



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

**Last Christmas, God Gave a 25% GROWTH in
Immanuel's Child Outreach to the Unchurched.
This Year It Could Be Even More!**

INSIDE:

- ♦ *Immanuel's Child* attendee: "Now I believe in miracles!"
- ♦ How the Lord Used a Brutally Hot Summer to Save Souls Forever
- ♦ Summer Camps EXPLODE with Spiritually Hungry Kids!

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)

“Now I Believe in Miracles!”

Amazingly, God expanded Immanuel’s Child even during the pandemic. Jesus is at work!

Although most SGA-sponsored *Immanuel’s Child* outreaches across the former Soviet Union don’t take place until Christmas season, prayers and preparations begin almost as soon as the previous season’s events have concluded. In late spring and early summer, we begin making calls to churches here in North America who participated the previous year. Late in the summer, we begin sending participation kits and Bethlehem Stars to participating churches, who then take up offerings and sign the Stars. Many other SGA partners also

send gifts to help reach as many children as possible. The Stars are returned with the offerings to SGA to be sent to churches across Russia and her neighboring countries, where gifts are purchased for distribution to children during their *Immanuel’s Child* Christmas programs.

And every year, God works as only He can in countless young hearts, and we get to report the fruit back to you—our faithful partners.

Here are just a few that we received from last Christmas . . .

We had Immanuel’s Child along with Bible school over four days this past January. We had about 40 children every day. We provided the children with breakfast and lunches, and distributed Christmas gifts. The children didn’t want to go home at the end—they were very happy as we were to see their joyful faces. Please pray for all the children who attended, asking the Lord to keep working in their hearts. We will keep contact with them all and build relationships, and our Sunday school teachers are working on future programs with them. May God bless you!

—Pastor Sergei, Belarus



In Voronezh, we had a physically challenged boy named Saveliy, who after receiving a gift and a Star, couldn’t believe for some time that good people from another country would personally sign his Star and send him a gift. He is 12 years old and said to us, “Now I believe in miracles!” In Omsk, the ministry is unique with Oleg having access to prisons and correctional schools, cancer treatment centers, and other institutions. He reports, “After the services, parents and children prayed with us, repented of their sins, and expressed their desire to live a God-pleasing life. In the cancer center, there was a special atmosphere where both parents and children prayed with us, with tears. God touched people’s hearts!

—Southern Russia and Siberia



The children received gifts, Children’s Bibles, and their much cherished Bethlehem Stars from North American supporters.



More than just presents, she leaves with a big smile and the gift of Jesus!



Unable to attend Christmas celebrations because of the pandemic, some children were visited at their homes.



Immanuel’s Child helped bring Jesus and hope to a cancer center in Voronezh.

In Russia’s Nazarovka region, SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Alexander Churilov had **53 children attending his *Immanuel’s Child* outreaches, and 42 of them were from unbelieving families.** Eight children trusted in Christ along with 2 adults, and nine families began coming to church after the outreach! Some had to be done in home visits due to the pandemic. One young boy named Artem wrote to express his thanks . . .

Our last day of school wasn’t a fun day at all as we didn’t have Christmas parties at school like we had before. But when we were told that believers would come to our home for Christmas with a Christmas program, I got very excited. My sister and I were presented with

Children’s Bibles and Christmas stories, Stars from children in North America, and gifts. The pastor presented our parents with New Testaments and a book of Christian poems. Thanks to all the church people who helped us have a very joyful home celebration!

Last year, **25 percent more** unchurched families attended and almost **40,000 total children!** This year, our goal is to reach **50,000 children** with the Gospel and the blessing of a special Christmas gift in Jesus’ name. Please pray with us in advance for a bountiful spiritual harvest through this year’s *Immanuel’s Child!* ♦

SGA-Supported Churches Minister in Severe Drought and Heat

Your prayers and support enable Compassion Ministry to show God's love to families

Summer heat has been especially severe across the former Soviet countries of Central Asia, where disputes over scarce water supplies have been making the news.

In Kazakhstan, the country's meteorological agency says that **severe drought exists in six of the 14 oblasts (states)**. Rice fields and livestock are being impacted, with the government reporting **more than 2,000 animals—mostly horses—have died** for lack of water and food.

We received a report from Albert, an SGA-sponsored missionary pastor, who vividly described the human toll and what the Lord has enabled him to do through your support for Compassion Ministry . . .

