



*Russian orphans . . . waiting to hear of God's love.*

## *Finding Refuge in the Lord*

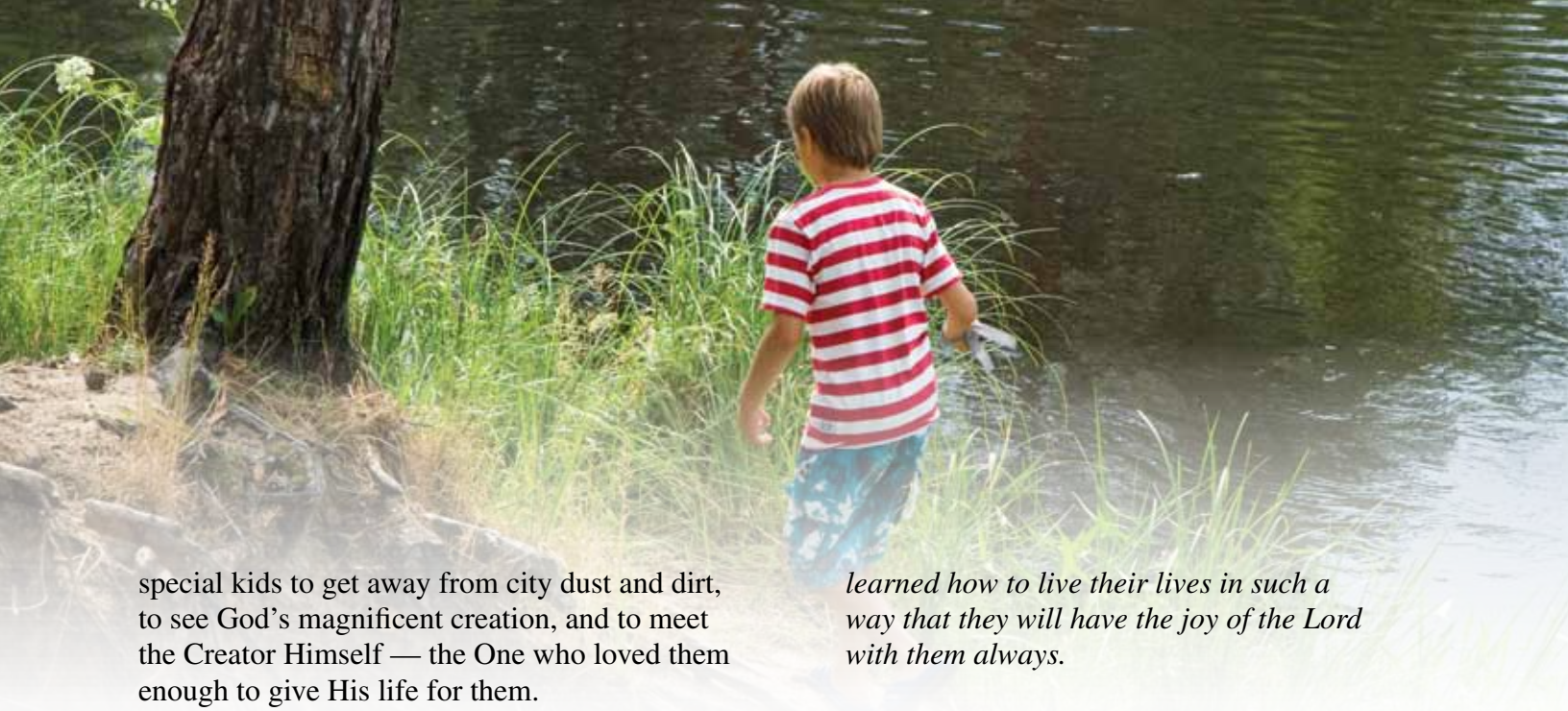
*You are my hiding place . . . (Psalm 32:7)*

For those who have never experienced it, it is hard to imagine what life would be like in an orphanage. Even in the best of situations, the young boys and girls who inhabit these children's homes often feel alienated and alone, despite being surrounded by many other children and adult caregivers.

