



SGA-sponsored missionary pastors find open hearts for the Gospel among Mongolian children.

Mission Mongolia

Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstacle out of the way of My people (Isaiah 57:14).

Pavel Barsukov's days are very full, and he loves it that way, saying . . .

As long as we live, let us continue to serve Him!

As an SGA-sponsored missionary pastor in Russia's huge Krasnoyarsk region, he has been organizing a new church in a different part of the city of Krasnoyarsk, where the spiritual needs are great. But Pavel also carries a deep burden for outreach in neighboring Mongolia, and he wrote recently to tell us about his fifth ministry trip into that isolated Central Asian nation. While his report discusses an outreach at Christmas, Pavel is hopeful for a year-round ministry.

As Pavel relates, the enemy tried to throw up obstacles, but the Lord — as always — had the last word . . .

We had a team of eight people, that prepared a Christmas play, saved our money, and our church collected gifts and humanitarian aid for the Mongolian people. About a week before we were to set out, one of our brothers went to the Mongolian embassy in Kyzyl to apply for visas. We had never had problems before, but this time the Mongolian ambassador did not accept our applications. He accused us of having disrespect for Mongolian customs and laws in filling

Continued on page 2

out our applications. Our brother asked if he could re-file the applications and submit them, but the ambassador replied he would have to wait a month!

When we learned about this, we were saddened, because we would not be able to be there at Christmas, and the children were waiting for us. But God strengthened our hearts, and we decided to resubmit in a week. All our churches prayed, and we could see God's hand 'in the heart of kings' again — our visas were granted on the same day we applied!



So the team packed up and set out for Mongolia. The mountain roads were treacherous with a lot of snow, and they even ran into an avalanche — yet another obstacle! After a long wait, a broken heater and freezing temperatures, they finally made it to their destination. And then the ministry began in the name of the Lord Jesus.

During their three-day stay in Mongolia, they got a lot accomplished. They met with the mayor of the town they were in, and gave him Christmas greetings. The team participated in the worship service of a Mongolian church where many unbelievers were gathered. In the evening, they showed the *Jesus* film to an audience

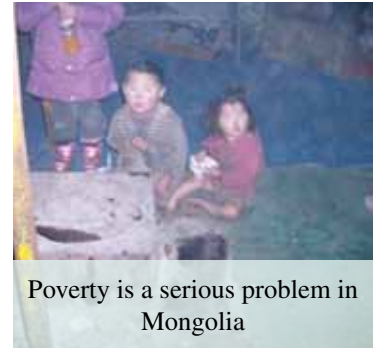
Responding to the Gospel in a Mongolian church!



of about 20 people, followed by a discussion to answer questions about repentance and having a relationship with Christ. At the end, three people repented and gave their hearts to the Lord Jesus.

Of course, the most joyful event of that trip was our meeting with the children who had attended our summer camps.

It was such great news to learn that many of them had begun to attend church! There were 130 children present at our meeting, which was filled with joy. We even ran short of gifts for them and had to run out to buy more. We are praying that the Lord will enable us to hold another camp this summer.



Poverty is a serious problem in Mongolia

One important task completed by Pavel and the team was to help the Vostryakovs, a Russian missionary couple who want to settle in Mongolia for ministry. According to Pavel, they would be the first Russian missionaries to actually live in Mongolia. Please pray for the paperwork and all the legal matters to be resolved soon. Pray also for Pavel and his ongoing studies at the SGA-sponsored Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary, and for his family — wife Svetlana and two children, Eva and Varya. We praise and thank the Lord for His hand on their fruitful labors for the sake of the Gospel!

Pavel, his wife Svetlana, and their family.



If the Son Makes You Free . . .

A Russian Criminal Kingpin Finds Freedom and New Life in Christ

As told to Igor Sokolov
SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in a Muslim
region of Russia



Igor (back right) and
Yuri (left)

We would like to share the special story of 55-year-old Yuri, whom God led to Igor Sokolov's church in a wonderful way. As a leading criminal figure in Russia, Yuri's life had been filled with great sin. But now he

lives a new life as a child of God, proving yet again the Lord's promise . . . *if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed* (John 8:36).