Now there is a major crisis because it has rained very little and there is no water. There is no grass in the pastures. Cattle began to die, as there is no place to graze them. Earlier they used to grow a lot of rice in this area, but now they have decreased the planting area by more than 12,000 acres. Because of the water shortage, drinking water is supplied to homes only for one hour in the morning, one hour in the afternoon, and one hour in the evening! Many of the wells have also become dry!

Pastor Albert told us about a young mother named Ryskul with two children. Illness caused her to lose a third child in pregnancy. Ryskul's husband recently worked as an electrician at a high school but due to the crisis, his salary was cut by 25 percent.



In addition to delivering bottled water and groceries, the outreach is an opportunity to bring the Gospel to those in need.

Who reached out to this family? Christians! The local congregation helped them with material and emotional support—and the Gospel. Albert reported:

Brothers in the church informed us of their plight. We used support you provided along with funds we had and bought them some groceries, and that was a huge help for them! We witnessed to her about Jesus when we met her, and then we had a chance to show God's love in practice!

Another SGA-supported worker in Kazakhstan has found that delivering needed aid opens doors for the Gospel. Their pastor wrote:

*I had a thought to visit my neighbor, and this seemed to be direction from the Lord. This neighbor has many connections, and I told her that we had **food gifts** to give to disadvantaged families, large families with many children, and to anyone who would be interested in **Christian literature in the Kazakh language**. She called some of her acquaintances and some came the next day. They thanked me for the food, and I was able to*

tell them that it is Jesus who is worthy of all thanks, as He cares for them and loves them. Thank you for helping to make this possible!

We want to enable each local church to provide up to 60 food packs a month for needy families impacted by the drought. **These packs can contain food, and other items such as water, medicines, and other help.** Please pray with us for God to open hearts for **the Gospel** as these families see His love and experience His gracious provision. ♦

“The Lord Kept Us and Blessed Us in Belgorod!”

SGA Supporters Help A Summer Camp Reach Double the Expected Children



Piotr Makushenko
SGA-Sponsored
Missionary Pastor

The Lord blessed us this summer with a youth camp. We had been concerned whether we would be able to have an agreement with the resort center because of the pandemic, but it worked out with your help.



It takes a large pot to cook for 160 campers!

The Lord kept us and blessed us! The camp was in a quiet, picturesque place by the Seversky-Donets River, protected by trees from the hot sun. **We had planned on 80 people participating**, but the youth begged us to stay in the tents instead. We agreed, and **ended up with 160 people** in the camp, including both youth and families!

We realized that we would have issues providing meals for everyone, but it was a true blessing. We brought two large cooking pots and wood. The cooks prepared meals three times a day for three days. Each day was filled with activities. We had



Campers were treated to activities, fellowship, and given the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

fellowship, training, and rest. We didn't have enough tents for all the visitors, so we asked the regional churches to help us provide the extra tents needed.

In addition to the young people and their families hearing the Gospel and the warm fellowship, the Lord gave us an additional blessing. **After the camp session had ended and almost everyone had left, four officials showed up to investigate and find out why people were there and why they swam.** We told them we had violated nothing and that it was a rest for families. There were some strange people swimming there, but they were not connected with us. Again, the Lord helped us. Despite so many people being there, no one got sick or injured during the camp. It was a special blessing for the young people amid all of the limits of public activities. People were encouraged to worship the Lord with joy.

We thank God for you, for your support, and for your prayers that helped us with this outreach and bringing glory to Christ. Pray for the Gospel seeds that were planted to take root and grow! ♦



The camp was held in a beautiful area by the Seversky-Donets river in Belgorod.

Christ's Love Overcomes Fire and Hardship at Christmas

Renat Murunov
SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Pallasovka, Russia

As we prepare for another Christmas season of ministry, I want to tell you about the fruit of our ministry this past January. The year 2021 began with active Christmas visits to needy families in the Pallasovka region, which is near Volgograd. One family had a serious crisis—they lost their home in a fire. A woman named Anastasia and her four children found themselves out in the street with no housing. With prayer, we along with local people helped them in the aftermath. A day later, we visited them with Christmas greetings and told them about Christ, which they gladly heard. We sang a Christmas song and talked about the birth of Jesus. Pray as we keep working with this family.

We also had the opportunity to visit Helen and her daughter Xenia, who has suffered from cerebral palsy since her childhood. We were not sure if they

would be open to us, but God answered our prayers and opened the door to see them on Christmas Eve.

