



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

Missionary Pastors: Faithful Ambassadors of Christ to a Fallen World

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Preaching over the sound of bombs and fighter planes
- ♦ Brave pastors deliver physical and spiritual food for hungry souls
- ♦ He told a church member, "I will repent!"



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)

The Gospel Versus Bombs, Terror, and Tears

Your support reaches into the cruel heart of war

Mikhail M., SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Ukraine

Greetings in the Lord! By the grace of God, we are among the living and can serve with you in the field of God. I am writing to you how God has blessed me and my family during this difficult period.



Distributing bread and other products.

During this period, I—along with my wife and ministry team—were in the **Kherson region** six times. Immediately after the Ukrainian army took the city back, we began to travel around the villages and cities. We collected money, someone baked pies and various pastries. People learned about our ministry and donated bread, various products, and knitted socks. **The help of SGA partners has been a major contribution in this ministry. I thank you for your participation in this ministry.** Every time we go out, we bring 500 loaves of bread, window film, nails, glazing beads, food, and medicines. We go back to the Kherson region, pray, get acquainted, distribute to people, often under gunfire. We evacuate people from hot spots.

“I’m afraid that if I fall asleep, I’ll never wake up again!”

Recently, people were taken out of the village of **Sadov**. There are two children in a young family. They survived the occupation, lived for three months in the basement, but four days before my arrival, four-year-old Artem could not sleep. His parents and grandparents were nearby, and he said,

“I’m afraid that if I fall asleep, I’ll never wake up again!” Eleven-year-old Andrei is his brother.

The children got upset and started crying, started looking for phones, asking to be taken somewhere. When I was taking them out, Artem had a wish to see other children after not seeing any for six months. On the way out, he explained to me what kind of weapons the invading forces were shooting with now. I was terrified. Small children—they understand what flies over us. We pray for our people, for the revival of our nation, for healing. Children are afraid, frightened, begin to stutter, and other health problems appear, as they survive the horror of war.

Preaching the Gospel Over the Sound of Explosions

We go to 11 villages and towns, distributing food, clothing, and hygiene items. We communicate with people. We perform volunteer services through local churches and believers who stayed there. **We help a pastor in Chernobaevka, and support their hands in ministry. They constantly receive people, feed them, and pray.** Recently, the pastor said that people come to church, knowing that help is not always available, but they go so that God saves them and their families. In January, we were at a service there, and the church was completely packed. **I preached and the brothers sang to the sound of shells, rockets and fighter jets.** Nearby is a broken airfield, which still contains burnt equipment, shells, mines, and cartridges. But despite all this, life goes on.

Baptisms of Fire

One final joy to share—Oksana works as a school teacher. She recently started attending church. She came up to me two weeks before and asked for literature. She said that she was interested and she wanted to understand everything. **And then she came**

forward for repentance, and said that during this time of visiting the church, she learned more about God and life than in 47 years. They have three children, now her husband is at war, in Bakhmut.

Another woman also repented. She began to attend church after her neighbor, who was a member

of our church, passed away. They were friends, and after the funeral, she began to attend worship services constantly. **Thank God, now these sisters are preparing for baptism!** We pray for peace in Ukraine. Thank you for your support, for your love and prayers! ♦

Your Support Provides Spiritual and Physical Food

Outreach brings Christ to many families and children in many towns!

Vladimir N., SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Russia

I greet you in the name of the Lord, and joyfully share with you the ministry you help make possible.

We have been taking care of a family with more than 20 adopted children. Some of them have grown up already and have their own families, while others are still children. We invite them to the church, and after the service we play games, then have lunch. They attend Sunday school and then we take them home. We help their adoptive parents to take care of them, and at the same time, we plant the hope of Christ in their hearts.

