



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

# Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

*You Help Train and Send Yet ANOTHER Wave of Leaders to Reach Waiting Souls! Read more . . .*

## INSIDE: REASONS TO REJOICE

- ◆ Irpen Seminary graduation—Michael and Bob attend the celebration!
- ◆ You Provide the 'Easter Story' of Jesus to Orphans . . . Even After Easter.
- ◆ Kids Who Need Jesus—*Right Now.*

*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)*



# GREAT NEWS: Resurrection Hope Penetrates the Hearts of Orphan Children!

Sergei Kalinin

SGA-Sponsored *Orphans Reborn* Ministry in Volgodonsk, Russia

Late spring is a busy time at orphanages in our region. Throughout April, children are preparing to celebrate May holidays with songs, parade marches, and other activities. **We had not yet been to all the orphanages with our Easter program, so we simply decided to continue with it!** All the trips were long distance and took between 14 and 16 hours. Altogether 1,016 children were visited—725 orphans and 126 children from unbelieving families—along with 248 adults. Of that number, 161 were unbelievers.

We visited the children's home in the city of Donetsk for the first time. The staff greeted us warmly and invited us to come again. One of the instructors approached us afterward and appeared concerned that we were "sectarian," **but we convinced her that the Gospel truths we were**



Orphans throughout Russian-speaking countries learn the eternal truth of the resurrection of Christ.

presenting to the children were important and central. She thanked us and invited us to return.

In Kamensk, the assistant director told us of her surprise when the children did not want to attend a "puppet show," but **after our program the boys and girls left the assembly with bright and shining eyes after hearing eternal truths.** We then went to Kochetovsk, where the orphanage administration asked us to contract with them to work together as they had seen our ministry over the past several years. We rejoiced at this! This particular children's home had a lot of graduates and several will go to Semikarakorsk to study. We took one Sunday and traveled to the church there to try and organize ministry for the graduates so we do not lose contact with them. Please pray that God will open this door!

One sorrowful part of our journeys was the stop we made at an oncology hospital in Rostov. **The children here were ill with blood cancers, and it is painful to look at them and their parents, knowing their children might not survive. They need the hope of the Gospel like never before.** We made a previous visit earlier in the month, and one of our sisters from Bataisk works there, and ministers to the children and their families regularly.

Finally, we have **organized a prayer chain at both of the Baptist churches** in our city. Every month, this prayer chain meets to pray for our *Orphans Reborn* ministry and for the children. It is wonderful to be able to share our needs and the needs of the children, and then we intercede in prayer together. We praise God for these opportunities to labor for Him, and we are thankful to you for your participation in our ministry! ♦

# Your Prayers and Support Send Graduates to Gather a Waiting Harvest

By Michael Johnson  
SGA President

This past May, I had the privilege of again visiting the SGA-sponsored Irpen Biblical Seminary to participate in their graduation ceremony. It was a meaningful day for not only me, but also for our president emeritus Bob Provost, who accompanied me to Ukraine for the celebration, and who had been involved with Irpen since its inception. **It was a special day because it once again demonstrated the result of your prayers and faithful support through SGA.** These graduates will now go forth to gather **the waiting harvest of souls** that God has raised up, and to make eternal differences in many lives.

(continued)



## SGA Sponsored Seminaries By the Numbers . . .

### Irpen Seminary

101- Number of graduates from fall '17-spring '18

1871- Number of graduates since the inception of the school

95%- % of graduates still in ministry

### Odessa Seminary

148- Number of graduates from fall '17-spring '18

1663- Number of graduates since the inception of the school

85%- % of graduates still in ministry

### Minsk Seminary

30- Number of graduates from fall '17-spring '18

1519- Number of graduates since the inception of the school

85%- % of graduates still in ministry

### Novosibirsk Seminary

10- Number of graduates from fall '17-spring '18

486- Number of graduates since the inception of the school

93%- % of graduates still in ministry

### Almaty Bible Institute

64- Number of graduates from fall '17-spring '18

793- Number of graduates since the inception of the school

95%- % of graduates still in ministry

### Central Asia Bible Institute

0- Number of graduates from fall '17-spring '18

53- Number of graduates since the inception of the school

93%- % of graduates still in ministry



## Your Prayers and Support Send Graduates to Gather a Waiting Harvest *continued...*

As I watched the students accepting their diplomas and listened to the joyful messages from the speakers, I remembered a similar visit to Irpen that I had made 14 years ago. **It struck me that the students I observed back then were now in place as**

**church leaders!**

They had used the tools given them in their studies to evangelize, and to grow churches in the places where God had sent them.

