



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

# Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL • EQUIPPING THE CHURCH • HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

## War and Winter Hit Millions. But God Uses You to Shine His Light.



### INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ◆ You provide heat, hope ... and God's Truth!
- ◆ Filling the church with children.
- ◆ Even in war zones, the Lord is at work!

*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)*

# In Troubled Nations, You Provide Helpful Heat and Gospel Hope in Jesus' Name!

**Editor's Note:** As this new year begins, it is appropriate to pause and reflect on the past year's momentous events. That includes the way God is using His people—including SGA supporters—to advance His kingdom not only across the former Soviet Union, but also in Israel. What follows are snapshots of events in which your prayers and gifts are, even now, playing a part.

## UKRAINE WAR: Third year of God bringing light out of darkness

The war between Russia and Ukraine that began in February 2022 is now entering its third year. The human toll is staggering, and the damage done to critical infrastructure in Ukraine is immense.



Natalia says, "Today we are fixing dinner on a new stove. It is wonderful!"

provide **Heat and Hope** to their distressed people.

"We are very thankful to you for your timely support and the wood stoves, which are a direct response to the needs of our people affected by the war and power crisis. Due to the war, many houses have been destroyed by shelling, and many people have become displaced refugees. We are meeting the needs of people in our city, as well as those who have been displaced, and at the same time sharing the Gospel."

*There have been multiple hits by Russian missiles on the power infrastructure. This causes frequent power outages. Those whose houses are heated by electric boilers are affected, and also gas heaters do not work without electricity. It's winter now, so the issue of warmth in the houses is very important, as well as having something on which to cook. The stoves you sent are a response to the most urgent, basic needs of the people. Although they are not large, they are very convenient and able to provide heat, and it is also possible to cook food on them. Thank God!*

*Maria just turned 82. She was born at the beginning of World War II and now lives through this war. Her relatives asked her to evacuate. But she said, 'I was born under bombs, I will die under bombs.' God spared her life and thanks to you, we were able to give her a stove. She used to oppose Christians very strongly, but now she has started*



Maria, standing behind her new stove says, "I am very thankful for the stove. Thanks to you, now my house will be warm and I will have food on the table."

*reading the Bible and sometimes comes to church events, praise God! Dear friends, thank you once again for your help, it is very important now! People in Ukraine are very grateful to you!"*

## ISRAEL WAR: Hearts open to Christ's love and Gospel

The deadly terrorist attack on Israel by Hamas militants in Gaza in October shook Israel to the core, and set off a military confrontation that threatened to expand beyond the region into a global conflict. **SGA has supported many Russian-speaking congregations in Israel for decades.** Many are populated by immigrants from the former USSR, including, ironically, Ukraine.

In Israel, **Pastor Boris** and his congregation are serving among those impacted by the war with Hamas. He writes:

*"We are very grateful to the Lord for all of you who pray for Israel and our ministry these days, and for all those who have sent financial support for our relief work in Ashkelon! This ministry started with 'five loaves and two fishes,' and then God multiplied their ministry resources greatly through you, our friends and partners!"*

*The situation in Ashkelon remains tense. Rocket alerts still sound on a daily basis, and the situation is particularly complicated for the elderly and the physically challenged. Our brother Eduard has been ministering to one elderly couple whose building took a direct hit. Tatyana and Constantine are in their seventies and have no close relatives. During one of the bombings, a rocket hit their building, but thankfully they were not harmed because they hid in the bomb shelter room on their floor. Tatyana's*



Constantine and Tatyana (above left) are staying in a neighbor's apartment after their building (above right) sustained structural damage after a direct hit from a rocket.



Believers at Aviv Center provide hot meals to those struggling with homelessness and drug addictions in Israel.

