



# SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

## READY TO BLESS!

### SGA Partners Mobilizing to Help Churches Reach 40,000 Russian-Speaking Children this Christmas!"

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

- ◆ Orphan Takes Jesus to Others through Immanuel's Child!
- ◆ How God Surprised an American—and a Lonely Orphan.
- ◆ Young Couple Spreads the Gospel in Frozen Far East Russia!



*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)*

# One “Immanuel’s Child” Takes Immanuel to Dozens More!

*How your gifts help an orphan reach other orphans for Christ*

Fall has come, and that means the faithful churches SGA serves across Russia and her neighboring countries begin preparing in earnest for another Christmas season of ministry through *Immanuel’s Child*. So many children in the former USSR have never heard of “Immanuel”—Jesus, who is “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). But since the inception of this vital ministry in 2002, your prayers and generous support have helped reach **tens of thousands** of needy children each year with the Gospel.

Sergei is an SGA-sponsored missionary pastor in Belarus. Last year’s *Immanuel’s Child* ministry was especially memorable for him because of the impact at a local orphanage, where his team presented a play before the gifts you helped provide were distributed. He excitedly described what happened:

*The play we prepared was called “Christmas in a Barn.” We made theatrical scenery and costumes, and we are thankful for gifted people in our church who joyfully helped in this area. Immanuel’s Child is not a one-time event for us, but rather a whole network of meetings with children and adults in church buildings, orphanages, schools, and other institutions.*

*About 40 children from dysfunctional homes*

*were there, and they closely watched the events on the stage. This year’s program was different as we had orphan children who had been adopted by our church members performing. Young Arthur was one of these children, and he played the part of a boy with a Bible. A woman on the orphanage staff approached Arthur and said, “I think I recognize you. You used to be at our orphanage years ago!” And indeed, Arthur had been in the orphanage for more than a year before his adoption. Now, he comes back to the orphanage with a different goal in mind—to share the Good News with the children and their teachers. God does miracles, and is indeed . . . the Father of the fatherless (Psalm 68:5). Thank you for your open hearts and desire to help our children!*

Similar Christmas programs were also held at Sergei’s church, with distribution of gifts along with the Bethlehem stars signed by SGA partners here in America. **This is only one example of the impact you are having through your support of Immanuel’s Child.** This Christmas, we are praying to reach **40,000 children** with the life-changing Gospel. **Thank you for all that you do to help make it possible!** ♦



Sergei with Arthur



Through *Immanuel’s Child*, children, including orphans, come to Christ. They get plugged in to weekly Bible studies and biblically sound churches. Last year SGA helped churches reach over 30,000 children. The goal this year is 40,000!

# A CHRISTMAS STORY: The Orphan Named Michael

*How God worked through Immanuel’s Child, SGA partners, and a faithful church family*

At SGA, we frequently receive powerful testimonies from Russia and her neighboring countries that we love to share with you. While SGA does not facilitate child adoptions, this story is a truly amazing account of a young boy’s salvation through the *Immanuel’s Child* ministry, and how God is using the prayers and support of SGA partners to change many lives for eternity.

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*“I became an orphan in 2005 and ended up in an orphanage, where you have to learn how to survive.”*

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## Michael Sproles' Story:

I was born in 1993 in Ivanovo, Russia. I became an orphan in 2005 and ended up in an orphanage, where you have to learn how to survive. At times, you feel that no one cares for you except you. But on a cold winter day in 2005, I first came into contact with SGA and supporting partners. A group from Merriam Christian Chapel and Wallen Baptist Church in Indiana had come to Russia for the *Immanuel’s Child* ministry.

They came to our orphanage with gifts, and for an orphaned child to see Americans and meet them with the gifts was HUGE! Two of these Americans were a father and his daughter—Mark and Rachel Sproles. We exchanged addresses that day and began writing to each other. In November of 2006, they adopted me and I came to America a couple of weeks later.

**If it wasn't for people who listened to God and gave to SGA, I wouldn't be here today, and I thank you!** When my wife Kaitlyn and I got married, we definitely wanted to donate part of our offerings to Slavic Gospel Association, and the reason was to



Michael with his wife Kaitlyn

help you spread God’s love to Russian kids—the love I received in what seems a long time ago!

## Mark Sproles' Story:

I had not even thought of going on a missions trip to this point. But God’s leading was clear. The first orphanage we went to was where I met Michael. We were sitting in a circle when the children came in, and Michael came right over and started talking to us the best he could. I knew there was something special about this young man, and we hit it off right away.

