



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN



**OPERATION
WINTER
WARMTH
is Underway
... and Churches
Are Providing the
Message of Life!**

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

- ♦ Faithful pastors reach elderly war victims in Ukraine!
- ♦ Your gifts help form churches in frozen Far East Russia.
- ♦ 3 great truths that never change!

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)

OPERATION WINTER WARMTH: God Uses Your Gifts to Help Elderly People Shattered by War

In Ukraine—and Other Frigid Lands—Christians Reach Out with Warmth



Above and Top: People stand in line to receive aid.

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth (Psalm 121:2).

Each January, SGA partners have generously supported **Operation Winter Warmth**, which helps provide warm clothing, blankets, electric heaters, and other critically-needed aid to needy families across the former Soviet Union. In winter, temperatures in some regions such as **Yakutia** and **Siberia** routinely plunge to double-digits below zero. In **Central Asia**, wind chills penetrate into homes that often have rugs for front doors.

The elderly, impoverished, and widows are especially vulnerable to suffering, illness, and death.

In **Ukraine**, where war has raged for almost one full year, bitter winter cold is even more dangerous because so much infrastructure in the country has been destroyed by bombing—fuel lines, roads, pipes, even walls to keep out the freezing temperatures.



Dima is a missionary pastor in Ukraine who has distributed much-needed aid through the SGA-supported *Operation Winter Warmth* ministry. He recalls the ministry in eastern Ukraine and its impact especially among the elderly . . .

We were blessed in a special way and received much positive feedback from the people. We implemented the ministry in one location, the village of Pervomayskoye. It is a suburb of Donetsk and before the war, its population was 2,200 people. Only 800 people live there now, among them children and a majority of elderly people, with almost all the young people leaving for good.

On the outskirts of the village, there is a checkpoint on the road to the village of Peski, where no access is allowed. It is located along a dead-end road and no one gets there. The mood among the people living there is far from joyful. We identified 210 households from among the most needy, but could have done much more if we had the resources. We arrived in the village, where a crowd of people awaited us. They circled around the van. We delivered a Gospel message and prayed for people. Everyone was very grateful for receiving the warm kits, especially the older generation, as they have spare resources, have to sleep on torn bed sheets, and clothe themselves with old blankets. We delivered food and blankets, and people received it as a gift! Moreover, those who received the kits did

not take them only for themselves, but shared some of the items with others in need, and it was exceptional. All the recipient families were very grateful!

In addition to Ukraine, deep needs such as this exist across many regions of the former Soviet Union such as Central Asia—where countries like mountainous Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are located. **As this winter continues, please lift up the faithful pastors and churches as they minister to the needs of their people and share Christ's love.** Also pray for the increased resources needed due to the demands created by the war in Ukraine. We praise and thank the Lord for each of you—our faithful partners—and for all that you help accomplish for the glory of Christ! ♦



Above and Top: People are grateful to receive winter warmth kits.

God Uses Your Gifts to Help Yield a Fruitful Fall in Russia's Far East!

Read how you are reaching across the world . . .

Grigory A.
SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Far East Russia



Making crafts at the camp.

Greetings, beloved supporters and coworkers of SGA's ministries! This past August with the support of many volunteers, we held a **Bible Camp for children and teenagers**. With great joy we served the children not only from **Khabarovsk**, but from other outlying villages. Altogether, there were 38

children who participated in the camp ministry.

During the week, we studied the prophet Daniel. **The children learned about holiness and God's omniscience, about salvation in Christ and about biblical values, using Daniel and his friends as examples.** The children showed themselves to be very creative in preparation, as well as their participation in worship services. At the end of the camp, three children came to the Lord in a prayer of repentance. When we went home, we continued our fellowship in our church youth meetings at the church on Fridays.

The fall and winter will be very busy. **We have planned an evangelistic trip to a village some 500 miles from Khabarovsk.** We want to **support the small churches there** in these villages, and to help brothers to start a Bible study group. We have been praying for this region for the last several years in order to preach the Gospel. In addition, our youth team plans to visit one village on a Saturday once a month for the purpose of evangelism among young

people, inviting them to the church and telling them about Christ. And beginning this month, I plan to start a new group of preparation of new brothers for ministry in churches, following the program "Fellowship around the Word." **Please pray for this new group of brothers who are preparing for ministry.**



Fellowship at the dedication of the House of Prayer.

One other joy to share that happened late last summer—the dedication of the House of Prayer for the Lord's ministry in Troitskoe (Khabarovsk region). **The brothers prayed for several years about planting new churches like this.** The reconstruction project of the House of Prayer in the village of Troitskoe continued for almost two years, with many brothers and sisters involved in helping from throughout the region. **Praise the Lord that He allowed us to put in practice these plans, and to complete the work of refurbishment to the end!**

Thank you all for your prayerful support and financial participation in spreading the Gospel across Far East Russia! ♦

Your Gifts Help a Former Prisoner Preach The Gospel To Other Prisoners

"everything changed when I started studying God's Word"

Not long ago, SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Alexander in Siberia shared the following wonderful testimony with us from former inmate Vasily. We praise and thank the Lord He is using your prayers and support to reach people with the Gospel even behind prison walls!

