

# IMPACT Preparing Leaders for the Church in Russia *ruSSia*

RUSSIAN LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES • SPRING 2011



## Church-State Relations Program Empowers Church Leaders

We've all dealt with red tape. We've waited in a line (or three or four) for a driver's license, requested building permits, filled out forms and submitted to municipal regulations. For churches in Russia, these processes can be especially frustrating as they often face unnecessary and even unlawful procedures and regulations. Some students' churches are repeatedly asked to provide lists of church members, even though no law exists requiring them to do so. They are met with difficult and lengthy procedures when applying for rental spaces or renovation permits. Churches must sometimes hire lawyers to help navigate the legal system, an expensive and time consuming process. Being uninformed about the law and the church's rights within it wastes time and impedes progress.

In response, Moscow Theological Seminary has implemented a new Church-State Relations program focusing on religion and the law. The unique, comprehensive curriculum equips church leaders with the knowledge necessary to address bureaucratic



roadblocks from various government agencies. Practically oriented courses significantly enhance legal literacy in the church and help build relationships with government officials. Upon completion of the program, church leaders are equipped to solve a number of legal issues that religious organizations face in their daily activities, eliminating the need for lawyers and allowing more time and resources to focus on ministry.

The program was developed by Anatoly Pchelintsev, co-president of the Slavic Center for Law and Justice, chief editor of *Religion and Law* magazine and honorable member of the Russian Attorney League. Dr. Pchelintsev and several other experts in the field have begun teaching classes at the Moscow campus and will subsequently travel to five other learning centers, making this the first specialized nationwide program at MTS.

According to Dr. Pchelintsev, "the new program moves Russians to work together toward the development of a civil society in which human rights are guaranteed and protected." When churches know their rights within the law, they are empowered to protect their religious freedoms and minister more effectively in their communities.

***The curriculum equips church leaders with the knowledge they need to address bureaucratic injustices from various government agencies.***

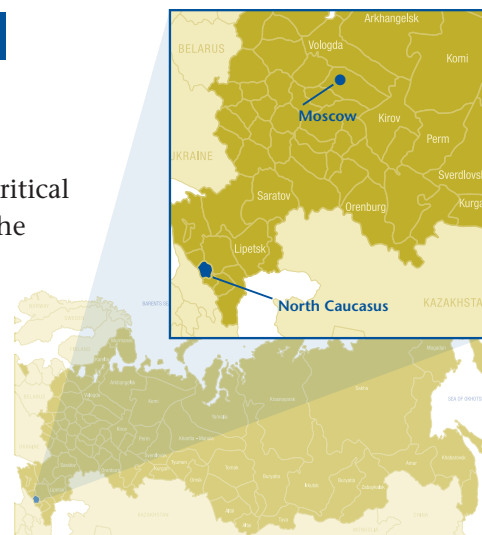


# What Group is Most Instrumental in the Spread of the Gospel?

Here's a hint: it is not a people group, it's an age group. Half of the world's population is under 25 years old. Yet relatively few missions resources are invested in reaching this young population. This was the theme of Valley Community Baptist Church's recent World Outreach Week where Andrey Kravtsev, NCBI President, presented as an

emerging leader in reaching this critical population. Andrey spoke about the work of NCBI and told stories of his students and graduates to over 1,200 people. Missions Pastor Doug Christgau reflects, *"Andrey was warmly received as he shared the story of a young man converted from Islam who now pastors of one of the few churches reaching Muslims in the North*

*Caucasus. We appreciated that the school uses modern technology to bring quality education to students. Through distance learning, students can access professors from Moscow on a time schedule that fits into the bi-vocational lifestyle of the pastors. Many people from Valley signed up to be prayer partners with Andrey."* We're grateful to Valley Baptist for their partnership in reaching this strategic population in Russia. To learn more about Andrey and the North Caucasus region visit [russianleadership.org/ncbilearningcenter](http://russianleadership.org/ncbilearningcenter).



**Andrey Kravtsev, NCBI President, presenting at a missions conference in Avon, Connecticut.**

## Praise God for:

- Those who are working, praying and giving toward the construction of Golgotha Church in Moscow, home to the Golgotha Learning Center.
- The opportunity to spread the gospel to Russia via radio. The Lord opened doors for two programs so Russians can hear the Bible almost everywhere.

- The freedom to have and study the Bible.

## Pray for:

- The students of NCBI, that they would be a blessing to their churches and communities.
- The successful launch of the new Christian Counseling and Digital Media for Evangelism programs in the fall.
- On January 1, a new tax law went into effect increasing MTS taxes by 20%. Pray we overcome this financial hurdle.

## Regional Spotlight: North Caucasus

- Home to more than 50 (mostly Muslim) ethnic groups across seven provinces, speaking 48 languages.
- Most communities have no churches or Scripture in their language.
- Cultural conflicts with neighbors and/or the government are common in this diverse and culturally rich area.
- Of the 77 "unreached" people groups in Russia, 48 are in the North Caucasus.
- Operation World describes the North Caucasus as "Europe's least evangelized region."

North Caucasus Bible Institute is dedicated to preparing church-planters and missionaries to reach this region. NCBI was established in 1998 with 24 students. Today, the school enrolls 139 students studying pastoral theology, social education and worship arts. In addition to classes, students work in the field leading children's camps, worship conferences, Bible studies and evangelistic outreach. NCBI prepares men and women for Christian service through educational programs that are biblically founded and culturally relevant.



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