The most heartbreaking stories come from the children who have been taken from their homes due to neglect and abuse from their parents. The orphanage serves as a shelter and refuge of sorts, but even the most compassionate care can't fill the empty place in their little hearts. These lonely, forgotten children need the love and hope that can only be found in the One who loves them most of all — the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the middle of Siberia near the village of Ungut is a summer children's camp operated by Oleg Smal and SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* teams in the Krasnoyarsk region. Last summer, Oleg and the faithful church workers ministered the love of Christ to 160 children between the ages of 6 and 13 in three separate camp sessions. Two of the camp sessions were called "Hiding Place," while the other was called "Sinai." Twenty of the children were orphans who seldom get to enjoy such excursions. According to Oleg, the camp sessions were an opportunity for these

*Continued on page 2*



special kids to get away from city dust and dirt, to see God’s magnificent creation, and to meet the Creator Himself — the One who loved them enough to give His life for them.

*learned how to live their lives in such a way that they will have the joy of the Lord with them always.*

*In addition to the orphans, more than half of the children came from non-Christian homes. As is our tradition, we began the camp sessions with a drama sketch featuring a major character called ‘The Laughless Princess.’ In spite of living in a castle and having everything, the princess never had any joy in her life, always weeping and very unhappy. One day, she met a person who was always joyful and who knew the secret of true joy. He invited the princess to come on an adventure with him to find joy, and the children came along on the adventure. During the next several days, our heroes met with children and face different situations. Each one could understand that the cause of everyone’s troubles is sin. But in His love, God gave the plan of salvation in sending Jesus to earth to die for us. On the seventh day during the evening service, we had an invitation for the children to receive Christ. In the remaining sketches, the children*

In the last day of the camps, every child received a reward for the points they earned for their behavior. Of course, none of the children wanted to go home, because their time with us had been true joy, especially for the orphans and kids from troubled families. Oleg is thankful for the support of SGA partners that helped make it all possible.

*Where else would these children have seen so much joy and concern, and genuine love? Thanks to all who gave. We know it was a sacrifice for many. You were able to give those children the love and joy of Christ even in cold Siberia, where they rarely have any physical or emotional warmth.*

For these beloved children, summer camp was truly a “Hiding Place” in the arms of the Lord. Please pray for Oleg and the *Orphans Reborn* teams as they continue discipling these boys and girls throughout the year.



How many children will have the opportunity to hear of Christ this summer?

# *Disappointed in Worldly Accomplishments*

*Noted Kazakh Academic Finds True Joy in Studying God's Word*



For Nikolai Hamizevich, the academic world has been a lifelong love and pursuit, and his impressive resume shows it. But today, thanks to the support of SGA partners, Nikolai is able to pursue studies of infinite worth, and for the glory of Christ.

In 1965, Nikolai graduated from high school with a silver medal — a special academic award given by the Soviet government in those days. That same year, he began studying math and physics at the State Institute in Kazakhstan. After graduating, Nikolai took the mandatory detour into military service, but afterward returned to the life of an academic. He taught at the Pedagogical Institute in Kazakhstan, and in 1974 began postgraduate study at the Academy of Nuclear Physics. Nikolai's accomplishments also helped elevate him to the role of General Director of the Science Academy Department in Kazakhstan's Nuclear Physics Institute. Between 1994 and 2001, he served as president of the International Association for Dialogue Between East and West. Capping it all, Nikolai earned his doctorate in economic sciences in 2001.

But these tremendous accomplishments did little to give Nikolai peace in his heart and soul. On the inside, he was disappointed despite his achievements and saw his life on a steady downward trek. That is, until a major change took place in the life of Nikolai's wife.

*One day my wife, Valentina, heard the Good News about God, who sent His Son to die for*



Nikolai and family.

