



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

**AS 2019 ENDS,
GOD IS USING
YOU TO MEND
BROKEN
PEOPLE AND
USE THEM FOR
HIS GLORY!**

Read what's happening . . .

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Far East Russia: *How many churches for 110 villages?*
- ♦ Alexandra: *From prison to freedom in Christ!*
- ♦ WAR ZONE evangelism in Ukraine . . .

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)

She pleaded, “Please Come and Bring the Word!”

A woman in the farthest ends of the earth prays and pleads . . . and God answers! Read how.

Eric Mock
SGA Vice President of Ministry Operations



Anatoly and Rostislav are working together to bring the Gospel to villages in Far East Russia.

Earlier this fall, I had the opportunity to be in **Far East Russia** to visit and encourage missionary pastors in the region through SGA’s *Reach Russia Now* initiative. While there, I heard Pastor Rostislav’s story. **I wish you could have been there!**

He told me about how your gifts and prayers through the SGA-sponsored *Antioch Initiative* have helped reach spiritually barren villages in Far East Russia—many of which have never heard the Gospel or have had only limited exposure.

Rostislav was once a police officer. He retired so that he could be full time in ministry. He was able to take part in the SGA-sponsored *Antioch Initiative training* (intensive Bible, ministry, and discipleship training) for leaders in order to multiply the spread

of sound churches in the vast Russian mission field. Another missionary named **Anatoly** came up to Rostislav during the classes and invited him to bring the Gospel to the villages in his region. Anatoly wanted to serve there himself, but as yet no doors had opened.

Only Five Churches in Over 100 Villages!

They began to pray together about missionary ministry. They both lived in Birobidzhan (Russia’s Jewish Autonomous Region) and had a heart for reaching **unreached villages**. They did research and found 110 villages and two cities. There are **only five churches in their region and no church in more than 100 of those villages**, and no access to the Gospel!

In fact, a woman from one village called and informed the brothers that a church had begun there



A Far East Russian church decorated for Christmas.

briefly 10 years ago, but now they have nothing. She pleaded, “Please come and bring the Word!”



Rostislav and women from a village in his region.

Desperate Conditions Include Hunger for God

The men kept praying for these villages, and this year they began travelling to visit them with your support through SGA. And they’ve found that the conditions are terrible:

- ◆ Kids with old clothes and no shoes.
- ◆ Children who are hungry and neglected with alcoholic parents.
- ◆ A 10-year-old girl named Dasha in one town whose mom was living with her fourth husband.

They started helping Dasha with homework, food and Bible teaching. Through this, the parents

“Then last Sunday, the parents allowed Dasha to take the bus to the city and attend Rostislav’s church.”

finally came to meet them last month. Then last Sunday, the parents allowed Dasha to take the bus



A congregation singing during a church service.

to the city and attend Rostislav’s church. Small steps, but God is at work!

With only six people now gathering together, a foundational group is forming. Very slowly, people are drawn from darkness to the light of hope. **With the help of SGA partners, these men are going to dark, lost villages with the light of the Gospel.** Their goal—110 villages with the light of Christ shining in the darkness. Through your support of these pastors and SGA’s *Reach Russia Now* initiative, you are right there with them! ♦



Rostislav and his family.

Your support helped rescue Alexandra from a Russian prison and the chains of sin



Alexandra Iskalina
Novosibirsk, Russia

I am so thankful for the ladies in the prison ministry team from the church—and for those who helped their ministry through SGA. If that is you, here is how you helped me find eternal freedom:

I was raised by my grandmother and great grandmother. My parents lived apart. When I was in the third grade, both of my grandmothers died within the same year. At first my father took me to live with him, but he had his own different family at the time.

So at age 16, I met a man and was living with him. Soon, narcotics became part of his life. Even the birth of his son did not stop him. When our baby was a year and a half old, I ran away to live with my mother.

I enrolled in school, worked, and met another man. I thought that here at last was the one I had



Alexandra Iskalina (second from left) was reached for Christ through prison ministry teams.

been looking for! We got married and he adopted my son, then I got pregnant and gave birth to another child. We lived well for a time and all of my friends envied us. Eventually I enrolled in another school and opened a small business.

Then narcotics tore my life apart again. My husband began using. He challenged me to try them. I became addicted! My life went downhill completely.

For a while, I wound up in terrible shape at a tuberculosis hospital. My husband ended up in prison. We divorced and I ended up in prison for more than five years.

But years before, some friends began visiting me and telling me how they had been to Christian rehab and how faith in Jesus Christ was powerful! That is when the women from the local church [supported by SGA] began to talk to me in the church. I came to know Jesus in the prison and began reading the Bible. The first days after my

“My life finally gained meaning and a goal.”

release, I began attending the church. My life finally gained meaning and a goal. The Lord used prison to bring me to my true salvation in Him! ♦



Remember to Pray for *Immanuel's Child*!



We are so thankful to the Lord for the faithful churches across North America who help make our *Immanuel's Child* Christmas ministries possible across Russia and her neighboring countries.