**Your prayers and generous support had yielded eternal fruit!**

And that made this day all the more memorable and moving.

Being founded

back in the early 1990s, Irpen Biblical Seminary is a young school compared to other evangelical seminaries around the world. **But the impact this school is having for the sake of the Gospel goes beyond its years. I am thankful that more than 90% of graduates enter full or part-time ministry all across the former Soviet Union and beyond. They are planting new churches and sharing the**

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***“I trust that you are encouraged by this progress—and will continue to pray and faithful partner in the days ahead.”***

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**Gospel through evangelistic events or one-on-one ministry.**

They are serving as Christian Education workers and worship leaders. They are serving as Bible teachers and youth pastors. **And considering it all together, it reminds me that this is why SGA exists—to serve the faithful evangelical churches that Christ is building across Ukraine, Russia, Belarus,**

Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and even in Israel. And there is yet another reality to ponder.

As men, women, and children are won to Christ in previously unreached regions, and new churches are established to disciple them, **these congregations will not grow apart from having enough biblically trained young pastors** to preach the Gospel and effectively teach biblical truth. Considering that the vast majority of cities, towns, and villages across the former Soviet Union do not have a Bible-preaching church or permanent Christian witness, we have much work remaining to do. I trust that you are encouraged by this progress—and will continue to pray and faithful partner in the days ahead. **Thank you for all that you do for the glory of Christ! ♦**



## God Changed My Friend . . . and Then Me!

My name is Akbar and I am a student at the **SGA-sponsored Almaty Bible Institute in Kazakhstan.** I am studying Christian Leadership and expect to graduate in 2019.

In 2009, I was in jail. Again. Waiting for the day of my release. A friend of mine came to see me in prison. I had known him since childhood—we lived near each other and went to school together. **But I noticed that he had changed from the way he was before.** He had become a Christian and told me about Christ.

After my release from jail, I lived for a time in my friend's house, and I noticed that his life matched the way he spoke. He and his wife showed me hospitality, even though his wife had not met me before or knew who I was. I began to read the Word of God. One day in a small church in Ukraine, I called on the name of the Lord. After becoming a believer, I felt that the Lord wanted me to return to my native Tajikistan. Since then, I have been living in Dushanbe, for which I praise God!

At the beginning of my walk, my friend Sergei helped me in my spiritual growth. I am learning from Pastor Rashid as well. **I was just admitted into the pastoral track at Almaty Bible Institute and will begin study this fall!** I want to receive biblical knowledge, so I can be a better evangelist in this world. I especially hope that I can share my knowledge with the small group that I lead, in addition to ministry with people in the rehab center.

Please pray for me!

*Akbar*



# God Himself Sent You to Me!

Not long ago, we received a wonderful report from **Dr. Levan, an SGA-sponsored missionary pastor and practicing medical doctor in the former Soviet country of Georgia.** In just a few short sentences, he vividly illustrates how your prayers and faithful support are not only helping the forgotten, but also opening doors for powerful Gospel ministry . . .



family from Abkhazia—a mother with two children. The other was a neighbor woman with four grandchildren and a daughter-in-law whose paycheck has been held up for two months. She had no water and no way to cook food as the gas had been turned off as well. We prepared four food packages containing things like flour, cooking oil, sugar, and beans, then headed out to distribute the packages.

When we arrived at the home of the latter family with the food, the woman wept and said “God Himself sent you to me!” She only had her last crust of bread left and nothing else. She was in a panic and didn’t know what else to do. The money you have allotted to assist these families and to support the ministry in our region has been a tremendous help.

