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**A LOOK AT THE PARTNER SCHOOLS  
AND LEADERS BEING REACHED**

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**JOHN BERNARD**  
*PRESIDENT, UNITED WORLD MISSION*

The global church needs few things more urgently than its own well-trained leaders, and they're needed at every level. Church planters and house church pastors need biblical training accessible where they're serving, and at their level of education. At the same time, the Church in every region of the world needs thought leaders educated at the highest academic levels. United World Mission seeks to equip leaders from the grassroots to the seminary classroom. Thank you for partnering with our Overseas Council ministry and seminaries around the world. Together, we're confronting the Global Leadership Challenge!

As John notes, confronting the Global Leadership Challenge is critical. Nine out of ten churches in the Majority World are led by individuals without formal training. Closing the gap has motivated the Overseas Council's ministry for more than 40 years. We partner with more than 100 strategically selected seminaries located where the Church is growing the fastest, or the needs are the greatest.

**We carry out this mission with you because of our shared vision for flourishing churches around the world led by well-equipped leaders.**

The Covid-19 pandemic brought government restrictions on in-person teaching, in turn creating financial and emotional stresses. In the stories that follow, you'll learn the challenges our partner seminaries have faced, and the innovative ways they have persevered and overcome. For instance, the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon halted in-person teaching, shifting the program permanently from residential to online. ABTS is now offering several short, on-campus sessions each year. This new approach is more financially sustainable and will allow ABTS to reach more students who might have been hindered from coming for a full-time residential program. Some seminary leaders wrote to say that enrollment actually increased because of the accessibility of innovative online programming.

You'll also read inspiring student testimonies expressing gratitude for your scholarship support, and stories of alumni who are now fruitfully serving

and multiplying. These students are among the 88,000 students who are being equipped each year by OC partner schools, and together their global impact is staggering.

Our Regional Directors' important ministries of walking alongside seminary partners have also recalibrated due to travel restrictions. They're conducting virtual workshops for faculty who are learning how to teach in an online environment. They and their seminary leaders are encouraging each other, praying for one another, and learning together. Their ability to adapt has been extraordinary!

Friends, this is why you and I invest in OC's Kingdom work. I trust you'll be informed and inspired as you read. And on behalf of our seminary partners and their students, thank you for your critical part in confronting the Global Leadership Challenge.



**SCOTT CUNNINGHAM**  
*DIRECTOR, OVERSEAS COUNCIL*



# EUROPE

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## REGIONAL UPDATE *FROM TARAS DYATLIK REGIONAL DIRECTOR*

I would like to thank you for your faithful and ongoing support of the ministry of Overseas Council in training Christian leaders who influence and serve others out of Christ's interests to accomplish His purposes for the Church and the world.

As you may have heard in the news, a hybrid war has been taking place in Eastern Ukraine since 2014. During these six years, 13,500 people have been killed; more than 31,000 people wounded; and about 1.5 million people have been forced from their homes in addition to the more than 600,000 who have emigrated to other countries out of the conflict zone. In response to this tragic situation, together with the Mennonite Central Committee, I am assisting as a workshop leader in the training of local pastors at the front line in peacebuilding, helping them to learn how share the Gospel and be agents of peace in this context. More than 50 pastors have been trained so far, and we plan to teach even more the next year. One of my goals is to multiply our training by helping to establish a training program at the masters level in one of our partner seminaries. This program would train a half-dozen individuals each year who would then



train Ukrainian pastors with the biblical understanding and practical skills of peacebuilding.

We would appreciate your prayers for peace in Eastern Ukraine, and that we will be the agents of the Prince of Peace among so many thousands of suffering people in that region. I also have a personal request. Pray for my son, Nazar, and his wife, Di, that they might accept Jesus as their Savior, especially as they struggle with Covid right now. Among many other needs, this is our priority prayer.



# EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (EST) *POLAND*

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EST STUDENT TESTIMONIES



**WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OVERSEAS COUNCIL FOR YOUR FAITHFUL SUPPORT, PRAYERS AND ENCOURAGEMENT. GOD HAS OPENED UP NEW OPPORTUNITIES, AND OC HAS BEEN A GREAT PARTNER IN HELPING US GROW AND HAVE AN IMPACT ON MANY LIVES. EST IS THE ONLY PROTESTANT SCHOOL ACCREDITED BY THE POLISH GOVERNMENT, BUT WE ALSO OFFER MANY NON-FORMAL PROGRAMS, SERVING ALMOST 20 DENOMINATIONS AS WELL AS OUR COMMUNITY. LAST ACADEMIC YEAR WE SERVED MORE THAN 4,400 PARTICIPANTS IN VARIOUS PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS.**

Last academic year our bachelor's program started off really well. It is the largest Protestant theological program in Poland. With the pandemic, we shifted to online classes. Actually, the classes grew to the largest class to date of new students. For this year, we will be using online technology with a mix of in-person and online participation.

Our Academy of the Third Age is for seniors and offers general courses, such as language classes, Film Discussion Club, and art therapy. With the pandemic, we trained seniors to use Zoom. The Academy usually serves about 200 seniors.

The Institute of Church Development had planned a course on public speaking for women, a project on helping people with various needs, a worship camp and family summer camp.

The School of Dialogue offers such events as a Festival of Science, Senior Days, Days of Reformation, Week of Prayer for Unity of Christians, and Festival of Protestant Culture. Our Festival of Protestant Culture typically attracts 4,000-5,000 participants.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we had to pause many of these programs. Instead, we employed creative ways to reach people: Online interviews with prominent Christian leaders, posted on the EST website • Online student testimonials • Visits with Polish pastors for encouragement, teaching and recruitment of new B.A. students.

Prayer requests:

Wisdom as we develop our online activities to broaden the scope of our ministry in a most effective way • Currently, the number of positive cases and deaths in Poland are increasing and the government has put restrictions in place to hopefully limit the spread of COVID.

## PROGRAMS OFFERED

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- Academy of the Third Age
- Institute of Church Development
- Bachelor of Theology

## CURRENT ENROLLMENT

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51 Students

# KUBAN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (KECU) RUSSIA

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## PROGRAMS OFFERED

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- Certificate of Counseling
- Certificate of Preaching
- Certificate of Youth Ministry
- Bachelor of Biblical Counseling
- Bachelor of Christian Ministry
- Bachelor of Youth Ministry
- Master of Church History

## CURRENT ENROLLMENT

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**205 Students**

**AS WE STEPPED INTO A NEW SCHOOL YEAR HERE IN KRASNODAR (SOUTH RUSSIA), WE ARE FACED WITH BOTH UNCERTAINTY AND OPPORTUNITIES.**

The pandemic has shaken foundations that seemed unshakable and pushed us to the limit. Yet in all of this, we know we can be “more than conquerors” (Romans 8:37) through Him who never ceases to love us. God is faithful, providing exactly what we needed at just the right moment.

- The Russian government education agency lost its case in court and was required to recognize the school’s right to exist. This is unprecedented in Russia, and we hope it will serve other schools that choose to stand up against “Goliath”.
- The lockdown served as a blessing in disguise, as we were pushed to move our classes online, a direction that we had only talked about earlier. The students appreciated it, as many were wondering whether they would be able to continue their studies with the lockdown.
- In September, we returned to in-person classes, thanks to easing of the restrictions. We keep all of the safety measures including taking temperature, providing masks and sanitizer to students, and encouraging social distancing.

Please pray for us in this new school year.

For the health of our KECU community. Several people have tested positive. Thankfully, all have either recovered or are in the process of recovery. The risk of getting the virus is still high • For wisdom in managing the school finances given the unprecedented circumstances. A large part of our revenue came from leasing facilities and living spaces - which is taking a huge hit with the lockdown • For a clear vision of what’s next for the school in light of the pandemic.

Thank you so much for faithfully continuing to invest in the Kingdom by supporting the work of theological education in Russia! We are very grateful that, in spite of the hardships you face on your side, you have continued to give. In many ways the pandemic has brought the “givers” and the “receivers” a lot closer. Let us know how we can be praying for you!