As the churches there begin the final preparations for their outreaches, please join us in intercessory prayer for the children and their families. Pray for:

- 1) God's provision enabling us to reach 40,000 children or more this year.
- 2) Many who will come to saving faith as they hear the true story of Christmas and the life-changing Gospel.
- 3) Protection for the outreaches that will be discreetly taking place in regions where opposition to evangelical churches is strong.
- 4) More supporting churches across North America to participate in this fruitful ministry.

Thank you in advance!

WAR ZONE: Providing God's Love to Shattered Children

Yevgeny Taran
SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Kherson, Ukraine



Children's camp in the war zone in eastern Ukraine.

I send you warm greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

In July, we had the opportunity to go into the war zone in eastern Ukraine and hold a camp for local children. These children have been through heavy shelling, living in basements for shelter, and facing hunger. Relatives of some of the children have been either killed or injured. Every family we met has suffered the consequences of the terrible

war. It was hard for us to listen to some of the stories the children and their parents told us. Yet we are happy and thankful that we were able to serve these

"It was hard for us to listen to some of the stories the children and their parents told us."

children while we could. For five days, we played various games, made crafts, had Bible lessons, and treats. In total, we reached about 70-80 children. Please pray that many will trust in Christ as their Savior!

In addition to children's ministry, my wife Lyuda is engaged in women's ministry. She holds meetings in a local café, and the ladies share their stories and make crafts. There are 60 women who attend, and of that number, only 20 are believers. While the women are meeting, I hold a meeting with brothers in another café, where we discuss development of men's ministry in our region. Please pray for much fruit to result!

The Lord has blessed us in building a new House of Prayer. We had 13 brothers perform the work beginning in March when the walls were put up in four days. Then in the summer, they put on the roof, windows and doors in 10 days. In two weeks, they had built us a House of Prayer and donated their time and labor!

I thank you very much for the opportunities you help give me to serve, and to help others while preaching the Gospel. We love you! ♦



Women's meeting at a local cafe.

CIS IN THE NEWS

World Health Organization: Russian Alcohol Consumption Drops Sharply

A report released earlier this year by the World Health Organization claims that alcohol consumption has dropped in Russia by 40 percent since 2003. The UN-affiliated body attributes the decrease to a series of measures brought in under President Vladimir Putin, who doesn't drink liquor and advocates a healthy lifestyle. This trend is a



factor in increased life expectancies in Russia—78 years for women and 68 for men, which is an historic peak.

This is encouraging news given the way that alcohol consumption exploded after the fall of communism and the end of the Soviet Union. Evangelical churches have also played an important part with successful Bible-based drug and alcohol rehabilitation ministries, several of which are supported by SGA partners. Please keep praying with us for more opportunities to share the life-changing Gospel in Russia, and point the way to God's delivering power. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

With the upcoming Christmas season, SGA and the evangelical churches we serve are entering not only the busiest ministry time of the year, but also the most fruitful. Thousands of needy children and their families will be hearing a clear presentation of the Gospel, many for the first time. And these ministries can help open the door for ongoing outreach throughout the year. Your prayers and faithful giving help support all that we do, including provision of Bible and theological training, Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, children's ministries, and much-needed food and other aid as part of Compassion Ministry. We are so thankful to God for all that you do. Please pray about how you can help advance the Gospel across Russia and her neighboring countries today! ♦



Insight FROM MICHAEL

**The prayer list for 2019 is underway . . .
but the prayers for 2020 need to begin
NOW.**

It's "transformation" time again! Each year, during the upcoming season, I love anticipating what God will do in many lives across former Soviet countries. As the Lord allowed me to be a part of developing the *Immanuel's Child* Christmas ministry, I have followed it closely even during the time I was away from SGA for several years working in the business world. The Lord has used this ministry to reach more and more children each year.



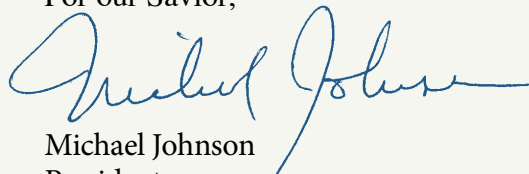
***"As the Lord allowed me to
be a part of developing the
Immanuel's Child
Christmas ministry, I have
followed it closely"***

But I can't help but be a bit concerned as the number of participating churches in North America has **decreased**. While this can no doubt be attributed to several factors, I think the number one factor is that not enough churches are even aware that this great ministry opportunity exists!

And the opportunity *is great*. **The relationships that begin with the children and their families are followed up in the course of the year.** The children are invited to Sunday school and the families to church, and during the summer, many of the kids who participated in an *Immanuel's Child* outreach also attend SGA-sponsored summer camps and other ministry events throughout the year. And what an incomparable blessing it is to be a part of it!

If your church has never participated in *Immanuel's Child*, I pray that you will prayerfully consider it for next year. It truly is one of the most effective times of the year for reaching the lost with the Gospel. Please join me in prayer as Christmas draws near. We are praying for an abundant spiritual harvest.

For our Savior,


Michael Johnson
President



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