



SERVING CHURCHES — REACHING RUSSIAN SPEAKERS

April 2017

A Summer Harvest in the CIS

Pray for SGA-Sponsored Summer Camp Season!

He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely (Proverbs 10:5).

Our faithful brothers and sisters across the Commonwealth of Independent States have learned much through the years of ministering in their challenging nations. They have learned that when God grants an opportunity, it must be seized immediately. And each summer, thousands of children in Russia and her neighboring nations flock by invitation to Christian camp ministries that you—our faithful



Thousands of unchurched kids flock to SGA-sponsored summer camps each year.

partners—help make possible. Although spring has two more months to go, preparations have already begun to reach the children for Christ. And in Russia,

serious questions remain about how the new anti-missionary law may be enforced to harass or even close evangelical camps as in the Central Asian, and Caucasus nations.

The spiritual fruit of summer camps cannot be overstated. In Armenia last summer, a camp led by SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Gagik was held in a very beautiful mountainous area along Sevan Lake. Gagik reports that the camp opened up numerous opportunities . . .

At our camp, 60 percent of the children were from unbelieving families. After each camp session, we invited all of the children to our church so that we can continue working with them. Sometimes the children even brought their parents, and we made personal visits to those children who were not able to come. We visited them in their homes, and got acquainted with their parents. We tried to develop a relationship

with them. We decided to hold a VBS ministry after camp was over, I It was wonderful to see many of the parents bringing their children after having seen the changes in their children on their return from camp. The camp also helps us in our overall church ministry. After last year's sessions, five parents began to attend our church. Camp is a very much needed ministry for our church!

In Russia's Elista region, Buddhism is the main religion, but the summer's heat helped open opportunities to reach local children in camp programs . . .

The summers in our republic are very hot. There are very few lakes or reservoirs here. There are two swimming pools in town, but we could not afford to pay for tickets to get in. So we prepared several games with water, which the children enjoyed very much. Some parents came along with their children to the camp. The



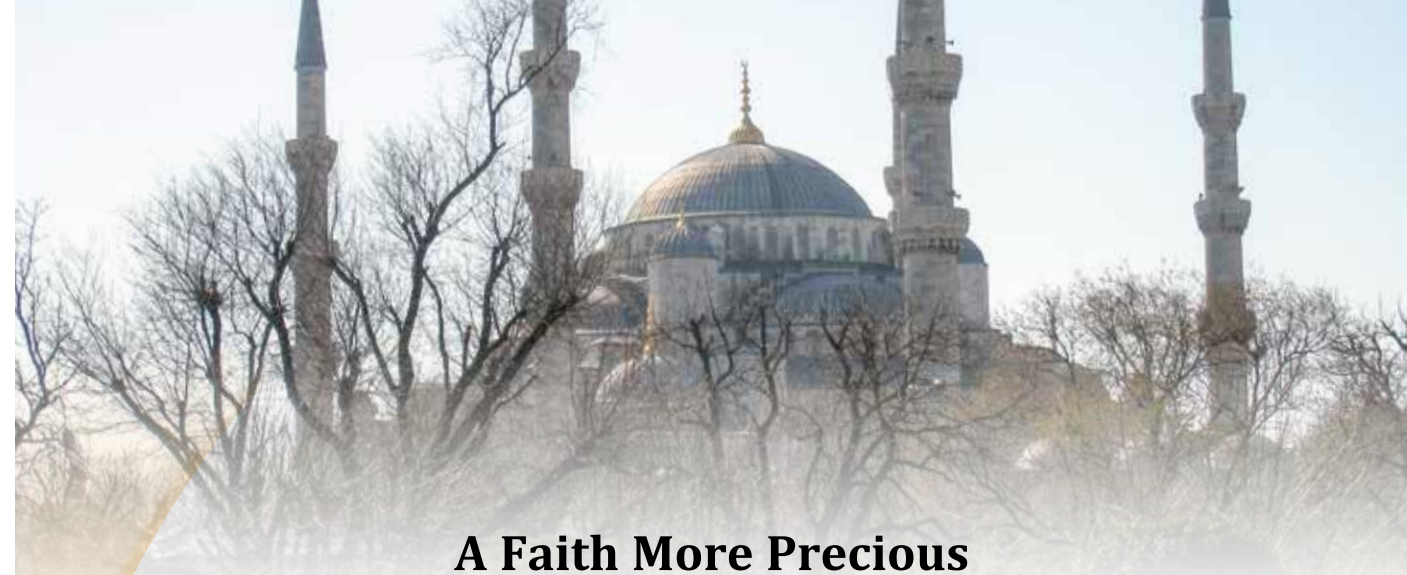
Children are presented with biblical truth through scripture, Christian songs, and testimonies!

mother of one young boy named Nikita told us, "I do not know what you did with him, but he has changed for the better after meetings with you. He is calmer and more obedient!" We are so thankful to hear such responses about our ministry!