# ODESSA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (OTS) UKRAINE

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## PROGRAMS OFFERED

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- Bachelors Programs
- Master of Biblical Preaching
- Master of Biblical Studies
- Master of Christian Education
- Master of Pastoral Ministry

## CURRENT ENROLLMENT

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**170 Students**

**UNSURPRISINGLY, LAST YEAR WAS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE PREVIOUS ONES. IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TEACHING IN THE PANDEMIC WE QUICKLY SHIFTED ALL OUR CLASSES TO DISTANCE EDUCATION. THIS CHANGE EXPOSED SOME CHALLENGES: AN UNDERDEVELOPED DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM, AND THE NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS WHO HAVE POOR ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AND ARE UNABLE TO JOIN STREAMING DISCUSSIONS AND SEMINARS. ALL VISITING FOREIGN TEACHERS CANCELLED THEIR FLIGHTS, AND WE HAD TO GET ALONG WITHOUT THEIR HELP. BUT, THE EDUCATION PROCESS WAS NEVER SUSPENDED, AND WE DID OUR BEST NOT TO COMPROMISE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION.**

Our faculty has also contributed to assisting the needs of churches in light of the pandemic. We organized and took part in online conferences and published some research materials. For instance, we addressed a new issue for the church: How are we to perform the Communion remotely? Our faculty quickly wrote “Communion Online” and shared it with pastors before the first Communion Sunday of the lockdown. We received feedback from pastors all over the Russian-speaking world, and even from immigrant churches in the US and Canada, telling us that it was a timely response to this predicament.

To address such needs and challenges of the evangelical churches in the future we are developing the Centre of Practical Theology. The Centre’s goal will be to assist Ukrainian churches as a witness in changing circumstances. This Centre will use research and publishing projects and formal and non-formal programs to foster a generation of reflective practitioners who will engage the challenges of their context.

Looking back at the history of the partnership with OC, we thank the Lord for His blessing to grant us with true and faithful friends. Thank you very much for supporting us at all times and during various challenges. Because of your help we have trained a large number of students who now make a difference in churches and society.

We would appreciate if you would pray:

For the new students and continuing enrolment process • That the seminary could deal properly with the challenges of the new year in quarantine • For stable and sufficient funding for our school.

# TRIVELIUS INSTITUTE (TI)

## BULGARIA

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### PROGRAMS OFFERED

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- Bachelor of Theology
- Master of Counseling
- Master of Spiritual Formation
- Master of Logotherapy

**WITH THE COMING OF THE PANDEMIC, LIKE ALL THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN BULGARIA, ST. TRIVELIUS INSTITUTE WAS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON SESSIONS FOR THREE MONTHS.**

For several years we have discussed the need to provide online training. Now, we needed to quickly shift to online, and not just for a few classes, but for the whole program. This was a challenge for both students and professors. To prepare materials for online and to record the video or do a live video class is different than teaching in-person.

But, God opened our eyes to see the need of education from a different angle. With His help we moved 70% of our classes online and continued to train Kingdom workers for the church and community in Bulgaria.

Our goal for this year is to continue developing the online programs. We will also be experimenting with hybrid classes (combining in-person and online training), as we believe students need character formation more than anything else – and this is best done in-person and in community.

This new reality has actually opened the door to reach to a new target group of students - young urban professionals who are willing to spend time online to advance their Bible knowledge.

In September we started the new school year with the BA in Theology and two MA programs in Counseling and Spiritual Formation. We now have the highest enrollment in the last five years. We have also launched a new program, the MA in Logotherapy, which will open the doors for graduates to enter a new segment of Bulgarian community.

We are deeply thankful for the support from OC we received during this time, as it enables our students to grow in knowledge and passion for sharing the Gospel.

We appreciate your prayerful support:

To have wisdom in the future months how to respond to changing pandemic realities • For our graduating students and their ministries in local churches and communities • For the health of our staff and families • For government accreditation of St. Trivelius Institute by the end of 2021.



# UKRAINIAN EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (UETS) UKRAINE

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## PROGRAMS OFFERED

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- Bachelor of Theology
  - Focuses in Music, Christian Ministry, Messianic Theology, Missiology, Practical Psychology
- Master of Leadership
- Master of Urban Missions
- Master of History
- Master of Psychological Counseling and Trauma Therapy
- Master of Theology

## CURRENT ENROLLMENT

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**550 Students**

**UETS IS AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL SEMINARY IN KYIV, UKRAINE. WE EQUIP CHURCH LEADERS FROM UKRAINE, CENTRAL EUROPE, AND CENTRAL ASIA IN THEOLOGY, COUNSELING, MUSIC MINISTRY, LEADERSHIP, AND MISSIOLOGY.**

This year, with the lockdown and the departure of our residential students, we immediately launched online learning. Now, we see new possibilities for distance learning. We have already launched our first fully online program, Foundations of Mission and Church Ministry.