As Xenia cannot speak or walk, her mother helped us to explain to her the meaning of Christmas and we

gave her a Christmas gift. Xenia wanted to open the gift instantly!

This family needs our prayers, and we indeed prayed with them.

Then it was time for the Christmas ministry at church. Our Sunday school children took an active part in the Christmas drama, and our hearts were filled with the joy of Christ's birth. We

gave gifts to the children, and then the pastors of the church—accompanied by the older church Sunday school children—went to visit a large needy family.

We thank you for your love and prayers for our ministry. **Please pray with us as we continue building a new church, and in advance of this year's Christmas outreach.** ♦

“A day later, we visited them with Christmas greetings and told them about Christ, which they gladly heard . . . Pray as we keep working with this family.”

SGA-Sponsored Compassion Ministry continues to deliver hope and needed resources to those in need.



Sensible Stewardship The First Step to Biblical Estate Planning

By Garland Gould
SGA Vice President of Donor Engagement

Step One: Setting Priorities

I have met couples and individuals that undertook their estate plan at the prompting of a biblically based financial study. While they were diligent and well intentioned, they later made a startling realization; they *never* stopped to pray about their decisions and seek godly counsel. They were simply in the “process”; it was mechanical only. This is a spiritual exercise first, not mechanical.

Our *Five Biblical Principles of Estate Planning* brochure outlines the principles that we lean on to direct us in this decision-making process. The first principle, *God is the Owner of All*, is foundational to all decisions. The second explains the “directional signals” that guide our distribution decisions. Third is advice for helping protect relationships. And the fourth focuses on our duty as stewards. These



principles, along with earnest prayer, are critical to establishing a plan that will help you hear “well done, good and faithful servant.”

In the future, I will be discussing additional principles of biblical estate planning and other helpful information about this vitally important topic. If you would like to receive the *Principles of Estate Planning* brochure, or have any questions, I would be happy to help answer them. Please email to plannedgiving@sga.org. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

It is hard to believe the summer went by so rapidly. Here we are at the threshold of autumn with winter not far behind. And with



With summer coming to a close, it is time to look forward to SGA-sponsored *Immanuel's Child* outreaches.

winter comes the Christmas season and the many SGA-sponsored *Immanuel's Child* outreaches you help make possible through your prayers and generous support. **Pray with us to reach at least 50,000 children with the Gospel this year.**

Your support helps accomplish so much through the evangelical churches we serve—provision of **Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, sponsorship of missionary pastors, Bible training, provision of food, clothing, and other aid for needy families through Compassion Ministry, and much more.** Please pray about how you can help today! ♦

Insight FROM MICHAEL

I'm already excited!

Here in September, I am already excited about Christmas! Because I know that means days of fruitful ministry through the SGA-sponsored *Immanuel's Child* outreach—a ministry with which I have been involved from the very beginning. I don't think I can begin to express how much it means to me and my wife, Erin, to see thousands of needy children blessed by getting an unexpected Christmas gift provided by SGA partners. But most of all, I'm thankful to know that these wonderful boys and girls will hear the life-changing



Gospel—that they have a Savior who loves and cares for each one of them personally, and who gave His life so that they could have an eternal relationship with him.

We typically report on *Immanuel's Child* twice a year. The first time is as soon as possible after the year's outreaches are concluded

We're praying to reach a record 50,000 children with the Gospel and special gifts this year.

so that you can see the fruit of what you helped accomplish. And the second time is what you are seeing in this issue of **Good News Report** for September, seeking your intercessory prayers in advance of this Christmas's ministries. We saw a significant increase in the number of children reached last year despite the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic. And this resulted in tremendous growth in ministry due to relationships that were established with needy families—many of them reached with food aid related to our *Christ Over COVID* outreach.

We're praying to reach a record 50,000 children with the Gospel and special gifts this year. Your prayers and faithful support are a vital part of helping to make that happen. **And the ministry does not end once Christmas is over.** The participating churches make it a top priority to follow up with the children and their families throughout the year as God opens the door. Each year, thousands trust in Christ as their Lord and Savior, and begin coming to worship services. Many of the children reached get involved in Sunday school and other children's ministries. The impact is truly profound and the importance of your support cannot be overstated.

I am so deeply thankful to you and for your faithful support of SGA. Will you join me in praying for yet another fruitful *Immanuel's Child* season? May the Lord grant that we reach more children than ever before with the love of Christ.

For our Savior,

Michael Johnson
President



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