Brothers and sisters, I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I recently finished serving my fifth prison sentence in a facility near the Russian city of Novosibirsk. I wanted to give my testimony and share with you what God has done in my life. I just pray that my story will be useful for the newly saved, as well as for those who have not repented before God yet.



Prison Bible study group.

While I was in prison, I attended a Bible study group for about two years and even prayed a prayer of repentance. However, I wasn't truly reconciled to the Lord. I had no spiritual fruit in my life, and even though I attended the group regularly, my life did not change much. However, everything changed when I began studying God's Word anew. After three months went by, I obtained true salvation! Glory be to our Lord Jesus Christ!

I don't know why I continued to put off my repentance before God. The local brothers from the church who were laboring in the prison ministry convinced me that the Bible study course helps new believers to better understand the Scripture—all that God says to us in His Word. The excellent practice of memorizing Bible verses by heart has also

helped and is helping me now. For me, my experience helped me to realize that I had put off my repentance for nothing. I do not regret having had that experience. My only regret is that I did not repent before God sooner.

I myself—as well as everyone around me—began to notice the positive changes the Lord was making with me, and most importantly, inside of me! My prison term expired last December, now I am standing firm on the path the Lord Jesus has shown me! Upon my release from prison, I wanted to join the church and be baptized, and I have begun participating in evangelism. And I also have a dream to do something to start a ministry in my home village of Kolyvan, since there is no Bible-preaching church there. Thank you to everyone who cares for prisoners, and especially imprisoned Christians! I thank you for your prayers and material support because it helps us to feel the presence of God in our lives! Glory be to God for everything!



Vasily sharing the Gospel and distributing New Testaments.

The writer of Hebrews admonishes us to . . . Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them (Hebrews 13:3). The immediate context is for believers who were jailed and under oppression, and it certainly applies to men like Vasily who have come to faith in Christ while behind bars. We are thankful for his changed life, and dedication to reaching the lost with the life-changing Gospel! ♦

SGA-Supported Missionaries Share the Gospel in Samara, Russia

Vyacheslav T.

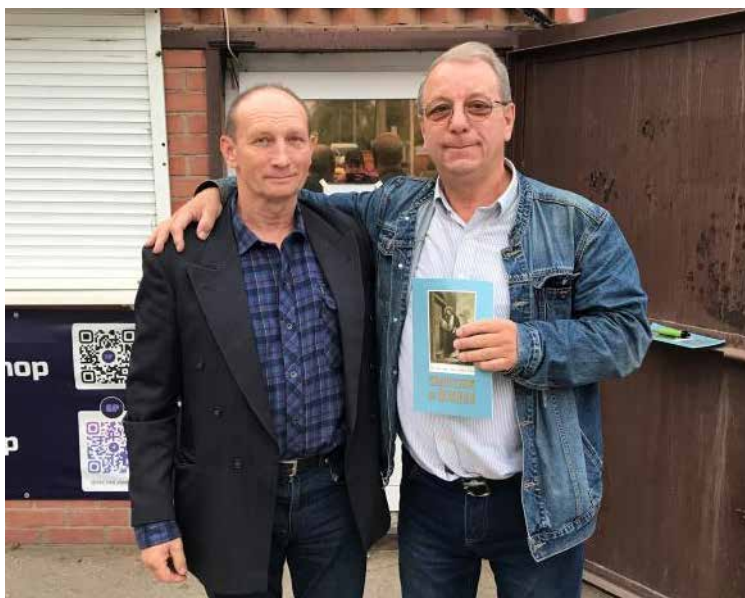
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Russia's Samara Region

Glory be to Jesus Christ for each of you! The shed blood of Christ unites us. When we think about it, our hearts become filled with great joy that our Mighty God saved us through the sacrifice of Jesus, that we be holy and blameless before Him in love. I thank the Lord for you, for your constant prayers for us and for your support in this uneasy time.

We praise God for what He is doing as we reach out to needy, large families with spiritual and material help. Together with our brother Gennady, we visited a farm during harvest time where we picked potatoes and onions together with other people. We worked in the field picking these crops for large families, and some for our own families. Then we went to the vegetable warehouse to buy more potatoes and onions, as well as other necessary food and visited several large families. The people were happy as this food was so needed in their families. As the food prices have gone up, it would be too hard for them to survive without it. That is why assistance from us glorifies Him and

brings such help to the families. Later at Christmas, we also provided gifts for the children and copies of the Scriptures. Please pray for their hearts to be open to the Gospel!

Gennady and I continue to travel each week for outreach in towns, villages, and regional centers. We visited three districts and gave out Christian literature to people of various ethnicities—our prayer is that they will come to know the Lord Jesus through the Word of God. Even Muslims expressed their interest in the Word as we shared that the Lord Jesus is Savior and Judge. We told them that they needed the Gospel to get acquainted with the Savior personally. Praise God that many people accepted the Scriptures readily and with interest, and thanked us for such an important gift! We got to talk to people who came from Kazakhstan to work and reside here. When I told them my wife was from Kazakhstan, they readily began to talk to us, listened to the Gospel, and accepted copies of the Scriptures. We ask you to keep praying for this ministry! ♦



Above: Vyacheslav and Gennady travel throughout the Samara region sharing the Gospel and distributing Christian literature.

