



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

“Lord, send me to reach someone!”
 And of course, the Lord did!

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Orphans are flocking to Christ like we’ve never seen!
- ♦ Pastor asks for God to use him—and he’s sent to the slums.
- ♦ SPECIAL: Ukraine War ministry update.

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)

How You Helped Orphans Celebrate Christ's Resurrection!

Your gifts help take Gospel truth to 225 children in Far East Russia

Elena R., SGA-Supported *Orphans Reborn* ministry in Far East Russia

Dear friends, greetings to you! I would love to share with you about God's wondrous works around Easter and beyond.

Children and adults learned about Christ's atoning death

At Orphanage 10, we held a pre-Easter lesson using paper dolls and taking part in various activities. **These pre-Easter events explained about what the Lord did for all people, including the children and educators of the orphanage.** The children are always interested in taking part in activities and games. At the first two meetings, we talked about the events of **the last week before the Crucifixion.** The children and adults in attendance **heard about God's plan of salvation** through the death of His Son on the cross.

Then they heard about His resurrection!

Next, it was a great joy to prepare and hold the **Easter celebration for the children and adults.** Representatives of three churches took part in the preparation for the special Gospel program—the cave, spears, the costumes, and took part in the program itself. It has been a blessed time of ministering together. **During the gathering, we touched upon the topic of sin, having presented a scene focused on the death of Christ, and a scene**

about His resurrection. A message was then delivered about the truth of the resurrection.

In the end, everyone was given a gift of puzzles on a biblical theme. The children were very happy with the gifts. **In the next two lessons after Easter holidays, we talked about the facts that serve as the evidence of the Resurrection.** The children heard the facts, and then retold them. The last session was in April, and we talked about the character traits that the children acquired and how Jesus helped them.

We prayerfully followed up

At this orphanage, we were able to hold five meetings in April attended in total by 130 children. Both the adults and children thanked us for performing the Bible stories in which they could recognize their character and deeds. Nikita, the oldest boy in the orphanage, came up to me and said, *"Thank you for the books. I read them and it helps me learn more about Christ and how I can believe in Him!"* At another orphanage, we held two meetings before Easter, talking about Passion Week events and the entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. As we visit the children every Sunday, we are able to unlock for them the truths of Scripture. We



The children were thankful for the puzzles with the biblical themes.

explained the difference between Palm Sunday and the events before Christ's death. We had a good talk in a group, which then continued in individual conversations and prayers.

After Easter, we were able to hold two more meetings, as we talked about application of biblical truths. We also showed the children a presentation with their photos. They rejoiced and thanked us. It was such a joyous time. Igor presented the message about Thomas, explaining to the children why he was known as "doubting Thomas." Later, the children asked to watch the photo presentation and the story about Thomas again.

In total, we were able to hold **5 lessons** attended totally by **95 children.** We thank the Lord for opportunities to share His truths by His grace and mercy; for these truths being understood by the children, for their interest in the Bible, and for the opportunity for us to preach the Gospel to adults!

You are part of this ministry!

We are grateful for your participation through your prayers and financial support, and also for opportunities to give gifts and attend to the needs of the fatherless. **Glory to our One God and Savior Jesus Christ and may the Lord bless you!** ♦

God Opens the Door to More Orphans in Russia!

How your gifts are reaching special-needs children without parents

Emma K., SGA-Supported *Orphans Reborn* Ministry in Russia

By God's grace, we are visiting a **new orphanage for disabled orphans** in the Nizhny Novgorod region. Thank you for donating funds that we were able to use to get gifts for these children. We filled in the gift boxes with shampoo, shower gel, socks, gloves, toys, games, a hairbrush, toothpaste with a brush, and of course sweets and candy. We were able to provide 103 gifts for the children!



Christmas program for the orphan children.

We had the opportunity to visit the children for Christmas. At the celebration, we put on a puppet performance and sang songs with movements, and played a game. The children had fun and played along the best they could. This

ministry to orphans with disabilities is a ministry of compassion and mercy, indeed! **Some of the children are not able to speak.**

There are children with different physical conditions. Some of them are not able to sit and can only lie down. Others can only sit and are unable to walk. These children live on the first floor. The doors were open and we could talk to them a little, and most importantly, could give them our love. **It was wonderful to see their smiling faces in response and joy in their eyes!** In the end, the orphanage headmaster said, *"It was wonderful, and you held a great celebration for the kids!"* They are eagerly waiting for us to come again, and we are so happy about it. Please pray for our future visits, and that the children (and adults) will hear and respond to the Gospel.