There are some other families that we have helped in the past, and I am especially happy to see them when they visit. They come from **Rognedino**, but live in different towns. **I remember discipling them, and now they have their own families and come here to help us with the ministry!**

Together with my family, we visit remote churches to help them to reach local people. We have regular Monday meetings on outreach in different places across the **Bryansk region**. We pray, discuss concerns, share plans. **We also have been visiting people at home.** This is the ministry which we have received from the Lord, and His example when He asked Zacchaeus to welcome Him in his house (Luke 19:5). We came to know about a family in **Tyunino** that needed food. We bought food and went to see them with New Testaments and a guitar for singing Christian songs. People in the family came together—we gave them grocery packs and had a worship service. **This is what we try to do—give people spiritual and physical food.**

On our Mother’s Day, our worship team was going to take part in the festivity in the local Community Center, where we had been invited. Local authorities wanted to greet mothers on this day. All of a sudden, our participation in the event and our visit there were cancelled. I was very much upset. I did not give up, and begged God to give us an opportunity to take part in the event. He intervened, and we took part in the event anyway. A miracle had happened, and our Christian singer with a nice, strong voice sang at the event.

People who were far from God were deeply impressed. After the concert, they came up to us and thanked us sincerely for our participation. **Glory be to God for reaching people through His Holy Spirit, sharing the News about Jesus Christ and His church in this village!** We also thank you very much for the gifts and for **Immanuel’s Child**. We succeeded in giving out gifts in the church and at homes where children live. Most of them were very needy people.

We thank SGA partners for the blessings! Please keep praying for our ministry! ♦



Providing gifts for families in the church.

From Belarus: “I will repent today.”

Konstantin D.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Belarus

Greetings, dear brothers and sisters, with the love of Jesus Christ! Over the past few months, the life of our church has been full of events and special blessings from God!

We began 2023 with a wonderful Christmas ministry held at our village club with help from Calvary Church in Minsk. Several brothers came a day early, prepared the scenery, worked hard, and then the next day a large team of over 60 people came. It was a big surprise to the club director. She wasn't expecting such a large scale event! But that wasn't the most important thing, the most important thing was that people heard about the Savior's birth.



Many volunteers came to help with the Christmas outreach.

It was important to me that as many people as possible heard the message of the Savior, so a few days before the outreach, we went from house to house in the village and invited the residents, singing songs about our Savior's birth. But we relied more on the power of prayer and the work of God's grace. And the Lord heard us! There were almost no free seats in the room that seats about 200 people! This is the grace of God! A week later, I met with the director of the club and she thanked me again, saying that since the founding of the club, there had never been such a great event. More than that, many people who were not at the program were very sorry they had missed it as they heard about it from their neighbors who attended. But I am thankful to God that He gave the grace to show and tell about the most important thing—that the Lord Jesus came to save His people from their sins.

And we pray that this message will go deep into everyone's hearts!

Valery's Repentance

It was a great joy for me to see with my own eyes the answer to many of my prayers, for a man who not so long ago began to visit our church.

Valery is the brother of another member of our church. He is 48 years old. Two weeks ago, I dropped him off at church and he wasn't saying much in the car, but when he arrived, he took off his coat and sat in the back row where he usually sits. He then said to a brother sitting next to him, “I will repent today.” At the end of the service and the invitation, I invited people to repent and turn to God for salvation. Valery did not hesitate—he ran forward in tears. What a miracle to see a repentant sinner saved!



Valery's repentance.

A few days later, we met and talked, and he told us what was going on in his heart on the eve of his repentance—how God took away his sleep, and thinking about life and repentance. Valery said that he cried all night after his repentance, only with joy. God works miracles! And I want you to be encouraged, and to see the greatness of our God! His hand is not too short to save! Pray for Valery, that he will grow in faith and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray also for me and my wife Irina, that His blessing, wisdom, and grace will accompany us in our service to Him! ♦

MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves (Philippians 2:3).

When many of us here in Western nations think of the former Soviet Union, we either think of Russia or see it as one country. In fact, the Soviet Union was made up of 15 different countries, with Russia being the largest and most dominant.

The country of Georgia is one of those former Soviet republics. It is located in the Caucasus Mountains south of European Russia, and borders Armenia and Azerbaijan. Poverty is severe there, and yet it is also the scene of fruitful Compassion Ministry for SGA-supported missionary pastors. Not long ago, we received a brief report from one of the pastors supported by our partners, and it is a beautiful snapshot of the church reaching out to the distressed and needy in the love of Christ. He writes,

“Greetings, dear brothers and sisters! I would like to share a testimony of how God works through Compassion Ministry. During the past year, prices in Georgia skyrocketed, and many families have found themselves on the brink of poverty. We are using your donations to purchase moderate-size grocery packs and medicine kits for those in dire need. This gives us the opportunity to get to know these families better and to show them that God loves them.