Yuri spent 15 years in prison, and influenced the fates of many people both inside and outside of jail. Many state structures and officials were under his power. He had an expensive Mercedes equipped with a safe full of money. Once Yuri and Igor drove around town, and Yuri pointed out the many factories and plants that were under the control of his gang. He related how much money he had while he lived his criminal life. But all of that was gone the moment God touched his heart and life.

Over time, Yuri had fallen into drug abuse and dependency. He decided he could no longer fulfill his position in the gang, and told the rest of his cohorts that they needed a new leader. A day later while on his way home, a shot rang out and the bullet went through Yuri's shoulder blade, miraculously stopping at the spinal cord. He regained consciousness in the hospital, and realized what had happened. Those whom he had left behind in the gang considered him too dangerous to remain alive — he knew too much. The doctors left the bullet in Yuri's back, afraid to remove it for fear of damaging his spine. Yuri was filled with rage and a desire for revenge, dreaming of the day he would get out of the hospital and track down the man who had tried to kill him.

And so it began. Yuri was eventually discharged and found out who fired the bullet. As Igor describes, Yuri took two guns and went to seek revenge, until Someone intervened.

When he came closer to the man's house, he heard a voice saying, "Yuri, forgive him!" Yuri stopped. He couldn't understand who or what had stopped him. But the voice continued to sound louder and louder, "Forgive him!" Suddenly, Yuri saw the man he wanted to kill. Coming up to him, Yuri said, "I do not know why you shot at me, but I forgive you." As Yuri walked away, the man stood there in wonder.

Yuri began thinking much about God after this incident and began attending Igor's church. As time went by, hearing about the Lord wrought a change, and Yuri decided to repent. But it happened while walking to the church. He felt that he couldn't walk any further, and fell to his knees on the street, asking Christ to forgive him and to come into his heart. Igor says that the change was immediate.

Yuri has become a good Christian man and takes an active part in our church throughout the year. He has been in the hospital of late, as his former lifestyle seriously damaged his health. He has tuberculosis and is HIV-positive. Yuri comes to the church only on Sundays and attends men's Bible study meetings. We visit him in the hospital as much as we can. He has great need for medicines, some of which he can get in the hospital but the rest he must buy. We do all we can to help. Dear friends, we are so thankful for your prayers and support. We believe God has opened your hearts to support our ministry, and it motivates us to keep on going. We have great joy as more people like Yuri find peace with God!



Yuri (front center)
has become actively
involved in the church.



MY MISSION ADVENTURE

WHAT IS IT?

A missions component for Sunday school or VBS curriculum (ages 5 - 12) to encourage children to live life on a mission for the sake of the Gospel, while promoting spiritual growth through biblical teaching on missions.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

It shows children the spiritual and physical needs of Russian-speaking orphans across Russia and her neighboring countries. The curriculum is designed to show children they can make a difference even now in their communities – and half a world away.

WHAT DOES IT COST?

Free

HOW IS A KIT OBTAINED?

Call Slavic Gospel Association at 1-800-BIBLE-50/ 1-800-242-5350 or you can sign up on the web at www.sga.org

WHAT IS IN THE KIT?

The kit includes: 5 mission lessons, a 5 part DVD, 5 Power Point presentations, a CD with Russian songs for children to learn, activity sheets (reproducible), bookmarks for children to sign and send to orphans across Russia and her neighboring countries (facilitated by SGA), and an implementation guide.

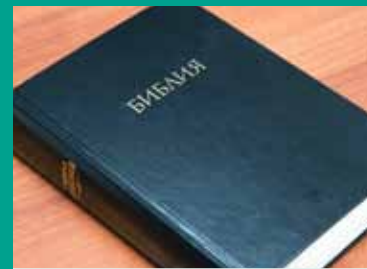


SGA Literature Update

10,000 Russian-Language Study Bibles Roll Off Presses!

Thanks to the faithful support of SGA partners, students and missionary pastors across the CIS will soon be receiving new copies of the *MacArthur Study Bible* in the Russian language.

This print run is for 10,000 copies, and they will be distributed to pastors, missionary pastors, seminary and Bible institute students, youth leaders, and *Orphans Reborn* workers in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, as well as in other nations of the CIS. It is hoped that the distributions will begin this summer. We praise and thank the Lord for His gracious provision, and pray that these Bibles will greatly strengthen the ministries of not only the current missionary pastors now laboring in unreached regions, but also future pastors and teachers.



