



SERVING CHURCHES — REACHING RUSSIAN SPEAKERS

March 2017

The Power of God's Mercy

SGA-Sponsored Compassion Ministry in the CIS

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart (2 Corinthians 4:1).

It's been demonstrated many times that our God can use simple acts of compassion and mercy by His people to change lives for eternity. For many years, SGA has helped supply evangelical churches across the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) with food, clothing, and other humanitarian aid to distribute to needy individuals and families—always in the name of the Lord Jesus and with the Gospel.

Sergei G. is an SGA-sponsored missionary pastor in Belarus. Not long ago, he shared several short testimonies from his compassion ministry and how God works to reach lost souls one by one. Some repent immediately, yet with others, the Holy Spirit works in their hearts over time . . .

Right now I'm reaching out to Andrei, who was a builder. He is 28 years old. Three years ago, Andrei was working

on a project and fell off of high construction staging. He is now an invalid and can no longer stand. He lives alone and uses a wheelchair. He is very open to the Gospel and desires to learn God's Word. He has begun to attend our Sunday church service, and I hope he will soon come to the Lord in repentance . . .

While ministering to Andrei, we got to know Elena, who turned out to be a friend of Andrei's—they've known each other since Elena was a child. Andrei told us that Elena helped him



Andrei and Elena

after the accident. She visited him in the hospital and at home. Elena is now 18 years old and lives with her mother. She is also pregnant, but there is no information about her baby's father. They are in great need and her baby will be born soon. I am glad to have a chance to help them all with food packages. Elena is very open to the Gospel and agreed to visit the church. I hope to continue to help Elena and share the Gospel.

Throwing out a Gospel Lifeline

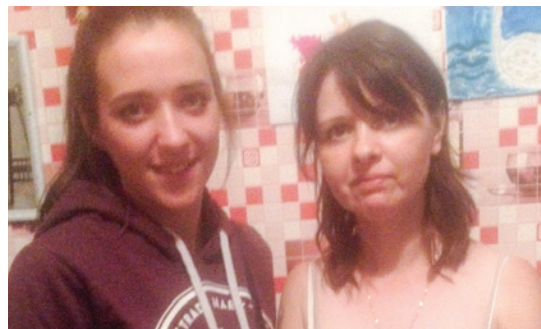
In addition to those who have been on Sergei's list for compassion ministry food distribution, the Lord brings others to his attention through the church . . .

I heard about a woman named Nadezhda from a sister in the church who works in a local shopping center. Nadezhda is employed there also as a cleaner. Apparently, the manager was very angry with Nadezhda over her work. Nadezhda was depressed and told our sister, "If I lose my job, I will commit suicide by hanging." Her financial struggles are so bad that for two days she only had hot water with sugar instead of a normal lunch because she didn't have money.

Nadezhda is a single mother with three children. Her oldest son is 17 and has enrolled in college. Her middle son is 14 and her youngest—a daughter—is six. God touched my heart when I heard about this family's needs. I connected with Nadezhda by phone

and got her to agree to a meeting. We came to her home with a food package. Words could not express her gratitude, and the tears made her eyes shine. She looked like she had received something very precious. She said that the food package is a great help for her, and she couldn't believe people like us existed.

We also helped to supply her children with things for school and invited her to the church. And Nadezhda, indeed, attended with her children and she



Sergei's daughter and Nadezhda (right)

wants to have ongoing fellowship with us. I have asked my oldest daughter and her husband, Vasily, to keep ministering to this family. Pray with us for their salvation!

Each month, SGA partners are providing food parcels to nearly 500 impoverished families in Belarus, Ukraine, and Central Asia. Aid is also distributed in Russia and other CIS nations as needs arise and God provides. In Ukraine, ministry continues through our Crisis Evangelism Fund for families impacted by the ongoing separatist violence in eastern Ukraine. We are thankful to God and to you for making these outreaches possible.



This is Your Creator!

SGA-Sponsored Summer Camp Ministry in Tomsk, Russia

Out on the banks of the Ob River, we held three camps for children and youth of different ages. We called it Bethel – the House of God. The purpose of the camp was to reach children with the Gospel, teaching biblical truths, even as we also had many fun activities together. We had two shifts in the camp with 80 children, and half of them were kids from unsaved families.