This year, the doors of almost all orphan institutions have been opened in Nizhny Novgorod city and in the surrounding region. We visited and ministered to many orphans of different ages, as well as children with differing mental and physical capabilities. My heart is filled with gratitude to the Lord and to you. **Glory be to our Lord for everything!** ♦

MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war (Isaiah 2:4).

The war in Ukraine is now into its second year. **History certainly demonstrates that for people living through long periods of warfare, it can be more than horrendous.** They are people like us. We know from reading accounts of various wars, the populations learned somehow to live with the tensions, although the scars of war had lifetime impacts. They had to carry on with their lives as best they could. **And in the midst of the chaos, the people of God were used by Him to proclaim the Gospel and demonstrate His great love by doing good to those in need.** They shone the light of Christ in the darkest of times.

Viktor is an SGA-supported missionary pastor in Ukraine who recently shared such a glimmer of light through a wonderful report about ministry to children and needy women in his region. Amid the war, he and his church are laser-focused on reaching as many as possible as God grants opportunity. **He and his church have held several evangelistic events as well as children's outreaches.** He also shares about their loving ministry to unbelieving women impacted by the war:

"A new small group was organized in our local

church, which unbelieving women began to attend. They had not come to the church until now. One woman shared her testimony. 'Life in the village has its difficulties. You depend on the weather a lot. In autumn, when the corn crop ripened, I did not have an opportunity to collect it for a long time. The rains had already started, and the ground was wet, and the harvesters refused to help for a long time. I hoped in God and asked Him for help. And the Lord answered, giving good weather. The crop was harvested, and after we were done it snowed hard almost immediately.' And she praised and thanked God for a long time for letting her gather the harvest. Please pray for the further development of our team and the church. May the Lord give wisdom in the further vision of how to grow ourselves, the team, and the church of God. Also pray for the development of youth ministry, that our youth may grow in Christ and serve other non-believers and youth."

God's Word tells us . . . *And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and*



New women's small group.

never again will they learn war (Isaiah 2:4).

As Viktor and the people in his region live every day in the midst of a great conflict, they pray for peace and an end to war. The above Scripture verse is most frequently viewed as a description of what life will be like during Christ's millennial reign. The Prince of Peace will indeed rule and reign, and it will be a time of unprecedented peace on the earth. And what a wonderful promise it is to contemplate in the midst of this sin-cursed, war-torn planet!

But in the meantime, those of us who name Him as our Lord and Savior know what we must do. We must faithfully stay at our posts and keep doing the work He has called us to do. In peace and prosperity, or in the midst of war, we go on with our labors of love for Christ, doing good to all men, women, and children—and always sharing the hope of the Gospel. May the Lord continue to gather His great harvest, and send out even more workers into His fields. ♦

Equipping Stewardship

By Garland Gould
SGA Vice President of Partner Engagement

In past installments, we have discussed the four steps of *Biblical Estate Design*: **Setting Priorities; Becoming Familiar with the Rules, Tools and Vehicles; Gathering the Necessary Data; and Seeking Competent Counsel.** We began looking at the **5 Biblical Principles** in the last installment. These principles are:

- **God is Owner of All**
- **The Priority in Estate Distribution is Dependency**
- **The Motivation for Estate Distribution is Love**
- **People are More Important than Dollars**
- **It is Required That a Servant be Found Faithful**

Last time, we briefly discussed Biblical Principle #1 and underscored that this principle is the foundation for planning. Now it is time to discuss Principle #2, *The Priority in Estate Distribution is Dependency*. This principle is the first of two "directional arrows" for our distribution plans. The scriptural reference for this principle is laid out in 1 Timothy 5:8 . . . *but if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his*

household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. This is a blunt statement from Paul and it gets our attention. Keep in mind that this principle states the priority and does not exclude family that is not financially dependent on you. That is a different decision with a different principle that we will look at next time. In our application of this principle, it most obviously includes minor children and spouses. Others that you need to consider may include aging parents, a sibling, or other family member that has fallen under your care, missionaries you support, and perhaps other ministries—especially your local church.

If these principles or any others raise questions, please remember we are pleased to serve you. We have two booklets to help you, the *A Steward's Guide to Estate Design* and the *Confidential Estate Inventory*, at no cost to you. We look forward to speaking with you and serving you as you consider God's plan of stewardship for your estate. ♦

“Lord, Send Me to Reach Someone!”

Jesus—in answering that prayer—sent him to the slums to see souls saved

Serik B., SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Central Asia

I send you the warmest greetings with the love of the Lord Jesus Christ! I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the Lord and bring the light of the Gospel to unbelievers.

