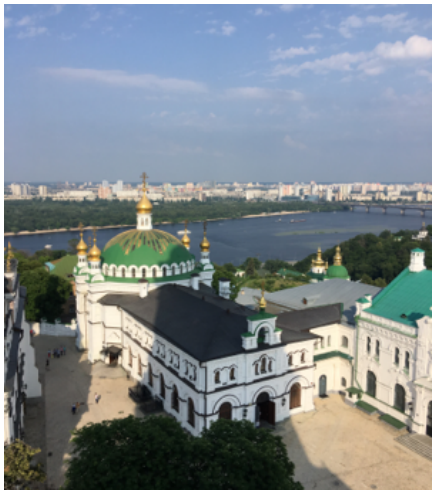


*Baptism at the banks of the Dnepr river*

# Summer 2018 Update

## 2018





This summer, the largest Christian baptism since Bysantine times took place on the banks of the Dnepr river in Kiev, Ukraine. Nearly 500 christians publicly proclaimed they are follwers of Christ and recieved water baptism in the heart of the Ukrainian capital.

The event was sponsored by the Ukrainian Evengelicals of the Pentecostal churches in Ukraine. Thousands of Christians gathered Sunday morning to witness the baptism in the tradition of the christianization of Kievan Rus. History tells us that prince Vladimir ruled Kievan Rus in the 10th century. He sent out emissaries to varous lands to learn of their religion and what god they worshiped. Vladimir's gransmother Olga, was baptised as a christian in Constantinople but paganism still dominated in the eastern lands.

As his emissaries returned from Constantinople it was said:

*"We no longer knew whether we were in heaven or on earth,"* they reported, *"nor such beauty, and we know not how to tell of it."*

Vladimir then accepted christianity and declared that all citizens young and old, rich and poor who are friends of the prince are to be baptised. Thus making Christianity the predominant religion in Kievan Rus. The orthodox church celebrates this holy day annualy. This year, Pentecostal christians celebrated the 1030th anniversary of the baptism of Kiev,with this large event. Ukraine has had a strong christian community that has grown significantly since the country declared its independence from the USSR in 1991. St. James was the first Bible college that began traninig christians.Many of the alumni now minister in Ukraine.



*Igor Laschuk*
*Class of '03*

Igor Laschuk is a character once you meet, you never forget. Igor has a very interesting testimony. He did not grow up in a christian home, spent some time in jail and lost a leg in an accident. As the Lord came into His life and he became a christian his life changed completely. After studying at St. James he began working with the church to establish men's rehab centers and helped open several in Ukraine. These rehab centers for alcoholism and those addicted to drugs have saved hundreds of lives. He is now developing ministry for the disabled. His outreach has touched many and several churches now offer disabled services not available before. He is a humble example of Christs' love to those in need.

This July, Olga Vatsik visitied Kiev on her way to her hometown of Baku, Adzerbaijian. Olga and her husband Vasyl, both alumni of St. James, now live in Huntsville, AL. Olga was invited to Kiev in 1993 by the Baptist Union to create a text book for the opening of a Baptist seminary. She wrote two books for Sunday school teachers which are widely used by baptist churches in Ukraine and Russia. At that time she enrolled in St. James Bible college as it was the only Christian college operating in the former USSR at the time. She recalls fondly the days at St. James *"it was as if every day was a celebration"*. Olga and Vasyl studied together and were married after graduating. They worked in Ukraine and began the first Christian adoption agency in the country. Helping thousands of parents to adopt children.



*Alumnae Olga Vatsyk*
*Class of '95*

They have immigrated to Huntsville where Vasyl started a roofing business and Olga took time to raise her son. They have been working with the russian speaking community in founding a Russian evangelical church there. Several slavic families got togther to start this ministry. Peter Stalin, a St. James grad is pastor of this russian speaking church in Huntsville. It was the first church in the area for the russian community. Olga and Vasyl are actively involved in church ministry. Vasyl is assitant pastor. Speaking with Olga I could sense her desire to continue in ministry. We discussed the possibility of working in Ukriane again and she is earnestly seeking the Lord's will for her and her family. The Vatsik family has blessed so many and it is a joy to know St. James was such an instrumental part of their lives and begining of their ministry.



*Sloboda Men's*
*Christian rehab center.*