The lockdown was the major event last academic year, but there were other significant events in our ministry to the Church.

- Our Theology for Life conference demonstrates how theology is applicable for all people, even those not involved in professional ministry.
- A woman's conference helped women understand how they are part of God's mission. There is an urgent need to invest in women's ministry, and we want to continue to contribute to this.
- We had one of our largest graduations this year - over 100 graduates. In addition, fifty church leaders at a regional school in Central Asia completed a diploma program.

In September, we started a new academic year, in-person. This year we have over 150 new students. It is amazing, but we have more new students compared to last year.

Financially we are not doing extremely well due to the pandemic. We are thankful to all our partners who have been supporting us. Your support through the Stabilization Fund was crucial for us. I just have no word to explain how grateful we are to you and to all of your partners who supported us.

This was a tough season for me as the UETS president. I was very encouraged by calls and emails from Taras, the OC Regional Director. It was clear to me that we are not alone, that we have friends who are staying with us and trying their best to help.

Continue praying for us:

For the health of our students, faculty and staff; financial stability of the seminary; and ministry of our students, especially near the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and in closed Muslim countries of Central Asia.

*STUDENT PROFILE***ARTHUR AND MARIA OVOD***CERTIFICATE IN BIBLE COUNSELING*

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We both graduated from KECU in 2018 with Certificate in Biblical Counseling. Later that year I was ordained as a pastor and, together with my wife, we have been serving a church in Novorossiysk. Our ministry includes helping families and young people, working with church elders, teaching and preaching, baptisms, discipling, and, of course, counseling.

Our studies have been a great blessing and helped us prepare to serve in full-time church ministry. We regularly counsel both individually and as a husband-wife team (especially when counseling couples). There are many testimonies of God's work in the hearts of His children. In the short time that we've been counseling we've served people with addictions, depression, sexual sins, fears and marital problems. The KECU counseling program equipped us to become better qualified counselors, competent to counsel people with various issues.

Even in my preaching I use principles garnered while studying counseling which are useful for teaching and instructing the congregation.

Since we have received so much in our studies at KECU, we continue to encourage and send other folks from our church to study counseling at KECU. In our view, this is one of the most practical programs to help people to resolve the most complex and deepest heart problems. It is both academically rich and practically sound.

We are excited to see the real changes taking place in our church members because of our counseling studies. We are very grateful to you, as scholarship donors, for having made our studies possible and allowing us to study as a couple. As we see, this has turned out a blessing both for us and for our church.

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**“THERE ARE MANY TESTIMONIES OF GOD’S WORK IN THE HEARTS OF HIS CHILDREN.”**

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KUBAN EVANGELICAL  
CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (KECU)  
RUSSIA



STUDENT PROFILE

# MARAT ASANOV

UETS REGIONAL SCHOOL

I came to know the Lord in a miraculous way. When my wife gave birth to our first child, she left home for six months. With the birth of our second, she fled again, this time for nine months. I used to beat her and hang out with my friends for several days at a time. However, one day in 1995, my life underwent drastic change. I was at home alone, drinking tea and listening to the radio. All of a sudden, I was seized with fear. Having felt God's presence, I fell on my knees and cried for half an hour. Then, my heart was filled with incredible peace and joy.

We endured serious hardships because of our conversion. When my wife and I came to know Christ, my parents renounced me. In their eyes we became traitors of the Muslim faith and "contagious" societal outcasts.

Currently, I am involved in pastoral ministry. I serve at the church in the city of Kara-Balta which has around 100 people. We also have affiliated churches in five villages. I also regularly participate in mission trips to different parts of Kyrgyzstan to hold two or three day seminars at our partner churches. In this way, we raise up new leaders.

As our church consists primarily of former Muslims, we focus on explaining the grace that was unknown to them before. We also

show Christ's love by cleaning up public places and helping elderly people and disabled children.

My studying at the seminary helps me grow spiritually. Today, I perceive the Scriptures differently. The knowledge I have gained at the seminary has equipped me to conduct seminars on the rights of the believer and his role in Muslim society. We go to different churches and share with Christians important information about our constitutional rights. I believe this is only the beginning. Lord willing, we'll keep on studying, and He will open new doors for us.