Please pray in advance for the camp sessions being planned in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Caucasus republics, across Central Asia and in Israel where opposition to the Gospel is so strong. As boys and girls hear about Christ's love for them, may He draw many boys and girls to Himself.



Children remember summer camp for a lifetime, with many coming to faith in Christ.



A Faith More Precious

Bret Laird
SGA Executive Assistant

... the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:7).

SGA has the high privilege and solemn responsibility of serving persecuted churches in several of the most oppressive nations in the world. In one central Asian country, believers are caught between the hammer of radical Islam and the anvil of an authoritative government. Arrests, police raids, and fines are a regular part of their lives. Bibles and Gospel literature are tightly restricted, and the few churches in the country are continually threatened.

But it is those who have escaped from the cruel clutches of Islam to the loving embrace of Christ who face the most persecution. Recently, a key SGA-sponsored missionary pastor shared the story of one

such young man who recently repented and believed the Gospel.

This young man worked long hours as a taxi driver in order to feed his family, but his car was very old and would constantly break down. His neighbors and friends would tease him saying, "You spend more time under that old car than in it!" They couldn't understand why he was willing to work so hard for such little pay. But what they didn't realize was that this car was not only the sole means by which he fed his family, it was a versatile evangelistic tool. While transporting clients, he would softly play Christian music and an audio Bible on his taxi's radio, and then share the Gospel to those who began asking him questions.

One day, this young man received a call from a long-time friend who had become a successful and wealthy businessman. The caller said, "I have a business proposition for you, so come and meet me." When the young man arrived, his friend escorted him into a room, where to his surprise were

In only two months, summer Christian camp season across the CIS will be here. Here is a special chart illustrating what God did through your prayers and faithful support, along with a wonderful report from Belarus sharing the fruit of last summer's camp harvest.

Pastor Boris
Vitebsk Region of Belarus

Our camp sessions took place along the Braslaw Lake. The children ranged from 9 to 16 years old, and we had 40 children in the camp.

The name of our camp program was *Alpha and Omega*, and the goal was to tell the children as much about God as we could. We used the biblical names of God in the camp such as *Mighty God, God Almighty, The Lord Who Sanctifies You, The Everlasting King, Jesus Christ, and Adonai – the Lord*. Every morning the kids assembled a jigsaw puzzle of God's character. The Bible lessons were *Who is God?, Where Can We Learn about God, "Why do men need God, How Can Man Come to God*, etc.

On the last day of the camp, we talked about repentance and gave an invitation. Uliana came to the Lord after the lesson, and the next day Anya, Sasha and Dariya repented. Anya and Uliana visited Sunday church service after the camp season, and Anya's parents allowed her to attend our Sunday church services and Sunday school. But sadly, now Uliana's parents are against the church and they don't like their daughter to attend, so they are no longer allowing her. And Sasha's mother is totally against the church. We will keep them in our prayers, asking the Lord to change their hearts!



*What God did through you in
the 2016 Camp Season*

349 Camps

11 Countries

17,103 Children attended

2,561 Repented



Pray for the Little Pearl Camp in Belarus!

Late in 2016, we became aware of a serious financial challenge for the SGA-sponsored Little Pearl (Zhemchuzhenka) Children's Diagnostic Camp in Belarus—a challenge so serious that the camp was threatened with closure.

We are praying for God's gracious provision. Camp director Pavel Mishchenko wrote to share the fruit of last summer's camp sessions for children who have radiation caused cancer and other physical ailments . . .

We had successfully completed five camp sessions including two for disabled children and one session for children with cancer. A special blessing for us is that afterward, the children from non-Christian families have

shown the desire to attend our churches. In addition, other meetings with Christian youth are already being held for these families. Many of them want to come back this year. They tell us that they have never been treated so well as they have here at Little Pearl. We have only done what we are supposed to do as Christians (Luke 17:10), but for these children it's been a great testimony.

Many children were sincerely moved to tears. Sadly, disabled people in Belarus are not treated in the best way by the system, but for us they are unsaved souls who have need for the Good News and the love of Jesus. As the Apostle John wrote about how Jesus

healed the ill at the pool of Bethesda . . . having five porticos. In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered (waiting for the moving of the water), they believed that an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water (John 5:2-4)—this reminds us of our society. So many are sick and needy. And we've tried to do everything we can for them. And there are a lot of Bible hours where they can hear the Gospel.

Our prayer is that God will provide the resources needed to keep this wonderful facility open reach thousands more children with the Gospel, while providing important diagnosis and treatment.



waiting Imams of the local Islamic court. For several hours, they berated, mocked, and threatened him. “Return to Islam, or face the consequences of being a Kafir (infidel)!”