Help rendered just in time, and in the glorious name of our Lord Jesus Christ! **Outreaches such as this help open doors for sharing the Gospel as God’s love is demonstrated in a tangible way. And you—our faithful partners—helped make it possible.** We can never thank you enough! ♦



Poverty throughout the country of Georgia has forced patients to wait for critical medical attention.

*Help rendered just in time, and in the glorious name of our Lord Jesus Christ!*

We help needy individuals and families with all sorts of assistance. So many are unable to purchase medicines, pay the electric bill, or to afford even basic food items. Poverty has more than doubled in Georgia according to the UN, and I encounter it personally more and more frequently.

Two families in particular had their power turned off for failure to pay. One family was a refugee

## CIS IN THE NEWS

### Chernobyl Radiation Still Contaminates Milk in Ukraine

A recent article in Environment International is raising concerns over milk contaminated by residual radiation from the Chernobyl nuclear accident in Ukraine. The report claims that milk from Ukrainian villages 150 miles away from Chernobyl is five times more radioactive than the government judges to be safe. The report adds that unless officials properly intervene, the radioactivity levels will not reach the safe



Soviet authorities resettled more than 350,000 people after the accident but many more still live in contaminated areas.

limit until at least 2040. In another Chernobyl-related incident, a forest fire in June raged for several days in the restricted zone around the nuclear plant. However, authorities said there was no radiation increase detected in the air around the plant or in Kiev.

This situation once again shows how the Chernobyl tragedy continues to devastate lives more than 30 years after the accident. Please intercede for the evangelical churches in Ukraine and Belarus who minister in these regions. Pray also for the SGA-supported Little Pear Children’s Diagnostic Camp in the town of Kobrin as they support children affected by the residual radiation. ♦

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

You may not be able to travel to the lands of the former USSR, but every gift to SGA sends your godly influence there. And every dollar has a ripple effect because of the unique way SGA helps build God’s Kingdom in these often-hurting populations.

For example, think of Irpen Biblical Seminary in the Ukraine. Leaders trained at Irpen influence hundreds of lives directly . . . and those lives touch yet others . . . and on and on your influence spreads. One life, families, and whole communities are reached and transformed by Christ because of your sacrificial giving.

Irpen is just one instance. *Orphans Reborn*, Bible Camps, *Immanuel’s Child*, and strong churches themselves are part of an interwoven network of God’s love and grace that is growing in the former USSR. God is at work. And He’s working through you! Please pray about making your next gift today to be an even greater part of the story.



God is at work, using your support to train Christian leaders at Irpen and the other SGA programs.

# Insight FROM MICHAEL

**A story that will “bring joy”  
to you and all believers!**

This past January, Slavic Gospel Association observed its 84th year of ministry—a tremendous milestone of thankful, fruitful service to Christ and for the sake of the Gospel. **If you were a filmmaker and tried to put together a montage of monumental events and scenes in our mission’s history, where would you begin?**

There were the difficult days of the Great Depression in the 1930s, where God declared His power and provided for the needs of the ministry as it got off the ground. Continue on into the 1940s, when SGA began broadcasting Gospel radio programs in the Russian language into the Soviet Union—a **nation held captive in the grip of atheistic communism**. Imagine the whirlwind days of 1989-1991, when the Berlin Wall came down and the communists’ rule came to an end across the entire Eastern Bloc. Then, reflect on the years since then, when your prayers and generous support have helped the faithful evangelical churches to proclaim the Gospel to their people like never before. **It really is quite a story of God’s grace!** And in all of this, from 1934 until now, the intent of our mission has never changed . . . *Sharing the Gospel, Equipping the Church, and Helping the Forgotten.*

In the book of Acts, the story is told of how Barnabas and the Apostle Paul traveled along on their way to Jerusalem . . . *Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Pheonicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them* (Acts 15:3-4).

I am so thankful to the Lord for what He has done through our partnership, and for the opportunity to report back to you what God has done. **The stories contained in this Good News Report (indeed, in every issue) are only a tiny fraction of the testimonies that could be shared.** Yet we are blessed to be able to share it. Thank you again, and please do keep praying. There is much work yet to do!



Michael Johnson  
President



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