Recently, we had the opportunity to visit one family. The husband's name is Igor and his wife is Mzevi. Igor's mother, their daughter, and two grandchildren live together. The man recently underwent heart surgery and had a cardiac pacemaker implanted, and now he has a hard time doing work around the house. Also, his mother has terminal cancer and is on painkillers. Lately, we had a high windstorm and the roof of this family's house collapsed, then leaked like a sieve. Now every time it rains, Igor has to try and cover the broken slates with pieces of tent-cloth, laying round stones on them to keep the cloth in place. Then a week ago, to make things worse, the wiring in the house caught fire and they miraculously survived by noticing it accidentally,



Igor works to cover the leaking roof.

and extinguishing the fire. Please, pray for this family; they are open to hearing the Gospel and gladly receive us. Pray with us that they will repent and receive the Lord as their Savior!”

So many heavy trials for this struggling family—from life-threatening health issues to deep poverty, to destructive weather. Yet God has placed this caring pastor and his congregation in the right place at the right time to demonstrate His love, and to share with them the hope of the Gospel.

The heart of God for the poor and needy is reflected throughout Scripture. There are at least 2,000 references to the poor in the Bible, and it is abundantly clear that we are to care and have compassion for them. The Apostle James noted . . . *If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that (James 2:15-16)?* Our brothers and sisters in the country of Georgia have very little themselves, and it is a joy for SGA partners to be able to help them. Let us indeed intercede in prayer, asking the Lord to truly open many hearts to the Gospel, and draw them to saving faith. ♦

You Share Christ's Love With War Victims in Deep Distress

Thankfulness is being spoken throughout Ukraine in these very difficult days. Men, women, and children are incredibly thankful for SGA-supported **Compassion Ministry**, and for the people who are so faithful to deliver these much-needed items, along with the saving truth of the Gospel!

- People who might otherwise starve are receiving food to fill their empty stomachs.
- People who are trying to survive the bitter cold of winter are receiving blankets.
- Hygiene items and towels are giving families an opportunity to feel refreshed.
- Much needed medicine is being distributed to those who are fighting illness.
- And even small things like a flashlight can be one of the best gifts of all, bringing light to darkness.



An elderly couple receives aid through Compassion Ministry.

One pensioner in the **Kherson region** is thankful for a flashlight and food gift after three months without electricity, getting water from a well, and making food in the oven. Lyudmila lives in the Kherson region and her village had been occupied for 10 months. After its de-occupation, it has been continuously coming under shelling. **Almost every day, people die from missile attacks.**

Lyudmila is one of many elderly people who have had to live the last years of their lives in difficulties. She cooks food, and heats water for bathing and hand washing on the stove. There is no gas supply in the house. She lives on a minimum pension and is unable to improve her living conditions. **A small food package and a flashlight brought this woman joy in the midst of hardships and difficulties.**



Lyudmila with the note.

In the photo, Lyudmila is holding a thank-you note in her hands, in which she thanks the church and volunteers for not being indifferent and for attending to her needs. And we join her in thanking you—and all SGA partners—for your prayers and faithful support. The Lord is being glorified and the Gospel is advancing by His grace and mercy during these difficult days. ♦

Dr. Richard Kelley Now With Christ (1938-2023)



Richard and Barb Kelley

The SGA family recently received word that Dr. Richard “Dick” Kelley went to be with the Lord on Friday, March 17, in Charlottesville, VA, after suffering a stroke. Our hearts are with the Kelley family, especially his wife Barb and sons Shawn and Eric. Barb, Shawn, and Eric also served on staff with SGA at varying times during Dick’s tenure.

Dick Kelley came to SGA in 1996 under the leadership of then president Dr. Bob Provost, serving first as Director of Ministry Support. In 2004, he became Managing Director of Media—Ministries, and then from 2009 to his 2015 retirement as Managing Director of Literature.

The funeral was held Saturday, March 25 at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Virginia. We are deeply thankful to the Lord for Dick’s faithful service to Christ through our mission. Please join us in prayer for the Kelley family in this difficult time.

