



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

*Thank you for helping introduce
kids to Jesus at Summer Camp!*

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Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit . . . (MATTHEW 28:19)

Non-Stop Rain Can't Stop the Gospel!

From Vyacheslav Khvostov
SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Russia.

As part of my ongoing church-planting ministry, I do a lot of ministry with teenagers organizing summer camps and clubs. Sometimes brothers and sisters in the church think they need a special call to work with teenagers and youth, but it's really not true. Forests, tents, songs by the campfire, and other outdoor activities are not my natural element. But I do it because Gospel work with the young is our duty. Who, if not I?

The Taganai Mountains where we hold our camps are a wet place. It rains frequently. Without fail, it always rains at the beginning of our camp sessions. **I am always tempted to cancel the sessions but then I get amazed at the enthusiasm of the children.** They are always ready to go! So I have to humble myself and lead them to the mountains. But one particular summer camp session that I led taught me to be thankful that we went despite the pouring rain.

For this camp, I took seven teenage boys to the mountains, and it rained all day long as usual. We walked on into the rain and got soaking wet. We walked three miles along dirty, muddy roads hoping and praying that the rain would stop so we could



climb the mountains. But it continued to rain. **It was so damp that we could hardly start the campfire to prepare dinner. When it became dark, I told the boys that I could take them back to town if they wanted, but they begged me to wait until morning.** They seemed to really need to be in such extreme conditions, which they lack in their normal lives.

When we got up the next morning, it was still raining. But the boys were still very much determined to stay in the forest. All of our things got wet. But I put a glad face and assured them that I liked hiking, and was ready to stay there for the third day as well. We never did get to the mountain climb. Our amusement consisted of jumping over the campfire, which was very weak with such wet wood and put out little heat. It was honestly the most miserable hiking trip I have ever been on!

On that third day, we collected all our things, packed up the tents and headed back home—in the rain. And as we went, my sadness turned into joy—because I saw seven happy teenagers thankful that they went and could have cared less about being so physically uncomfortable. **All of these boys who were on this trip . . . who stayed three days in the wet forest . . . repented of their sins and were baptized. Four of them went on to become ministers in the church!**

Editor's Note: This report is a wonderful example of why your support of SGA-sponsored summer camps is so important. You are truly making an eternal difference in many young lives—half a world away! ♦

Camp Director Overjoyed: “God is Working in These Kids!”

Their favorite part of camp is Bible studies

For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

Russia's Yakutsk region is a land of extremes. Located in the Far East, the republic of Yakutia-Sakha is the world's coldest place in winter with temperatures plunging to -50F or below. And yet

summers are hot and humid with swarms of mosquitoes! It's not a place where you'd expect to find a vibrant children's camp ministry. Yet the local evangelical churches in Yakutsk are undaunted, and the generous support of SGA partners is helping them introduce many young boys and girls to Christ! *(continued)*





Last summer, a children's ministry team led by Oksana Sivtseva held camp activities in several outlying villages including Mokhsogollokh near the city of Yakutsk. She wrote to tell us that the camp season is eagerly anticipated by both children and adults:

*The local residents know about our church and many of them allow their children to come to the camp—even encouraging it! During the camp session, the children wanted to know more about God, and memorizing Bible verses very well. We had the usual games and camp activities, **but when we asked the children about their favorite part of camp, many of them answered, “Most of all the Bible studies!”** God is at work in these kids! **Instead of liking the food or games, they liked God’s Word instead!***

In another village, Oksana said that some local authorities put up obstacles, but the activities went ahead anyway:

*We had received permission from the local administration to hold our camp activities at the central clubhouse in the village. After we had been meeting for three days, the deputy principal of the school came to watch the program and to check our documents. Then he just left! **The next day, we arrived to find the clubhouse closed and we couldn’t find anyone with the keys.** We stood there in the street and the children waited so patiently while we tried to find someone. But then a sister in Christ named*

*Please pray in advance
for the Lord to open
the hearts of the children
to the Gospel . . .*

*Margarita—the only believer in this village—invited us to come to her brother’s house and hold the activities for the children. **So the enemy was overcome and we succeeded in holding the evangelism program for the children.** At the end, the kids didn’t want to leave and stayed playing for some time. We want to continue our ministry there, so please pray for us!*

In Belarus, Pastor Nikolai oversaw several summer camp sessions in the Minsk region. **Some 93 percent of the children were from unbelieving families**—most of them large, low-income and needy. After the camp sessions, he had parents testify that the

children had changed for the better. One young mother wrote to offer her thanks . . .

