders who've given their lives to spread the Good News.

Your gift to Russian Leadership Ministries can be designated for textbooks at the Chelyabinsk Learning Center.



TED ROGERS, IAN CHAPMAN, PETER MITSKEVICH, IGOR MAKSAKOV, RON HARRIS, AND VITALY SOBELOV

Building Bridges

MTS grad Alexander Vyuchnov on relationship evangelism.

Personal relationships are the heart of evangelism, and without them, Christianity will become a dead religion. Stories from our church's ministry show that while many in our town of Yelnia possess Bibles, they don't read or understand them. We feel called to lovingly reach out to these people—to build relationships and show them through action and truth how their gods don't compare to the God of the Bible.

One way our church reaches out to our community is by sharing the Gospel with workers at the factories in our town. Along with handing out tracts, I regularly engage in personal conversations. I often explain why we should go to Christ with our problems, and not to other people who have just as many shortcomings. People are curious; recently, the carpenter's shop superintendent probed me about one of the topics he read in a tract I gave him.

We are also extending Christ's love to the unchurched children in our community. This summer we held our children's Christian camp, which, with the help of our brothers and sisters in Moscow, took over one month to organize. The camp was full of different activities: entertaining, educational, and evangelical. On the last day we launched fireworks outside of town, which delighted the children—a perfect ending to an exciting week.

Once the camp was over, many non-Christian children began attending our church services. These children knew little about the Bible, so my wife restarted Sunday school this fall. Those families who attend often stay after the Sunday services to ask questions and talk about their issues.

With the Lord's help—and your prayerful support—we will build more relationships and share the joy of Christ with those who don't know Him.



ALEXANDER VYUCHNOV AND FAMILY

Education's Full Circle

MTS professors honored for doctoral degrees from state universities.

Among the talented professors at Moscow Theological Seminary are Gennady Savin and Marina Ganina, who were recently honored at MTS for completing their doctorates at state universities. For Marina and Gennady, their educational pursuits began at MTS. Now they use the knowledge acquired through their doctoral research to teach and inspire MTS students at their alma mater.

Marina's Story

As a youth, Marina knew little about Christianity; her father, hoping to mold a successful career, was a member of the Communist party. But when Marina was 14 years old, she says, "A spiritual awakening came to our family, along with all the changes in the former Soviet Union."

Stirred by the Holy Spirit, Marina repented, was baptized, and began to serve in her local church as a Sunday school instructor. Marina soon sensed God calling her to teaching and simultaneously enrolled at a pedagogical university as well as in MTS's Christian Education program. Upon graduation from both institutions, Marina was invited to teach at Moscow Theological Institute. And when MTI and MTS merged, she was appointed the Dean of the Christian Education Department and a professor of pedagogy, social pedagogy, and counseling of children and teenagers.

Desiring to expand her understanding of how to work with and teach youth, Marina began doctoral courses at the State University of Nizhnyi Novgorod. There she defended her dissertation, "Formation of Moral and Psychological Orientation on Chastity for Teenagers." As the integration of theology and psychology are new to Russian scholarship,

Marina hopes to bring the study to the forefront of society in general—and to the classrooms of MTS.

Gennady's Story

Gennady was raised in a Christian family, his grandmother encouraging him to attend the local church, pray regularly, and study the Bible. "By the age of 11," says Gennady, "I had read the whole Bible, and since that time the Holy Scripture became my table-top book."

Though passionate about the Word, he never expected it to someday become the focus of his profession. Like many young Russian men, Gennady received technical training and pursued a career fixing cars and electronics. However, when he returned from army service, his life story took a drastic turn...for the better. He was invited to teach in children's Sunday school at Central Baptist Church in Moscow, which kindled his interest in theology.

Moscow Theological Seminary was his next stop. Upon graduation, then-President Alexander Kozyanko invited Gennady to teach Greek. As he taught all that MTS had passed on to him, he thirsted for specialized knowledge in the area of linguistics, theory, and history of literature.

With a Doctorate in Linguistics from Russian People's Friendship University, Gennady is the director of the M.Div. program at MTS and he serves the students with his expertise in biblical hermeneutics, exegesis, and homiletics.

To honor their impressive accomplishments, Russian Leadership Ministries presented Gennady with a new laptop and Marina with a classroom projection system to facilitate their teaching at MTS. Please pray for Gennady and Marina and the rest of the faculty at MTS as they impact the lives of leaders and students across Russia.

Now Gennady and Marina use the knowledge acquired through their doctoral research to teach and inspire MTS students at their alma mater.



GENNADY SAVIN AND MARINA GANINA ACCEPT THEIR CONGRATULATORY GIFTS TO AID IN THEIR TEACHING FROM IAN CHAPMAN AND PETER MITSKEVICH.