His wealthy friend also pled with him, saying that his own reputation and safety was being put at risk since the Imams had given him the responsibility to bring his “apostate” friend back under submission to the Islamic god Allah. Seeing that threats were not persuading the Christian to abandon his new faith, they decided to switch from a “stick” approach to a “carrot” approach. His wealthy friend said, “We all know that you can barely feed your family with that old, broken car of yours. Allah and the Imams are my witnesses, that if you will renounce Christianity and return to Islam, that brand new Lexus* parked outside will be yours. Look, here are the keys! Say the Shahadah (the Islamic creed) and the car is yours!”

“Christ bought me with His precious blood. I will not sell Him for a Lexus.”

This new believer—a mere babe in Christ—looked around. He saw the glaring eyes of the Imams and knew they could make good on their threats. He saw the pleading gaze of his friend and knew that he could also suffer if the council didn’t get what they wanted. And through the

window, he saw the shiny glint of that fancy Lexus, and for a moment considered all the societal status and economic opportunity it represented, since this was the car of choice for the country’s elites. Then came the answer that left

both his friend and the Islamic council in stunned silence:

“Christ bought me with His precious blood. I will not sell Him for a Lexus.”

***Editor’s Note: The cost of a Lexus can vary anywhere between \$30,000 and \$50,000 or more depending on which model. These cars are way out of reach for most poverty-stricken believers in the CIS.**

CIS in the News



Living Standards Fall Sharply in Russia

A few months ago, the internationally known Swiss financial corporation Credit Suisse reported that the living standards of Russians had fallen a jaw-dropping 14 percent in the space of just one year—mid 2015 to mid 2016. The survey is called the Global Wealth Report, and charts factors such as the average income of households. High oil prices between

2000 and 2007 increased Russians’ prosperity eight-fold, but then growth slowed down and then began declining.

This is a complicated issue with various factors specific to the Russian economy that might not have been taken into full account, however we know first hand from missionary pastors and church families that making ends meet in today’s Russia can be very difficult. This makes SGA-sponsored Compassion Ministry and other humanitarian aid outreaches all the more important as we help evangelical churches reach needy families with food and, as always, the life-changing Gospel. Please keep praying for God’s ongoing provision.

How You Can Help

**Subscribe to
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website
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With a new anti-missionary law in Russia and increasing pressure on evangelical churches across the CIS, these are days of renewed challenge for the faithful, hardworking missionary pastors we serve through your faithful support. Compassion Ministry is just one of many ways Bible-preaching churches are helping to meet very deep needs. The most important need they have is hearing the Gospel and a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus. Your generous support and prayers help provide Bible training, Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, children’s ministries, missionary pastor support, and much more. Please pray about how you can help today!



Innercircle Perspective

Once God has spoken; Twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God. and lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord, for You recompense a man according to his work (Psalm 62:11-12).

King David wrote these words when his life was in grave danger. He tells how he could trust God to get him through major threats. David says that he trusts God because He is all-powerful, all-loving, and always fair.

Thank you for praying for the recovery of Angelina Korotky, the daughter of SGA's director of Bible training for Israel, Dr. Oleg Korotky. At the scene of the December accident, she had multiple critical injuries, no pulse, and was not breathing. But **Much Prayer Much Power!** Our Heavenly Father has gloriously answered the vast army of prayers. During the recent Shepherds Conference, she was able to walk to the choir loft and sing with The Master's Chorale. She is planning to resume her studies at The Master's University in August. Thanks for praying for Angelina.

Dr. Doug Petrovich is a former SGA missionary to Russia, and as academic dean, established the outstanding Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary in Siberia. While completing his Ph.D. at the University of Toronto, his archeological research in Egypt led to his conclusion—and demonstration—that the Hebrew

alphabet letters evolved from Egyptian hieroglyphics. His research also confirms the dating of the Exodus and the return of the Jewish people to their land. You may find *The World's Oldest Alphabet* at Amazon.com.



Dr. Robert W. Provost
SGA President

The Little Pearl Children's Diagnostic Camp in Belarus has served countless children with radiation-induced illnesses from the Chernobyl disaster, and many have received Christ as their Savior. This vital ministry is critically needed, but they have lost their main source of funding. Please put this on your prayer list and share the need with your church missions committee.

The churches in Far East Russia are starting to develop *Orphans Reborn* ministries in 12 of the 334 unreached orphanages and 9 faithful men have been set apart to serve as missionary pastors. Please join us in prayer for these needs.

Thank you again, for your prayers and your support. You are deeply appreciated. Your support sustains our ministries and your prayers empower all that we do and may it all bring for glory to Christ.



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Slavic Gospel Association
6151 Commonwealth Drive
Loves Park, IL 61111
www.sga.org
E-mail: insight@sga.org
Phone: 815-282-8900
Fax: 815-282-8901

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