A dying man finds life—now, and forever



Pastor Serik with the 60-year-old man.

I had been praying for the Lord to direct me exactly to where there were people who needed Him. **Praise God, He answered my prayers and sent me to the slums at night.** Right at that place, I met one man who was sitting on the pipes of the main heating pipeline for the town. **He is 60 years old, and he has been living on the street for a long time. Both of his legs were frostbitten. He was not wanted—either in a hospital or in a shelter.**

In such a desperate state of hopelessness, he

decided to die. He said he had prayed to God so hard and cried for help. He begged God to save him and give him one last chance, and God answered his prayers granting him a chance through our meeting. We treated him to some food, but he was afraid of eating as his stomach did not accept the good food. He felt really sick. We were so sorry for him. But most importantly, he realized that God is real and alive and answers prayers. **Praise God, he repented and decided to start a new life with Jesus Christ!** Seeing all this, we do not cease to be amazed at the majesty, grace, and love of Jesus Christ.

Reaching orphans and adults

March was a very busy month for us. We helped needy and homeless people, and held a camp for unbelieving children. **There were both orphans and children from poor families. Four adults responded to the call to change their lives and follow God.** We helped them to settle in Christian



Children at the camp.



Preparing beds for campers to spend the night.

rehabilitation centers. There were about **31 children** at the camp. Eighteen of the campers stayed for the night in our home. It was a wonderful blessing! Everything was for the glory of God. The children were very happy and grateful. We also had an incident during the camp. While we were in the

forest with the children for two hours, someone came into the house and robbed us! Even so, the children look forward to meeting with us and asked us to hold a summer camp for them. We are also grateful for the opportunity to present people with Bibles in our national language.

Urgent prayer need!

I have one more important need. **My God-given wife and helper is having severe health problems.** She has an ulcer that has gotten worse and she needs special treatment. Yet we are grateful to the Lord for everything, that He gives us the

opportunity to minister for His Glory, and reach people for Him. And it's a great joy for us to share all these blessings with you, as it's our joint ministry. Thanks for your care and prayers! May God richly bless you in His mighty ways! ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

It is such a blessing to be used by God to reach the next generation for Christ across the former Soviet Union! Whether it be through children's ministries in a Bible-



Christmas program for orphans with disabilities.

preaching church, special outreaches like *Orphans Reborn*, *Summer Camps*, or other children's outreaches, *the Lord is using your generous gifts to make these ministries possible.*

And not only that—your prayers and support help sustain fruitful Bible training, missionary pastors, **Compassion Ministry**, provision of Bibles and Christian literature, and so much more. We truly couldn't do it without you. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Spring camp for children in Belarus.

Insight FROM MICHAEL

Your Support for Children's Ministries is helping reach many young lives with the Gospel.

Now that we are nearing mid-summer, it is once again time to focus on a couple of the special children's ministries you help make possible through your support of SGA. ***Orphans Reborn*** continues to be a vitally important outreach of the faithful evangelical churches we serve across the former Soviet Union. In our last fiscal year, dedicated church teams were visiting **180 orphanages** and reaching almost **10,000 children** across nine former Soviet nations. Some of the teams are reporting access at new orphanages this year, for which we praise and thank the Lord!



As for **Summer Bible Camps**, we are working in **10 former Soviet nations plus Poland and Israel**. A total of **723 camps** were held last year with **more than 50,000 children participating**. How marvelous this is, and I can't wait to see what God will do by the time this summer ends!

For many of us, it probably seems too early to even think about **Christmas ministries**, but I can assure you our brothers and sisters over there are thinking, praying, and preparing for them! It is such a vitally important season of evangelism and ministry for them, and bears much fruit for the coming year as they follow up with the children and families reached. I have visited several former Soviet countries as ***Immanuel's Child*** Christmas outreaches are conducted, and am thrilled every time as I witness how God is moving to bring children—and yes, their parents and caregivers—to Himself.

I can't forget about Sunday School either. Once the children and their families become engaged with a local church, loving believers begin discipling them in Christ, and Sunday school activities are an important part of that process. **All of these things are a steady, ongoing labor of love for our brothers and sisters**. Reaching the lost for Christ through the power of the Gospel is their year-long, day in and day out calling. We at SGA are so thankful to be able—along with your steadfast prayers and vital support—to help equip them with what they need for effective ministry.

Please continue to intercede in prayer for the churches, especially in Ukraine as the ongoing war continues to ravage the land. They will carry on with their ministries regardless, and are deeply thankful for your support. **And as always, I can never thank you enough!**

For our Savior,

Michael Johnson
President



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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

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