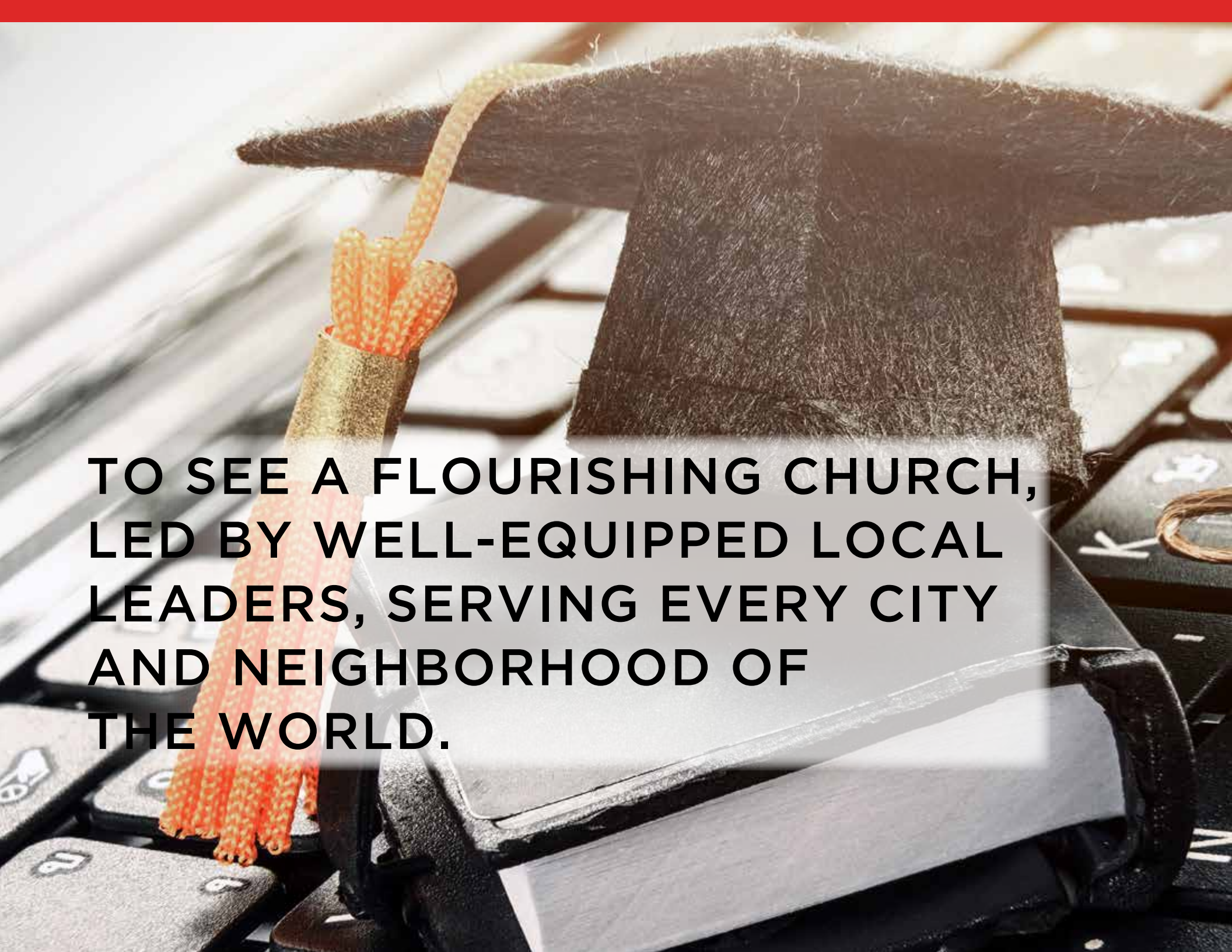
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**"AS OUR CHURCH CONSISTS PRIMARILY OF FORMER MUSLIMS, WE FOCUS ON EXPLAINING THE GRACE THAT WAS UNKNOWN TO THEM BEFORE."**

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A close-up photograph of a typewriter. The focus is on the brown felt wiper and the orange braided cord. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box in the center of the image.

**TO SEE A FLOURISHING CHURCH,  
LED BY WELL-EQUIPPED LOCAL  
LEADERS, SERVING EVERY CITY  
AND NEIGHBORHOOD OF  
THE WORLD.**

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR PARTNERSHIP.  
WE COULDN'T DO  
THIS WITHOUT YOU.**



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