Our program for younger children stressed the reality of our Creator, who did miracles in nature. The focus was on the Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest miracle of all—through whom all the miracles of nature happen (Romans 1:19). The children were “tourists” who wanted to know more about the camp and its Host – God!

The older children were invited to the “Island of Salvation,” and we based the lessons on the theme of “the ultimate hero.” And the main Person on whom we focused is the Ultimate Hero – the Lord Jesus Christ. We explained the Bible's truths about Him and the Gospel, and then we told them of the choice they needed to make to follow Jesus and entrust their lives to Him.

Through these sessions, the children became acquainted with the fundamentals

of the Christian faith, the Bible and prayer. And the Lord worked through the proclamation of His Word. We had 15 children repent of their sins in the first session, and 19 children in the second session. We give glory to God for these miracles!

On the last day of the camp, we offered Christian literature to the children—Bibles and evangelistic books for children. At least half of the children took literature with them. And on the way back to Tomsk, our bus broke down. But rather than be upset, we were thankful because God prolonged our camp and time with the children! We had more time to talk to unsaved people. We prayed, and the bus began to run, so we arrived back in Tomsk safely!

Summer 2016 was a blessed time for us in Tomsk, and we are so thankful! Please pray for the children who were reached, and as we follow up with them.



The children are completely captivated by the camp activities, which always point to the Lord Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

Ministering to the Widowed (James 1:27)

Pastor Alexander Povroznuk
Zhitomir, Ukraine



Every Saturday I visit local widows and hold Bible studies with them. There are about 15 who are coming to my Bible study. Two of the women left Zhitomir and moved to Sumy and Rivne. I called the local pastors to make sure that they follow up with these widows so they are not forgotten.

Together, we joyfully sing Christian hymns, and the ladies already have their favorite songs. They actively participate in the study and discuss the Word. Please pray for them, because some have relatives who are pressuring them, thinking that they belong to some cult or sect. To counter this, one of our widows brought a friend last Saturday, so that she could see what we do during our meetings. She went home satisfied that all was well! Another lady named Natasha—who only began attending a couple of months ago, shared that she has already read the book of Genesis! We are seeing more of them get involved in other women's ministries in our church. We praise God for this ministry!



Compassion Ministry in Central Asia

Greetings to you, dear brothers and sisters! I am very grateful to you for your prayers and support, which gives me the chance to serve the Lord and visit families. It is really a good way to reach people for Christ in Tajikistan. Many people live in poverty and they are very happy and thankful when someone brings them something to eat. Even if they are not into God's Word immediately, with your prayers and ours, God in time opens their hearts!

A new believer named Viola in our church will be baptized soon. We also continue to conduct worship at her home. Each Monday evening, I evangelize with the Gospel of John and new people come. Our hostess always tries to prepare a tasty meal for us. As the visitors hear about the Lord Jesus, there are results. One woman has begun to visit with other members of Viola's family. Please continue to pray for them as they become closer to the Lord!



Unreached Regions of Far East Russia



- Nearly the size of the continental U.S.
- 9 states (oblasts)
- 6.3 million people
- Rich in natural resources
- 62 evangelical churches, 45 pastors, 5 missionary pastors
- A heaven-sent opportunity to reach this vast, unreached region for Christ!

REACH
Russia Now



Waiting and Wanting to Hear

Pastor Alexander in Russia's Far East

Russia's vast Far East region could really be called Earth's "last frontier" in terms of Gospel witness. As noted previously, the land area is nearly the size of the lower 48 United States. More than six million people of differing ethnic origins live there—some so remotely they can only be reached via a small airplane. The majority of towns and villages have no evangelical churches.

Pastor Alexander serves on Sakhalin Island off the Pacific coast of Far East Russia. It's a forbidding climate and difficult ministry conditions are there, but his ministry is fruitful. He recently shared about a phone call that led to an eternal life change for one Korean man . . .

We distribute New Testaments regularly as part of our ministry on Sakhalin. And finally, it has yielded results. One day I received a phone call from a young man whose name is Leonid—he is an ethnic Korean. He told me that he wants to come to our church. I met with him



Leonid's zeal to serve as a new believer knows no bounds!

personally and shared the Gospel with him. With tears in his eyes, he received the Gospel and repented of his sins.