*our sins. A bit later, my wife repented and trusted in Christ, and six months later, both my 14-year-old daughter and I came to Jesus. No one had been able to change my life, but Jesus changed me completely. Our family life was also changed. At the age of 53, I had come to the Lord, and I began to have the desire to share the Gospel with other people.*

Nikolai eventually paid a visit to his home country of Belarus. Visiting the evangelical church in the city of Soligorsk, he was given the opportunity to preach and share the testimony of how God had saved him. That day, 36 people came forward in repentance and gave their lives to Christ, including Nikolai's sister. Nikolai's family could see the change that had taken place in his life.

*All my relatives saw the changes in me and also in my family. We had given up drinking vodka, and it was a strong testimony that God is able to change sinners like me. Before, I had been a very proud atheist, but when Jesus saved me, my relatives started to consider how God was able to change people like me.*

Today, Nikolai runs a large business in Almaty, Kazakhstan — a business that affords him numerous opportunities to witness and serve the church. And that's not all. Nikolai has found himself drawn back into the academic world — only this time for the glory of Christ. He is a diligent student enrolled in pastoral studies at the SGA-sponsored Almaty Bible Institute, expecting to complete his studies in 2013.

*I thank my Lord and you that today I can study in Almaty Bible Institute. I believe that my education will help me to better understand the Bible, and to serve my Savior as a more effective preacher of His Word.*

# A Good Place for Outreach

## Kidney Stone Attack Leads to Witnessing Opportunities



Dr. Igor Dengin  
SGA-sponsored  
Missionary Pastor in  
Dzerzhinsk, Russia

*. . . but sanctify Christ  
as Lord in your hearts,  
always being ready  
to make a defense to  
everyone who asks you  
to give an account for*

*the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and  
reverence (1 Peter 3:15).*

Last summer was a hectic, fruitful time visiting and ministering in Ukraine for Dr. Igor Dengin. He had been on a ten-day trip to Khmel'nitsk and Gomel visiting fellow missionary pastor and participating in evangelistic meetings, as well as visiting prisons for ministry. But his trip home ended up with an unexpected detour to the hospital, as he relates . . .

*On my way back home, I felt severe pain in my kidneys. I was taken to the hospital and they diagnosed kidney stones. I ended up staying in the hospital for more than two weeks, and found that it's a very good place for outreach. There is a lot of time for discussion! I met a director of a local secondary school who teaches math, a student, and a truck driver. I talked to the teacher most of all, as he described himself as 'not an angry atheist.' He offered up many of the standard arguments defending evolutionary theory, but I had ready answers for him. Those who were overhearing our talks were prone to take the side of God more than the side of evolution. We didn't argue with each other, but just shared our thoughts.*

*Ivan, the student, appeared to be an Orthodox adherent, but God blessed me*

*to become his friend also. He came to know many things about the Gospel and salvation.*

While Dr. Igor's trip to the hospital was an unplanned "seed-sowing" moment, he is also praising God for the prior weeks' challenges and joys. He said that the summer was very hot in the Dzerzhinsk-Nizhny Novgorod region of Russia, with lots of smoke from the severe, widely-reported peat and forest fires.

*Our eyes ached because of the heavy smoke and it was hard to breathe, but we still succeeded in holding our tent camp for children. We had 30 kids between 7 and 14 years of age, and mainly held the meetings at night because of the fires.*

After his visit to Ukraine, Dr. Igor and his fellow workers visited six prisons. They are rejoicing because there is new leadership in the local prison system, and doors are beginning to open for them again. Many inmates want to know God, and even the prison warden at one of the facilities said that he considered their ministry useful and necessary. Dr. Igor said, "Praise God! God closes doors, and He is the One who opens doors!"

Dr. Igor asks that we continue to pray for his ministry, and for the beginning of a local drug rehabilitation ministry. He spent much of the fall on the construction site helping to put a roof on the building that will be used for the ministry, and working to get it ready for winter. Pray also for Dr. Igor's family. They are all deeply thankful for the prayers and faithful support of SGA partners!