MacArthur Study Bible in the Russian language.

The *MacArthur Study Bible* reflects 30 years of Pastor-Teacher Dr. John MacArthur's personal research compiling over 20,000 notes. It is especially helpful in clarifying difficult passages and is one of the most complete compilations of notes, charts and maps in one volume. This 4th Russian edition will bring the total number printed over the years to 55,000 copies.



NEWS AND ANALYSIS

Kazakh Christians Protest “Insulting” Cartoon



Protestant church leaders in Kazakhstan issued a joint protest earlier this year in response to an inflammatory cartoon published in a Karaganda newspaper. The cartoon showed a man in a doctor’s robe opening up another man’s skull and putting what appears to be a Bible in his head. The caption for the cartoon contained profanity and insinuated that believers are not logical and fall to trickery and delirium.

According to Radio Free Europe, the church leaders’ statement called the cartoon “insulting,” and demanded an apology. They also charged the paper with printing a false report about a Karaganda church. The article implied that the church was involved in brainwashing people to become Christians. The newspaper denied that the cartoon had religious overtones.

As of this report, it is unclear whether the Kazakh government will take any disciplinary action toward the paper in response to the incident. This matter is yet further evidence of renewed hostility toward evangelical churches in many parts of the former Soviet Union. Baptist churches and other evangelical fellowships often face false stories and false rumors about their

worship practices. And time after time, as local communities see the truth and good works of the churches — especially with children — these false stories often backfire and the Lord grants to many . . . *the repentance that leads to life* (Acts 11:18).

Russian Leaders Address Demographic Crisis

Russian president Dmitri Medvedev and other leaders are continuing to express concern over the country’s so-called demographic crisis, especially what had been a shrinking population. The Moscow News reported that Russia’s birth rate finally shows some increase after years of decline, and the president discussed various incentives to help boost childbirths. The government incentives are intended to encourage women to give birth to more than one child, with families having more than three children being given free land and other financial benefits. This is being done initially as a pilot project in the Ivanovsky region of Russia.

There are many reasons for the decline in population across Russia and the CIS, including poor health and pollution, along with abuse of alcohol and other drugs. According to the article, alcohol poisoning causes between 30,000 and 40,000 deaths a year in Russia. The evangelical churches SGA serves are committed to help reverse this trend through the power of the Gospel, and by other practical ministries such as Bible-based drug rehabilitation. These Christian rehab ministries greatly outpace their secular counterparts in performance, to the glory of Christ.





Orphans Reborn

Finding a Home in Christ

Dima Nachina
Orphans Reborn Coordinator in Belarus

We first got acquainted with Oksana (pictured right) at the Slutsk orphanage, and at the time she was 12 years old. She had been taken from home by local authorities due to her mother's heavy drinking. Despite it all, Oksana still worried deeply about what was going on at home with her mother and was often upset.



I invited Oksana to come to our Bible club at the orphanage, and at first she was reluctant, as she didn't know anyone there. I told her that the club was a meeting of friends, and she agreed to come. We prayed together and sang Christian songs, and communication took place. Afterward, Oksana had lots of questions she wanted to ask me. You could tell that she really liked what she had experienced, and finally had acquired some friends! She was among the first to sign-up for a new cooking class we offered, and began to attend the church regularly despite the prohibitions of her teachers and school administrators. But then we had to deal with a health crisis.

I noticed Oksana panting for breath one day, and the orphanage director told me that she had problems with her nose, but the doctors in Slutsk didn't want to treat her. The director agreed to allow me to take Oksana to Minsk in an effort to diagnose what was wrong. The problem was discovered and Oksana had surgery. Her breathing returned to normal, despite the predictions of others that nothing could be done. Oksana could see the hand of God in all of this, and she finally repented — trusting in Christ for salvation. And there's more. Oksana needed a home as the orphanage was reportedly closing, so she was taken into the family of the pastor of the church in Saslavl. She attends the church and takes an active part in the ministry, teaching Sunday school and helping in camp ministry. She is growing spiritually — even at the young age of 17, she is helping minister to the girls at camp.



Oksana at her baptism.

None of this could have happened without God's blessings and your material support. I thank all who have prayed and participated in our ministry. Please keep praying for Oksana!