I am a mother of six children and we

*lack money for food. My two children were in the camp, and they have changed after learning about God. Sveta received the book A Faith to Grow On, and Maxim received The Bible Explorer. **My children have begun to help me around the house, they’ve begun to pray and ask me to go to church with them.** I could not say no, and we made a commitment to attend. Thank you for helping my children go to camp!*

Summer camp season will soon begin again in June. Please pray in advance for the Lord to open the hearts of the children to the Gospel, as well as for the resources needed to send as many kids to camp as we can. ♦





These Kids Send You Their Thanks . . .

My parents don't believe in God. When I came to the camp it was all new for me and interesting. The other children stood up for prayer and at first, I didn't want to but I did out of respect. I was afraid because I didn't know what my friends would think of me. But at the end of the camp, my friend Vasya and I prayed a prayer of repentance. During camp I thought about my life, and I am happy that I found the Lord Jesus!

—Nikolai (Age 12)

I have never had such a wonderful rest! I had never heard about God before. I will do what I can to be more obedient to my parents at home and will attend Sunday school. I wish the camp could continue longer!

—Kirill (Age 12)

This was the best camp! I liked the games, the Bible lessons, the food, and songs. But most of all I am happy that I repented after talking with the pastor. I am very thankful that he prayed with me. Now I am on God's side and want to be with Him!

—Ivanka (teen girl)



Ivanka at camp.

CIS IN THE NEWS

ISIS Extremists Trouble the Caucasus

A recent Deutsche Welle report highlighted the serious concerns that exist in Russia's Caucasus region over recruiting by the radical Islamic militant group ISIS. While Russia is not the only nation in Europe and Asia with these concerns, a significant number of young people have reportedly left the Chechnya region to join the terrorists. **Official numbers say up to 800 adult Chechens are fighting for ISIS, but the real total may be much higher.** A spokeswoman for the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies in Moscow said several factors help push young men into the group—high unemployment, social dissatisfaction, and unfulfilled hopes.



This troubling report **underscores the importance of SGA's support of Russian evangelical churches in this difficult region** where so much blood has been spilled. The faithful missionary pastors we serve discreetly minister to young men and women, sharing the true and abundant hope of the Gospel, and not the false hope of a false religion. Please remember to pray for their safety, asking God to draw many to Himself in saving faith. ♦

SUMMER CAMP 2018: HOW YOU CAN HELP

Summer camp season begins in just two short months across the lands of the former USSR. How can you help?

- 1) **Pray for our goal of 30,000 campers.**
- 2) **Pray for a good experience for these often hurting kids.** Thousands of needy children will get to experience loving Christian fellowship, the usual fun camp activities, and making new friends.
- 3) **Pray for salvations!** Most important of all, they will have the opportunity to hear of the Lord Jesus, of His great love for them, and that He gave His life for their eternal salvation. Please begin praying now, knowing that thousands of kids will be hearing the Gospel for the very first time.
- 4) **Pray for spiritual growth.** Those already saved need to grow. This can be a critical time. One director said 8 days of camp can equal the impact of 2 years of weekly discipleship.
- 5) **Give as God leads you.** Every \$41 provides the funds to send a child to camp. Thank you for your generous support that makes this possible, as well as all SGA-sponsored ministries—Bible training, missionary pastors, provision of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, humanitarian aid, and much more. You are making an eternal difference for the Kingdom!

**2018
SUMMER CAMP
CAMPAIGN**
Goal: 30,000 Children

Insight FROM MICHAEL

GOD'S TIMING . . . AND OUR ROLE

I'm always amazed and humbled to see God weave together all our SGA programs! There is the the year-round *Orphans Reborn* ministry. And *Immanuel's Child* at Christmas. Added to those, summer camp ministry is a vital way for SGA's faithful partners to help to make an eternal difference for thousands of children across Russia and her neighboring countries. These three outreaches alone reinforce each other, and lives are radically transformed!

But here's something else that is such an obvious work of the Lord: *TIMING*. The atheistic communist government and other organizations sponsored Pioneer Camps for children, but when the Soviet Union ended in 1991, most of the camps ceased. And God had biblical Christianity ready to step in!

Evangelical churches—the churches SGA serves—stepped in to host camps for young children and teenagers with an emphasis on the Gospel rather than communist ideology. Since then, the work has been incredible. What a joy—what a privilege—to help raise support for these church-run camp activities. Only eternity will reveal how many boys and girls received Christ as their Savior as a result of their time in camp—not only hearing the Gospel but also seeing the love of Jesus lived out before them.

Summer camp season runs from June 1 to the end of August. **Please pray for an abundance of resources to reach our goal of sending 30,000 children to camp.** Thank you for all that you do to help make this ministry possible!



Michael Johnson
President



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