



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

**In War Zones ...
In Cities ...
In Remote
Villages ...**

**You Are Advancing
the Gospel and
Helping Save Souls!**



**INSIDE: YOUR
PRAYERS AND
GIFTS AT WORK**

- ♦ Pastor's Widow Bringing People to Christ!
- ♦ Compassion in a Dangerous Place
- ♦ Political Shock Casts Shadows

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)

Your Gifts Help Church Reach Hurting Ukrainian Refugee Families

Report from an SGA-sponsored pastor near the war zone

Gennady Savenkov, SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Zaporozhye, Ukraine

Three years ago, refugees from the Donetsk region in the eastern Ukraine conflict zone began to come to our town in large numbers. Our church held various activities for the refugees, and through them we met **a mother and her two children**, who were named Nikita and Vanya. Nikita went to a class with our son Slavik, and they also went to soccer together.

Recently, we were holding an activity at the local children's shelter for children who have been removed from their homes, and I was surprised to see Nikita there! My wife Alyona and I approached him, and when he saw us, he began to cry. **Alyona held him and they wept together. No words were necessary.** Social services told us that the mother had been drinking a long time. The man she had lived with returned from prison, and they began drinking together, leaving the children alone for several days. A neighbor saw their plight and took Nikita to the shelter, but Vanya was taken to their grandmother. Our family was not able to take Nikita in at that point because we didn't have the necessary documentation.

Not long ago, the mother, named Julia, reappeared and came to ask us for help. She was in poverty and was sleeping somewhere in a basement. **We spent the evening talking with her, and she repented!** The church worked to find her a small house with furniture, tableware, and other needed items. But regaining custody of her children was a different matter and would take time. To complicate matters even further, the orphanage housing Nikita was going to have to send him elsewhere because they were over capacity. **Julia tearfully begged us to take him as she had to put her life in order.** So we wrote a request to the orphanage to bring Nikita



Gennady, Alyona, and their happy blended family.

home with us. Julia visits him and sometimes takes him for a walk in the city. Please pray for her in these early stages of her spiritual growth.

Please pray for our church and the ability to expand so we can manage all of the opportunities the Lord gives us. Because our church building started as an ordinary house and then developed to hold so many ministries, **we lack offices, a place to eat (fellowship room), utility room for summer camp equipment storage, a place to store humanitarian aid, and a kitchen.** We need a nursery because we have a sharp increase in the number of newborns. Pray for God's provision and wisdom to make the right decisions. Thank you so much for everything that you do for us. May the Lord reward you a hundredfold!

Editor's Note: Gennady and Alyona have five children of their own and have adopted seven. In addition, they have taken in a needy family from a neighboring town—a mother with two children. All in all, this blended family is comprised of 17 people: 14 kids and three adults. We praise the Lord for Gennady and Alyona's loving, giving witness. ♦

Thank You for Supporting SGA's Compassion Ministry!

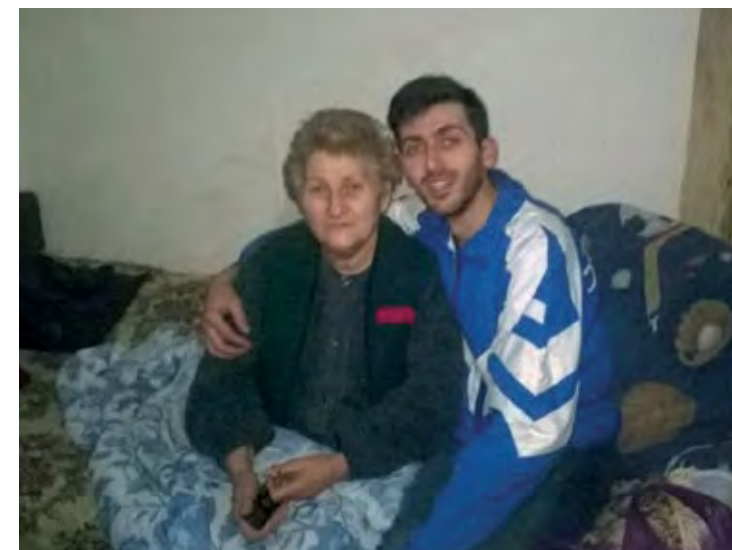
Eric Mock
SGA Vice President of Ministry Operations

SGA-sponsored Compassion Ministry is near and dear to my heart. With your help, this aspect of our mission's many ministries has a powerful impact as the churches we serve across Russia and her neighboring countries reach the forgotten with the Gospel.

One example came to us recently from the former Soviet country of Georgia in the Caucasus region. **Pastor Tsiskara visits many families who are living in poverty, giving them food packages and talking with them about the Lord.** Several have even visited Tsiskara's church and are interested in hearing more about God's Word.