The Dengin family . . . united in Christian service



# NEWS AND ANALYSIS



## Alcohol Abuse Remains Massive in Russia

The Russian health ministry released statistics showing that 40 percent of Russians — or almost 57 million people — overindulge in liquor. Spokesman Yevgeny Bryun said the number of registered alcoholics in the country is about 2 percent, or 2.7 million people. “[By that number] I mean the number of people who are undergoing treatment. But all kinds of problems, including economic, social and family troubles, come mainly from those who drink to excess. They constitute about 30-40 percent of our population.” Alcohol consumption in Russia per capita is currently about 18 liters a year, twice the critical norm set by the World Health Organization. The Russian government has declared an anti-alcohol campaign and aims to halve consumption by 2020, and root out illegal production and sales.

This staggering statistic is doubly heartbreaking when you add the total of those addicted to heroin in Russia — some 1.5 million people according to the government. That exceeds the number of “registered users” by three times. Seeing the need in their country, a growing number of the Russian evangelical churches SGA serves are operating Bible-based drug rehab centers as a vital part of their overall ministry. Please pray with us for the resources needed to help them expand this important outreach. We are thankful for the

many who have found deliverance through the life-changing Gospel!

## Prison Protests Increasing in Kazakhstan

Human rights groups in Kazakhstan are concerned about a growing number of incidents involving prisoners maiming themselves to protest prison conditions. Radio Free Europe reports that 12 prison inmates in the town of Dolinka maimed themselves by slashing open their abdomens. Four of the inmates were critically injured. There were several other similar incidents in recent months, and the human rights activists are pressing authorities to improve conditions in the prisons. Around the same time, the warden and two associates at the Kushmurun Prison in northern Kazakhstan were sent to prison after being convicted of bribe taking.

Prisons in the CIS are notorious for conditions that fall far below typical Western standards. Many missionary pastors in Russia, Kazakhstan, and their neighboring nations place a high priority on prison outreach, even helping to establish congregations behind prison walls. Quite a number of former prisoners who came to Christ in prison have moved on into ministry after their release from incarceration. We praise God for these wonderful opportunities to share the Gospel with the lonely and forgotten.





## *A Harvest at Christmas*

We are rejoicing with our brothers and sisters across the lands of Russia for yet another fruitful season of ministry at Christmas — ministry made possible through the prayers and faithful giving of SGA partners!

According to reports we have received from churches participating in the SGA-sponsored *Immanuel's Child* ministry, nearly 15,000 children attended the outreaches, which were held in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and four Central Asian nations. Nearly 11,000 of the children were from unbelieving families, with 378 responding to the call to repent of their sins and trust in Christ. In addition to the children, 143 adults received Christ, and 412 adults began attending local evangelical churches. And more than that — thus far 962 children have begun attending Sunday schools, and that number continues to grow!

In Ukraine, SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Vasily Starenok conducted an outreach in the village of Rogozki, with Sunday school students from Chernigov participating. Afterward, his team distributed gifts to the children, telling them that the presents were expressions of God's love. Many non-believers heard the Gospel as well. Oksana Bulavina teaches Sunday school at Chernigov, and she expressed her thanks to SGA partners . . .

*The children were very excited and very thankful. Everything was organized in the spirit of love and for the glory of God. It was a demonstration of God's mercy, shown to lots of people, and I am sure that they will have good memories of this service for many years to come. It is real evangelism!*

In addition to *Immanuel's Child* outreaches, SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn*

teams conducted Christmas programs for orphan children in their regions. In Kirovo-Chepetsk, teams visited children's homes in four towns with encouraging results . . .

*These kids — ages 15 to 16 — were not familiar with us and were very skeptical. At first, they laughed at us. But as the program proceeded, they became very silent and listened to us attentively. Adults and educators also watched our play. Some had tears in their eyes and sincerely thanked us for the program and the gifts for the children. There were also outreaches in Sovetsk, Velikoretskoye, and Fileika. Thank*



Children of all ages are reached through Christmas ministry.

*you for your prayers and support, and for your participation in the life of our church.*

We have received many other reports from across the lands of Russia, and we praise and thank the Lord for the ministry accomplished in each one. Pray with us that the seeds of the Gospel that were planted in the hearts of thousands of children will bear much fruit in the days ahead.

