

New Strategies for Effective Missions, Given the Current Realities of the Post-Soviet World: Training and Equipping the Next Generation of Leaders

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More than 25 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the evangelical church and missions in Eurasia are faced with important choices about which strategies are most effective for building God's Kingdom in this part of the world. Many of these choices are shaped by the particular political, economic, and social pressures that affect a particular country or region. The religious and political freedoms that existed in the early 1990s are steadily eroding. For example, Russia's return to authoritarian leadership, recent aggression against Ukraine, and its efforts to curtail religious liberty, as well as the rise of radical Islam and inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts today pose especially serious challenges to missions and church growth in this part of the world.

A new perspective on the cooperation of church and state in the post-Soviet space is needed to show the church as an agent of change rather than a threat. The church, civil society, and the state often find themselves working separately towards solutions to shared problems. It is only through collaboration towards a shared vision that new life can be breathed into society and a movement of servanthood can be ignited in the countries of Eurasia.

In light of these external challenges and the need for renewed cooperation, we believe that the most effective strategy to release the church's potential for societal change in Eurasia is through training and equipping the Next Generation of Christian leaders who will emerge to take positions of influence throughout the region. That is why Mission Eurasia is intentionally investing in this young generation of leaders who can unleash the capacity of the evangelical church to play a transformational role in society. We are pursuing this strategy through two distinct and innovative ministry initiatives:

A Need for New Missional Strategies

School Without Walls (SWW): this non-formal training program is designed to train young emerging leaders and equip them with the biblical knowledge and ministry skills to reach out to society on behalf of the church and initiate effective and positive change for

the sake of the gospel. Through SWW, we are expanding a movement cross-denominationally that will help the church become more engaged and improve its outreach to society, contributing to church growth and ultimately to social transformation.

Next Generation Professional Leaders Initiative (NGPLI): this new initiative harnesses and develops the tremendous potential of young Christian professionals in shaping the future of the church and society in the post-Soviet region of Eurasia. As the first generation of Christian youth allowed to pursue careers in the influential fields of politics, business, law, and education since the collapse of the Soviet Union, these young professionals have an almost unlimited capacity for catalyzing transformational processes within their professions, the church, and society. As our research has shown, young Christian professionals are becoming one of the most influential demographic groups for the gospel on a cross-denominational basis. Therefore, NGPLI represents a strategic movement that we believe can help to successfully reform society.

A Need for New Approaches of Cooperation

These new missional strategies are the key to social and spiritual transformation. However, they cannot be implemented without cooperation between government, church, and society. These efforts will be increasingly effective when combined with partnerships with the global community to share ideas and resources. This is what Mission Eurasia offers in the pursuit of church growth and resulting societal transformation.

In summary, Mission Eurasia believes that the key to a healthy church and healthy society is the training and equipping of the Next Generation of young leaders who, despite any challenges they face, can use their spiritual and professional influence to bring positive change to this part of the world.

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