Later that night when we returned to our hotel, my daughter and I reflected on our day. I looked at her and said, “God sent us here to find our son, your

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*“I looked at her and said, ‘God sent us here to find our son, your brother.’”*

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brother.” She replied, “I knew you were going to say that!” I called my wife Margaret that night and told her, “I’ve found our son!” God worked so fast! There were roadblocks along the way but He removed them. We had to make two more trips, and then go to court for the adoption hearing. That’s when Michael officially became a Sproles. I know that God had all this planned out. Every single step! **He used Immanuel’s Child to change Michael’s life and the lives of so many people along the way.**

He has married a wonderful young lady, Kaitlyn, who he never would have met if not for SGA’s ministries. God has big plans for him and I’m excited to see what’s next! ♦

# Young Couple Brings Jesus to Far-Away Chukotka!

*From Moscow and California, they live in Far East Russia to bring good news to despairing people*

**Yevgeny Zakharchenko and Alexander Dubinin**  
SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastors in Far East Russia



Through your support, believers are bringing Christ's love to those in need throughout the brutal territory.

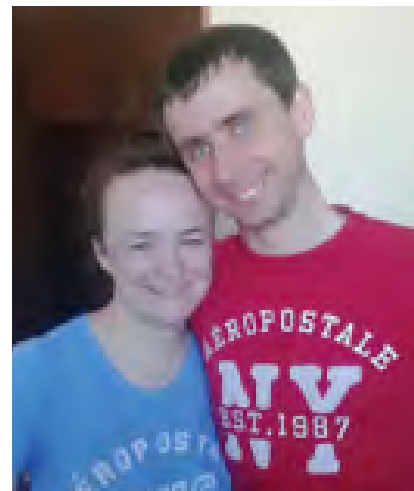
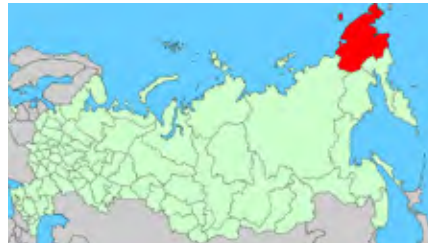
We both recently traveled to the Far East region of Chukotka, located in the extreme northeast right across the Bering Strait from Alaska. Chukotka is the second least populated region in Russia with a population barely over 50,000—and the climate is very harsh. When we arrived in the town of Pevek, we were met by a wonderful family of missionaries named **Pavel and Nadia Rozhkov**. As we listened to their story, we were filled with admiration for their commitment to God and their faithfulness.

While Pavel had moved to Chukotka from Moscow, Nadia came from California in the U.S. She met Pavel during a missionary trip to Chukotka, where they eventually married and committed their

lives to Gospel ministry. They earned respect in their town by adopting two small Chukchi children, and their church—the only one in the region—has gained influence in the town. The town authorities even invite the church to participate in local concerts.

Thus far, the church has ten members, with up to 30 in attendance. Services are held in a three-room apartment and some even have to stand in the corridor. The town itself has about 4,000 residents, made up of Russians and Chukchi. Many are alcoholics, and 20 percent of the population have HIV. Pavel and Nadia make visits to reindeer farms to take the Gospel to the Chukchi. They travel 100-200 miles across tundra by car or by oversnow vehicles. The journey is difficult and dangerous, but the visits have borne fruit. Several have

received the Gospel and have come to know the Lord. The headmen of the villages ask Pavel and Nadia to come because the people are drinking their lives away, and they see the God proclaimed by this missionary couple as the only way out.



Pavel and Nadia Rozhkov

We met a young Chukchi man named Sergei. He grew up out in the tundra and became a believer when he went to a larger town to get an education. He is preparing for baptism and he wants to grow in the faith so he can go back to the tundra and share the Gospel with his people. He thanks God for salvation and freedom!

*"The headmen of the villages ask Pavel and Nadia to come because the people are drinking their lives away, and they see the God proclaimed by this missionary couple as the only way out."*

Pray for Pavel, Nadia, and Sergei as they continue their labors. Pavel has been unanimously chosen by his church as a candidate for pastoral ministry with a probationary year. Thank you for your prayers and support of our ministries here in Russia's Far East! ♦



Pavel and Nadia with their adopted children.

## URGENT: Prayer Requests for Immanuel's Child



Please pray for:

1. **More churches in North America** to participate, enabling Russian evangelical churches to reach even more kids for Christ.
2. **Outreaches in countries where local and national governments oppose the churches and their ministries.** Ask for God's protection and blessing despite the pressure.
3. **That 40,000 children will come to Immanuel's Child programs** across Russia and her neighboring countries. May the Lord open their hearts—and those of their families—to receive the Lord Jesus as their Savior!
4. **An abundance of resources to provide as many Christmas gifts as needed** for distribution in every Immanuel's Child outreach that takes place.
5. **God to be honored and glorified** as the true Christmas story is told, and the life-changing Gospel is proclaimed.