*Editor's Note: While a Christmas ministry report might seem odd for late spring, our schedule requires that InSight issues are completed at least two months ahead of publication date. In addition, as Russian Christmas is observed January 7, many reports from Russia and her neighboring nations continue coming in months after the season is past. Our prayer is that this report will bring you Christmas joy — even in the middle of spring!*

# Innercircle Perspective



*So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you' (John 20:19-21).*

Isaiah 49:6 tells us **how** the Father sent His beloved Son. He says, *It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.* This mandate to the Lord's disciples at that time applies equally to us — His disciples today. Our clear assignment is to take the Gospel, first to the Jewish people, but then we are also to take the light of the Gospel to all the nations, from where we are to the end of the earth.

For us, the lands of Russia are across the world, literally the end of the earth. And it is tragic that after more than 20 years of freedom, there is still so much more to do in Russia and in her neighboring countries. The Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (UECB) — our partners in ministry — is the largest fellowship of evangelical churches in these nations. In Russia, they are steadily growing, largely through the conversion of young people, and especially young professionals. Their total membership is approaching 80,000 faithful men and women. As SGA partners, your prayers are being answered and your support is being blessed. You are making possible Gospel ministries to orphans, unchurched children and their families, youth and their families, young professionals, as well as to drug addicts, alcoholics, and prisoners.

The aggressive goal in Russia is to reach one percent of the population. This is a very ambitious goal as it requires growth from 80,000 to 1.4 million members. The task is even much greater in the other republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States. But in all of these countries, the Lord has raised up courageous men of God to lead the movements. It is a great privilege to come alongside joyful believers

who, while being frequently harassed by government authorities, remain undeterred in their zeal to win as many of their countrymen to Christ as possible.

In two of the Muslim nations, the ratio of believers is 5 in 100,000 and 7 in 100,000 respectively, but these believers are constantly witnessing. In one country, there are only three pastors for nine churches, but they have nine men ready to be sent and are praying for support. In another country, there are five pastors for seven churches, but they have six men ready to be sent and are praying for support. In the pro-American nation of Georgia, there are only seven pastors for 24 churches, but they have six men ready to be sent and are praying for support. In all the countries together, more than 600 faithful men are ready to be sent as soon as the Lord provides support.



Dr. Robert W. Provost  
SGA President

Amazingly, the Lord has made it possible for SGA partners to assist with highly effective summer camp programs in nine nations. Included are five Muslim countries where last year, more than 2,000 children participated and 353 children received Christ as Savior. In one such nation, five camps were held secretly. There were 160 children that attended and 48 of them received the Lord. This year, we are praying that the SGA camp ministry partnership can be expanded to help the 600 believers in Georgia conduct camp outreaches in their communities.

Your prayers and support are making a great difference in reaching people of the former Soviet Union for Christ. We can never thank you enough. At the same time, I am constrained to ask you to help us gain the interest of more churches and more individuals. It is so tragic that the door is closing, while tens of millions are waiting to hear and wanting to hear. Please help us find more partners to help us get the Gospel to them.



# How You Can Help



Help Bible-preaching Russian churches reach their people with the Gospel.

There are more than 700,000 orphans in Russia alone. Caregivers working at orphanages across Russia and her neighboring countries do what they can to provide these children with a loving environment, but there are so many children—it is more than they can do all by themselves. Evangelical churches are helping these orphanage caregivers provide a loving environment through the SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* ministry. Each year, *Orphans Reborn* teams reach out to more than 12,000 of these lonely, forgotten children, sharing Christ's love with them.



Additionally, as teams of church workers are reaching out to these children across Russia and her neighboring countries, faithful missionary pastors are reaching out to thousands of lost and hurting people who populate the villages, towns and cities.

As a partner in the Gospel, your generous support helps local churches reach the forgotten harvest across the lands of Russia:

- Bible and theological training for pastors, worship leaders, youth and children's workers and teachers in Christian education.
- Distribution of Bibles and Christian literature.
- Resources to equip youth to be the arms and legs of the local church.
- Orphans ministry through *Orphans Reborn*.
- Supporting faithful, local missionary pastors.

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