Innercircle Perspective



Christ is risen!!!! Peace be to you, our dear brothers and sisters. What could be greater than trusting and serving the Living God, who overcame even death. We congratulate you and your church with the words from the Gospel: "The tomb is empty, He is not here, He is risen," and let us tell this news to our neighbors and friends, let us go outside in the streets and tell those that we meet about our God Who is the Living God . . . the tomb is empty, death is overcome and eternal life is available for everyone!!!

SGA Missionary Pastor Pavel Barsukov

The featured article in this issue, *Mission Mongolia*, is about the ministry of this young man, an outstanding missionary pastor. I first met Pavel (Paul) in 2000 in Dudinka, a small Russian city 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle on the Taimir Peninsula. In the winter the schools don't close until it is -40. Children are still seen on the playgrounds until it reaches -35. Snowmobiles are not for sport, but for transportation. The summer growing season is so short that only wild berries thrive, and they bring great excitement.

Pavel completed his studies at the Krasnoyarsk Bible College in 1999, and was then sent to the Taimir by his home church, the Central Baptist Church of Krasnoyarsk. Sponsored by SGA partners, he and his young bride, Svetlana, were assisting Pastor Vladimir Nenastin. Together, they were establishing the first Bible-preaching church in one of the furthest north cities on the Earth. Svetlana was busy with their first child, a baby daughter named Alonya born in 1999.

Later in 2000, Pavel and Svetlana were sent to Talnakh, a nickel mining community. It is 15 miles north of the city of Norilsk in the same region, where they shared the Gospel daily and established the Talnakh Baptist Church. When we were there in 2001, Pavel was in the hospital with a severe gum disease. After he had recovered, the Lord called them to the Norilsk Baptist Church where Pavel served as the missionary pastor for six years. Daughter Eva was born in 2002 and daughter Varvara was born in 2004.

In 2007, their home church called them back from the far north to Krasnoyarsk to give oversight to their extensive evangelism and missionary activities. Last fall, they began to organize a new church in another district of Krasnoyarsk. They recently rented a 1,500 square foot building and have done some cosmetic repairs. On March 20th, they had their first church service and more than 80 people attended, including a number of unbelievers.

They had anticipated some difficulty with children being present in the service, as the facility has no separate room for Sunday school. So they prepared a children's sermon with visual aids, examples, and memory verses. Pavel wrote . . . *This has worked really well. The children enjoy it and they are getting used to being in the church service. And for the adults, the children's sermons are still very useful, as they are based upon the Word of God. After the children's sermon and congregational singing, the children move to tables at the end of the hall. There they do crafts quietly, while the adults listen to the main sermon.*



Dr. Robert W. Provost
SGA President

There are more than 360 SGA-sponsored church planters — all such faithful, gifted, enthusiastic men that the Lord has raised up to evangelize unreached cities, towns and villages. They are deployed in climates ranging from - 65 degrees in the extreme Arctic north to 120+ degree temperatures in the deserts of the Central Asian nations. Their wives are godly women who joyfully endure special challenges, such as not having a washing machine, having to prepare their family meals from basic food elements, and sometimes needing to kill and pluck the chicken before they can cook it.

I trust that this departure from a usual *Innercircle Perspective* will serve to enhance your greater understanding of the national missionary pastors that our Lord allows us to serve. I am always humbled by their zeal and their faithful 24-7 approach to ministry. It is their lives, and the lives of their wives as well. And it is your prayers and faithful support that make their tremendous ministries possible. Please tell others about it. There are many more who are ready to go and are praying for support.



How You Can Help



Help SGA-sponsored missionary pastors reach Russian-speaking people today!



I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me (John 14:6).

Missionary pastors continue to reach their own communities, while also reaching out to people outside their borders with the Gospel. They face many challenges and obstacles in their ministries, including very limited resources and frequent opposition by governmental authorities and religious groups opposed to evangelical churches.

Your faithful support of SGA-sponsored missionary pastors helps to equip these pastors with the resources they need to fulfill their ministries. You help make possible:

- Distribution of Bibles and Christian literature.
- Orphans ministry through *Orphans Reborn*.
- Resources to equip youth to be the arms and legs of the local church.
- Bible training for pastors, Christian education workers and worship leaders.
- Children's and Youth Ministries, as well as summer camp ministries.

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