# You are spreading God's love through *Immanuel's Child*



## CIS IN THE NEWS

### Russia's Chief Mufti: "Russia Will Be One-Third Muslim in 15 Years!"

According to a recent article in the Moscow Times, Russia's chief Islamic leader predicts that Russia will be one-third Muslim in 15 years based on current demographic trends. Ravnil Gainutdin, who chairs the Russian Council of Muftis, added that dozens of new mosques will need to be built in the country's largest cities. Russia's Muslim-majority regions, such as the North Caucasus republics and Tatarstan, are known to have the highest birth rates in the country. The remarks were made at a forum hosted by the Russian parliament, and were echoed by Dmitri Smirnov, a priest and official with the Russian Orthodox

Church. Smirnov added that he thought it was "too late" to reverse the trend.

While such a headline is certain to be unsettling to many, **the evangelical churches SGA serves consider this to be a growing mission field in their own neighborhoods.** Several missionary pastors sponsored by our mission have discreet ongoing ministries in the Muslim regions, and **lives are being changed through the proclamation of the Gospel.** While we cannot often share their ministries openly, they are thankful to God for you, and for your faithful support that makes their ministries possible. ♦

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Even as we enter the fall season, the special days of Christmas are already on our minds. Christmas means *Immanuel's Child*, and the tremendous opportunity to help evangelical churches across Russia and her neighboring countries reach thousands of needy children with the Gospel. It's truly one of the most special outreaches of the year, and one where you—our faithful partners—can see the impact of your prayers

and gifts in countless young lives. This year we are praying for 40,000 children to attend *Immanuel's Child* events.

Your support helps accomplish so much . . . providing Bible training, compassionate humanitarian aid, ministry to lonely, forgotten orphan children, provision of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, helping Russian-speaking congregations in Israel, and so much more.

Thank you for all that you do, and for being a vital part of how Christ is building His church in the CIS. ♦



# Insight FROM MICHAEL

## He touched countless souls. Now he rests with them in Christ's presence.

On July 12, we received the news that Ken Hunt, former director and chairman of SGA/New Zealand, had gone to be with the Lord at the age of 95. While we are saddened by the news, we also rejoice that Ken is in the presence of the Savior he loved and served throughout his life. We also praise the Lord for the powerful impact Ken had for the sake of the Gospel.

While I was in New Zealand recently, I had the wonderful opportunity to meet Ken and spend time with this wonderful brother. **SGA founder Peter Deyneka had visited New Zealand back in the early 1970s, and as usual, "Peter Dynamite" inspired local believers to begin organizing what would become our mission's New Zealand office.** In the years that followed, Ken would become a board member, eventually serving as director, and long-time chairman of the board. Current SGA/New Zealand director Rick Hemmingsen was one of several who spoke at Ken's funeral service, and he eloquently summed up Ken's life well lived . . .

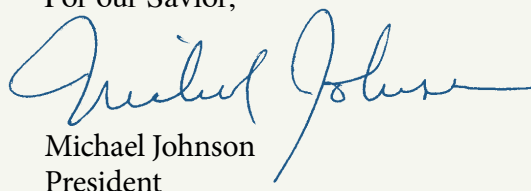
*When my wife Lynda and I came to Auckland in 1987, we met Ken and his wife, Joy. Ken had been an SGA representative as a volunteer for many years. He had arranged the rights for SGA to print the Robert Laidlaw tract, *The Reason Why*. Many thousands were printed in the Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish languages. Much of the contacts and interest generated by Ken and my predecessor as director, David Kimpton, have left an ongoing legacy as the ministry is now involved in 10 Russian-speaking countries. Ken was a true friend and mentor to me, and his faith was truly lived out in the way he served his Lord.*

Bob Provost, SGA's president emeritus, also sent a warm remembrance that Rick was able to read . . .

*I first met Ken in 1995, and the next year Louetta and I experienced the first of several times of wonderful fellowship with Ken and Joy. A finer Christian man, nor a more precious Christian couple, I do not recall ever having encountered. They were delightful to be with and profoundly wonderful representatives of SGA throughout New Zealand and beyond. May Ken's wonderful legacy live on in the advancement of the Gospel!*

The SGA family worldwide sends our love and condolences to Ken's family and the New Zealand staff. We are deeply thankful to God for Ken's lifetime of service, and the legacy he leaves behind for the sake of the Gospel across Russia and the CIS.

For our Savior,



Michael Johnson  
President



Ken Hunt



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HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

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