At the request of the family, memorial gifts can be made to Slavic Gospel Association and designated for Irpen Biblical Seminary in Ukraine. Just write “Kelley Memorial” on the memo line of the check, or if donating online, please select the gift designation option, then in the pull down window, select “Kelley Memorial.” ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

SGA-supported missionary pastors across the former Soviet Union wear many hats. They lead their churches in worship, preaching and teaching the Word of God. They make disciples. They lead teams out into the towns and



Visiting a family with a grocery pack.

villages with food and other aid, along with the Gospel. They evangelize one-on-one during home visits, and lead children’s ministries. Your prayers and faithful support mean so much to them. And your gifts accomplish so much else—provision of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, Bible training, children’s ministries, youth ministries, Compassion Ministry—the list truly goes on. Please pray about how you can help today. ♦



Believers pray over a man, blessing him for pastoral service.

Insight FROM MICHAEL

What these pastors are doing is astounding . . . and you are part of it!

By now, most of you are familiar with what we call SGA's "tagline" that you see at the beginning of all our publications—*Sharing the Gospel, Equipping the Church, Helping the Forgotten*. These three points sum up all that we do through our mission. We exist to serve the churches Christ is building across the former Soviet Union as they advance the Gospel.

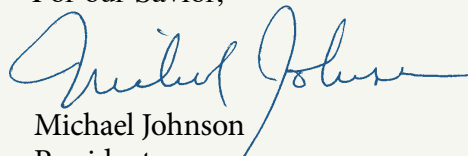


The articles you have been reading this month show a **good cross section of the daily lives of the faithful missionary pastors you help support**. They help war refugees. They visit the sick and needy with food, clothing, and as always, the life-changing Gospel as God opens doors. They serve in their churches and make disciples. They lead teams of church workers out into their communities and regions to reach people for Christ. They are the love, mercy, and compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ on display day in and day out. They are truly an inspiration and set a loving, living example of Christian service that we would do well to emulate as the Lord grants us the opportunities.

When you think about their ministry environment, consider what they do with whatever arises. In a time of war, they spring into action to help affected people—and advance the Gospel. During a global pandemic, they spring into action to render aid to individuals and families—and advance the Gospel. When their governments begin exerting pressure on believers and their churches, they respond by showing more love, more commitment—and continuing to advance the Gospel. When they encounter outright persecution in their regions, they do not respond with wrath or recrimination. They keep on modeling the love of Christ, helping their people as the Lord grants opportunity—and advance the Gospel, trusting in the Lord to do His work in human hearts as only He can. And in times of openness, they joyfully seize the opportunities the Lord has granted them to serve, love—and advance the Gospel.

In all of this, our brothers and sisters are so very thankful to God, and to you, our partners in ministry. Not just our partners, but their partners as well. Together, more and more lost men, women, and children are hearing of the great love of Christ, and how they can have their sins forgiven by repenting and trusting in Him as their Lord. I am thankful to God for you also, and cannot adequately express that enough.

For our Savior,


Michael Johnson
President



SHARING THE GOSPEL • EQUIPPING THE CHURCH
HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

Good News Report is published to report religious news about Russia, the rest of the CIS and the ministries of:

Slavic Gospel Association
6151 Commonwealth Drive
Loves Park, IL 61111
www.sga.org
E-mail: goodnews@sga.org
Phone: 815-282-8900
Fax: 815-282-8901

To start, cancel, or change the mailing address on your subscription to Good News Report, please send your name, your old address, and your new address to the address listed above. Please allow six to eight weeks for the fulfillment of your request.

International Offices

Noble Park, Australia
Cambridge, Canada
Rugby, England
North Shore, New Zealand

U.S. Board of Directors

Dr. Rick Goertzen, *Chairman*
Kelly Abbott, *Vice Chairman*
Michael Johnson, *President*
Brian Kult, *Treasurer*
Dr. Rick Gregory, *Secretary*
Warner Tillman
Harry Leopold
John Wauterlek
Dr. Bill Atkinson
Rev. Bill Ball
Scott Rich
Josh Tillman
Dr. Robert W. Provost, *President Emeritus*

SGA is a charter member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.



Enhancina Trust