Afterward, Leonid attended church faithfully and completed a study course for new believers, then we prepared for his baptism. At the end of September, our church as a whole went outside the town to a baptismal spot, and Leonid was baptized.

This is an example of how God causes the seeds of His Word being planted to grow, and Leonid is the fruit that grew by God's mercy through our planting. As we witness publicly, people usually take the New Testaments, while some reject them. Whenever we have opportunity, we try to talk to people about the Lord Jesus. If a person is willing to take a copy of the New Testament, then they are willing to hear about God, and we share. Thank you for your part in our ministry!

There are many more like Leonid across Far East Russia. With the provisions of the new anti-missionary law looming, we do not know how much longer Alexander will be able to distribute Bibles and witness in public. That is why SGA's *Reach Russia Now* initiative is so vitally important. Please pray for the resources needed to take the Gospel across this vast region while we still can.

CIS in the News

Poll: One in Three Russians Believes in Witchcraft

A recent ITAR-TASS news agency article cited a poll showing 1/3 of Russians believe that some people "are capable of casting spells or an evil eye." The poll was conducted by the All Russia Public Opinion Research Center in the fall. Drilling down deeper into beliefs, the poll also showed that the bulk of younger people aged 18 to 24 are not inclined to believe in sorcery. Spokesman Ivan Lekontsev said, "Although a relative majority of Russians say they don't believe in witchcraft, nevertheless many are familiar with at least stereotyped and mythological views of it. The poll was

conducted among 1,600 people with a 2.5 percent margin of error. Up to 18 percent of Russians do not identify with any spiritual belief or faith group.

With at least 130 people groups across Russia, local beliefs include animism and shamanism in some regions. Polls such as this reinforce the urgency of advancing the Gospel to all of Russia—and confirming SGA's *Reach Russia Now* initiative. Please join us in praying for God's continued wisdom, direction, and provision in serving Bible-preaching churches.

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We are thankful to the Lord for you and all of SGA's faithful partners. Your prayers and generous gifts help accomplish so much for the glory of Christ and the advance of the Gospel across Russia and her neighboring countries. SGA-sponsored missionary pastors are reaching the lost through Compassion Ministry—sharing Christ's love and much needed food items with



thousands of poverty-stricken individuals and families. In addition, you help provide Bible training, Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, children's ministries, missionary pastor support, and much more. Please pray about how the Lord would have you help today.

Innercircle Perspective

Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14).

First, I want to thank everyone who prayed for and sponsored the recent *Immanuel's Child* Christmas outreaches throughout the former Soviet Union and in Israel. While we don't have all the reports in yet, I was recently in Khabarovsk, in Far East Russia. While there, I received several wonderful, exciting reports about how our Lord blessed the IC children's Christmas outreaches in a number of churches.

We were there to help with a conference to launch our new *Reach Russia Now* major evangelistic initiative. A total of 71 pastors and missionary pastors came from all over the vast territory that is as big as America. We committed to do everything possible to help them reach their nine unreached oblasts (states). We committed to holding *Antioch Initiative* training sessions in two locations to prepare faithful men for missionary church planting, and for serving as pastors.

However, the most urgent needs are for more church planters and more missionary pilots. Please join us in prayer for support for 10 men who are being set apart to be sent. And please also pray for our Lord to raise up orphan workers to be sent as an *Orphans Reborn* team to as many of the 334 Far East orphanages as possible. And please pray

for our Lord to provide support to help many little churches hold summer camp outreaches for unchurched children.

The closest region to Alaska—Chukotka—is a one-hour Cessna flight from Nome. The territory is the size of Texas with a population of 51,000 people.



Dr. Robert W. Provost
SGA President

There are three cities, 60 villages, and very few roads. There is one pastor, and one church with 20 members, that has planted a group that is growing into a church. They are traveling by snowmobile to take the Gospel to other villages. Please join me in praying for churches in Alaska to get involved and travel over frequently to help them. Please also pray for our Lord to provide an airplane and pilot to be located in Chukotka.

Your prayers, encouragement, and support are vital in helping us launch this exciting new Gospel advancement. The government in Moscow continues to implement the new law that violates our Lord's command that we make disciples of all the nations. Please pray that our Lord will place a hedge of protection around all our Gospel advancement initiatives. Pray that children all over Far East Russia will not be hindered in coming to our Savior. And thank you again for all that you do.



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