

Евангелие от Иоанна



May 6, 2018

Dear Friends,

Joe Walters and I co-pastor Encounter Church in Sacramento, California. We recently returned from teaching a class on the Gospel of John at Odessa Theological Seminary, in Odessa, Ukraine (April 16-20) at the invitation of Gary Clatterbuck through NAB Russia.

The opportunity to teach young, hungry minds, was exhilarating and fulfilling. I have a sense we learned as much as we taught. The eighteen students in our class were young, enthusiastic, and curious. They demonstrated a solid foundation of biblical understanding, and a desire to press into the deeper issues and themes that run throughout the Gospel of John. Their questions were thought provoking and at times, extremely insightful.

Joe and I observed that most of the students in our class were not necessarily identifying a call into full time Christian ministry. However, their enthusiasm to learn revealed their eagerness to take the deep and meaningful truths of scripture back to their home churches where they talked of how they serve in a variety of lay leadership positions. Imagine individuals who are willing to financially invest in an education that will simply help them walk well with Jesus! Their obvious commitment to discipleship demonstrated how the church is growing in the Ukraine. Though the protestant church in the Ukraine currently only reflects about 3% of the population, it is obvious that the these students, through their local churches will affect change within their generation that advances the Kingdom of God for decades to come.

Within our class was a smaller percentage of students who had identified God's call on their lives to serve in full time Christian ministry. The intellect and talent of all the students was obvious. However, the unique gifts and abilities among some of these who have been called into pastoral or missional service was particularly impressive. One of the young, critical thinking, and analytical minds was a student named Slavic. If he follows this calling, it is clear that God will use him to be a leader among leaders within his generation.

Another student, named Eugene, was from Russia. That was unusual because of the obvious tension between Russia and Ukraine. He testified that when he left for school, his friends told him not to come home. He was viewed as a traitor. This young man was particularly eager to learn. And he testified that God was calling him into full time missions. He felt a particular burden for the unreached people in both India and Africa. It's obvious that God will use him in powerful and significant ways to advance the gospel.

Both Joe and I would love to look twenty five to thirty years down the road to see where God leads each of these students in service to Him. If you get the opportunity to invest your time, energy, or resources into NAB Russia... do it! Dynamic things are happening.

Our prayer is for the Christians in the Ukraine to rise up, birthing a great awakening among all who live there. The embers are there!

John Stone
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