Not long ago, he visited a family of seven—parents, grandparents, and three children.

No one in the family is currently working at a job as the father had a stroke. **He is now paralyzed and bedridden.** When Tsiskara and fellow church members visited and prayed with the family, the father prayed along with them and wept when it was concluded. **Tsiskara is thankful for the support you provide and asks that you continue to pray for him as he reaches out with Christ's love.**



Pastor Tsiskara comforts Natela Margieva and talks to her about the Lord.

More Compassion: Taking Christ to the War Zone

Another moving report came to us from church teams in Ukraine who are taking the love of the Lord Jesus into the conflict zones in the east. We will withhold names for security reasons, but the reporting pastor tells us that your support is making a tremendous difference:

*In the past month, we were able to provide **food assistance** to several locations where people have suffered the most from the hostilities. **Many have lost their homes** due to the shelling, and some have even had loved ones killed. The local authorities say more than **140 houses are beyond repair**, with 600 that are repairable.*

*Those who could leave moved to other cities, but most of the non-displaced population are elderly, people with disabilities, or those who have no family elsewhere. **They are open to the Gospel and interested in Christian literature.***

*Unemployment and long distances from larger towns make the needs for basic food and necessities the most pressing. **One special elderly lady is so thankful for the Word and a fresh loaf of bread that she comes every Saturday to a former community center that is now a new church.** The young will also bear consequences of the armed conflict, but we hope and pray that little girls like Lera will forget the sound of exploding shells, and will instead remember their first steps in following Jesus. On Saturdays, Lera recites Christian poems that she learned by heart to one of the village congregations. We are thankful for your continued prayers and for your financial support of Compassion Ministry! ♦*

Pastor's Widow Brings Many Young People to Christ!

God uses SGA supporters to help sustain and grow amazing ministry.

In 2013, SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Leonid Bulbotka became seriously ill, and was told by his doctors that he would not live long. Yet he faithfully carried on as long as he could, until he went to be with the Lord in 2015.



In the years since Leonid's homegoing, his wife Irina has faithfully carried on with children's ministry in **Russia's Tver region**, also **opening her home to people who face all types of struggles**. She recently sent a wonderful report on how the Lord is using her to touch many lives for Christ . . .

*I love the verse in the book of Joshua that says . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15). I thank God for choosing me to serve people. **There are now 10 people living in my home**—five pensioners with physical*

challenges, three people who now have jobs, a school-aged girl, and me. The Lord unites us all.

We have been remodeling and enlarging the house to accommodate everyone, and the work continues gradually.

***This summer, we had 60 persons participate in a Christian camp.** Adults and children from the Sunday school and from needy families were involved. We organized a canteen on the ground floor of my new home. We cleared a place by the house and covered it with sand. Now we have a place for volleyball and the young people can come together for fellowship.*



The children at the camp played on the sand field.

We built a campfire pit in the yard. We sat around it and sang songs. When the seven-day camp ended, the young people continued to come together by the campfire to study the Bible. We sang songs, played guitar, and discussed different topics. I cooked dinner for them in the camp canteen. We continued these activities for two months until the weather became too cold. Now the young people come together in my house for fellowship every Wednesday and Friday.



Everyone enjoyed singing by the campfire.

“When the seven-day camp ended, the young people continued to come together . . . to study the Bible.”

Christian “family” grows as Christ changes lives . . .

Irina went on to tell the story of a young woman named Aliona who lived in the home for a time. Then a year ago, she decided to leave and began living in a sinful way. **But the Lord convicted Aliona of her sin, and she realized that there was no one by her side to support her and give her good counsel.** At last, she reached a turning point and remembered the large family she had with Irena. Aliona came back, and they both wept and talked for a long time. This time, God blessed her with a new job as a deputy director of a shop. Irena sees many positive changes in Aliona's life, and it is clear to everyone that the Lord is living and working in her heart.

Next, a 62-year-old man came to live with the large group. He had been in a rehab center a year ago, but when he returned home he began to drink again. **Two men who had successfully went through church rehab asked Irina to receive him into the home.** Within two months, she could see changes in his appearance and his soul. He is happy to stay with the large family and helps Irina maintain the house.

Every evening, this large blended family that the Lord assembled unites for fellowship, sings together, reads God's Word, and prays for each other. We praise God that *with your support*, He has given Irina this wonderful ministry, carrying on Leonid's legacy of service for the sake of the Gospel. ♦



Irina has evening fellowship at her home.



Everyone was able to eat together in the canteen.



A beautiful rainbow over the campers' tent.

SGA Celebrates, and Remembers, an Amazing Life

For nearly 25 years, Alex Jaruchik served SGA as the Russian voice of Dr. J. Vernon McGee.