CIS IN THE NEWS

Renewed Military Clashes Between Azerbaijan and Armenia

Early in the fall, fighting between Azerbaijan and Armenia flared up again over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh territory after a cease fire had been in effect for some time. Both sides blamed each other for the initial provocations according to published media reports. Azerbaijan shelled Armenian troops at three locations along the border, claiming they were responding to a buildup of Armenian landmines and weapons near the border. U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said that direct dialogue between the parties is key to resolving the issues and achieving a lasting peace.

Talks took place in November between the foreign ministers of both countries, something Mr. Price said was a good sign.

This long-simmering dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh broke into open warfare in the early 1990s, and again in 2020. Thousands of people have lost their lives in the fighting. SGA partners have helped evangelical churches on both sides of the border to help refugee and needy families, and will continue to do so as God provides.

The Gospel is truly the only way to bring lasting peace. ♦

Equipping Stewardship

By Garland Gould

SGA Vice President of Partner Engagement

We have been discussing the four steps of Biblical Estate Design: (1) Setting Priorities, (2) Becoming Familiar with the Rules, Tools and Vehicles, (3) Gathering the Necessary Data, and (4) Seeking Competent Council.

Now, we are ready to look more closely at each of these, beginning with **Setting Priorities**, and the biblical principles we will use to do that. These principles are:

- God is the Owner of All
- The Priority in Estate Distribution is Dependency
- The Motivation for Estate Transfers is Love
- People are More Important than Property
- *It is required that a servant be found faithful - 1 Corinthians 4:2*

Christians understand that God is, indeed, owner of all—the cattle on a thousand hills, the gold and silver (see Psalm 50). The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are not even our own, but have been bought at a price (1 Corinthians 6:20). **But what does God's ownership of everything look like in**

our lives? Have we thought through this reality and how it applies to our lives, our families, and the assets God has entrusted to us? And while believers know this principle to be true, many admit to not praying about their estate plans. For many, planning is simply a secular exercise with the motivation to simply “avoid probate and leave everything to the children.” As those who recognize who God is, let's begin making plans by asking the Owner what He would like done with what He has entrusted to us, when we will no longer have use of it.

If these principles, or any others, raise questions, please remember we are eager to serve you. We have two booklets to help you, the Estate Planning Guide and the Inventory form, at no cost to you. We look forward to speaking with you and serving as you consider God's plan of stewardship for your estate. You can reach us at plannedgiving@sga.org or call our toll free number at 1-800-BIBLE-50 for more information. ♦

Insight FROM MICHAEL

These Three Truths Don't Change—Instead, They Change Everything Else!

It is hard to come to grips that a new year is upon us already. The past few years have truly been like a whirlwind—from the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts throughout the world to the outbreak of war between Russia and Ukraine, continued flareups of violence between Azerbaijan and Armenia, political turmoil here in the U.S. and around the world—the list goes on and on.

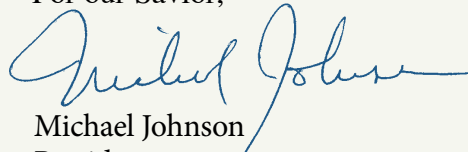
Through it all, there have been **three constants**.

First, our sovereign, omniscient, and omnipotent God and Father continues His work doing what only He can—drawing men, women and children to Himself as they hear the Gospel proclaimed. **Second**, the faithful churches SGA serves across the former Soviet Union go on fulfilling the ministries to which God has called them no matter what might be happening in their midst. *The proclamation of the Gospel is first and foremost in their hearts*, and they joyfully take advantage of every opportunity to do so when the Lord opens the door. It is truly a joy to serve them. **And third**—the steadfast, faithful support that comes **from you, our partners in ministry**. The growth in the ministry that the Lord has enabled the past several years through you never ceases to amaze me. It is all the more amazing considering some of the global economic challenges that are out there, yet the Gospel work goes on.

In 2 Timothy, the Apostle Paul makes a gripping statement in the face of personal hardships that he was facing. He said . . . *Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my Gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the Word of God is not imprisoned* (2 Timothy 2:8-9). **That last part bears repeating—the Word of God is not imprisoned!** Throughout biblical history, in all kinds of circumstances from war to famine, in plague and poverty, nothing imprisons or binds the Word of God from accomplishing His purpose. **We are seeing that every day across Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and indeed around the world. God's Word is not bound, and His glorious truth is being proclaimed no matter what difficulties or obstacles fallen man throws in the way.** It is so exciting to be allowed to be a part of it all together with you. As always, I can't thank you enough for the vital part you play.

May God do even greater things for His glory in the days ahead.

For our Savior,



Michael Johnson
President



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