Recently, we received word that former SGA radio missionary Alex Jaruchik unexpectedly went to be with the Lord on March 5 at the age of 72. Alex served with SGA from 1975 through the end of the 1990s, producing the Russian-language version of Dr. J. Vernon McGee's "Through the Bible" radio programs.

Alex Jaruchik was born in Paraguay, and lived most of his life in Spain, Argentina, and Ukraine. He met his wife Isabel in 1973, and eventually they served at SGA's U.S. headquarters where Alex worked as a radio producer. After he left SGA, Alex worked with

Far East Broadcasting Company, where he also produced Russian-language programs. Alex and Isabel relocated to Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2008. **SGA president Michael Johnson reflected on Alex's service with thanksgiving:**

"I remember the thousands of letters we received from people that came to saving faith in Jesus Christ from listening to his programs."

For nearly 25 years, Alex served SGA as the Russian voice of Dr. J. Vernon McGee. I remember the thousands of letters we received from people that came

to saving faith in Jesus Christ from listening to his programs. He can now enjoy sweet fellowship with those whose lives were changed for eternity because of his faithfulness.

Alex is survived by his wife Isabel, three sons—Esdras, Abraham, and Nehemias—and daughter Lara, along with several grandchildren. Also surviving is his father Pedro Jaruchik in Argentina. Please remember Alex's family in this difficult time, while also joining us in thanksgiving for his life and ministry. Only eternity will reveal the numbers of Russian-speaking men, women, and children who came to faith in Christ through Alex's broadcasts. ♦



CIS IN THE NEWS

Kazakh President Announces Surprise Resignation

Kazakhstan's long-time president Nursultan Nazarbaev suddenly announced his resignation in mid-March after nearly 30 years in power. In a televised address to the country, Mr. Nazarbaev said that the speaker of parliament's upper chamber, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, would hold presidential authority for the time being. There had been speculation that Mr. Nazarbaev might step down as president but continue to hold power in another capacity, but no announcement was made to that effect during the address.

President Nazarbaev has been the only leader of independent Kazakhstan since the 1991 Soviet breakup. The country's economy has done reasonably well compared to most other former Soviet republics as the nation is rich in mineral resources, but in recent years there has been decline. Mr. Nazarbaev recently sacked the government on the grounds that economic issues have not been satisfactorily addressed.

Evangelical churches enjoyed a substantial amount of freedom in the initial years after the Soviet collapse, but restrictions and oppression of



The Presidential Palace in Astana.

the churches has increased in recent years. Kazakhstan's population at one time had near parity of ethnic Russians and Kazakhs, but now Kazakhs hold the majority by a significant number. **Islam** has also seen a significant revival since independence and wields considerable influence. It is too soon to tell how this change in leadership will impact the churches, and how much freedom they will have to openly share the Gospel. **Please lift our brothers and sisters in prayer in the days ahead.** ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP



SGA-sponsored missionary pastors and their fellow church workers are **truly the frontline of ministry and evangelism** across Russia and her neighboring countries.

Some labor in **large cities** such as Moscow, Kiev, or Novosibirsk, while others labor for the sake of the Gospel in **small, remote villages**—even in **harsh, forbidding climates** like the Arctic and Siberia.

Your support for all of SGA's ministries such as **Bible training, Compassion Ministry, children's outreaches, and individual support** undergirds all that they do. We are so very thankful for your faithfulness in prayer and giving.

Please pray about what you can do to help today! ♦

Insight FROM MICHAEL

The field is huge. The ground can be hard. But joy keeps these people doing “the impossible.”

If there was one drawback to receiving all the wonderful reports that we do from faithful SGA-sponsored missionary pastors across the CIS, it would be this—we don't have enough room in the Good News Report to share them all! So,

No matter where they are, their commitment to Christ is steadfast and their zeal is keen.

we try to fit in as many as we can, while also keeping you up to date on the other ministries you generously support. This month is no exception.



The regions where they serve and the circumstances in which they serve are so varied. Some are in regions where opposition to evangelical churches is intense, and they have to conduct their ministries very discreetly. Others are in regions where there is more freedom and great openness to the Gospel. No matter where they are, their commitment to Christ is steadfast and their zeal to win the lost is keen. Many of them can identify with the words of the Apostle Paul: *“I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches”* (2 Corinthians 11:27-28).

When they are able to see the fruit of their labors realized and someone comes to faith in Christ, they greatly rejoice and so do we!

This issue of our newsletter contains several reports from our missionary pastors and church workers. I pray that you will be just as blessed and encouraged as I have been to see the fruit of our shared ministry. Please remember them in prayer each day as the Lord brings them to mind. Their challenges are many and the work is not complete. Multitudes in the nations of the former USSR have yet to hear the Gospel. Thank you for your part in helping to send out these faithful workers to God's harvest field!

For our Savior,

Michael Johnson
President



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