**emotional state became very fragile as a result.**

*They are staying in a neighbor's vacant apartment. Eduard and his team are taking care of this family, bringing them food and helping them with other needs. Eduard prayed with the couple and gave them a Bible. Please pray for them and for many others who are suffering the trauma of the war."*

*These are only a few examples of the ministry you help make possible. As 2024 progresses in these nations, please pray with us that the Lord will turn many willing souls to Himself as they hear His Gospel and experience His love. ♦*



## MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

*Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).*

In the course of our ministry and communications with SGA partners, we stress the vital importance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our firm conviction—and always has been throughout our mission's long history—that the Gospel must be central to all that we do. It is central to the faithful churches we serve across the former Soviet Union, and in many cases, the good works that the churches do help pave the way for the advance of the Gospel in their regions.

Eugene is an SGA-supported pastor in the **Ioshkar-Ola region**, located in the Mari-El Republic of north central Russia. He shares how God turned a natural disaster into a wonderful outreach, and opened doors to proclaim the Gospel with approval from local community leaders.

*"We had planned to have a tent camp, which we have regularly done for many years in the woods. We had organized a team consisting of teenagers and prepared everything for the camp. But 10 days before our trip to the woods, strong storms hit in many regions. Dozens of trees were felled across many acres. Homes were damaged, as well as several camps located in the woods. To our greatest regret, some tourists, children, and even babies died during the storms. The local authorities closed the entrances to the woods and banned camps until a later time. We began to pray and thought about what we could do in such a situation. Thanks to our previous ministry in the region, we met many different people including public figures. The solution was that we held a camp on the premises of the nearest camp not far from the town. Certainly, it deprived us of the atmosphere of camping in the woods, but it was easier to have activities and I could reach twice as many people!"*

*It so happened that the things we thought would be a big problem turned into a new opportunity in the changed situation. Instead of the 40-50 whom I*



Summer camp ministry to teenagers.

*would have addressed, I was able to build contacts with 100-110 teenagers! We as believers are now strongly interwoven into the public life of the region. I speak as an invited speaker, an expert in various activities where I have an opportunity to tell people about a Christian approach in the solution of social problems, the raising of children, and development of the families. Now we actively develop relationships with the businessmen of this town, who to our great joy take part in our ministry to the orphans. They took the initiative and collected much clothing and footwear, which we gave to the orphanages. The other day I received a phone call from the leader of the team of businessmen, and they again talked about their readiness to take part in providing footwear and clothing for the children. I thank God for such an opportunity! I thank you for your participation in our ministry that you help make possible! Glory be to God for you!"*

*As Eugene and his team went forward with their changed ministry plans, God moved for His glory and for His good. He laid the groundwork for even greater works in accordance with His eternal purpose.*

This is yet another wonderful testimony of how **God is using your prayers and support** to make an eternal difference in many lives—thousands of miles away in a remote region. We pray that we will see even greater fruit in the days ahead! ♦

# "The Lord filled the church house with children!"

***God answers prayers as His Gospel spreads in Russia***

Renat M., SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Russia's Volgograd Region

Peace to you, brothers and sisters! I greet you with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ! Some time ago, a man named Anatoly began attending our church services and meetings in a home group. He is disabled, and walks on prosthetic limbs. The problem is that he might lose his family soon. Anatoly's children did not want to communicate with him and did not want him to stay with them. He came to the church, sure that God would help him restore his family. We began to pray for him and gave him a copy of the New Testament to read.

God is indeed helping Anatoly. He stays with his family. The woman he is with accepted him. His middle daughter began to talk with him and stopped rejecting him. However, his older daughter is still opposed to him. Unfortunately, Anatoly and his partner have not yet registered their marital status. We tell him that they live in sin and that they have to register their marital status. **We told him to repent and receive Jesus into his heart.** We continue to talk to him, exhort him, and pray for him, that God would grant them repentance.

**Another part of our ministry over the summer was rafting with youth.** We thank God for the opportunity. They met with other teens, stayed in tents, and went along the river on the rafts.



Rafting trip with the youth.



Meeting with children and teens.

We have meetings with children and teens every year on the eve of the new school year in order to pray, bless, and exhort them. **This year, the Lord blessed us with one more meeting with unsaved children and teens.** Our church teens helped us serve the other children and teens. A year ago, we served them, and now they serve, and we are happy about it! Children and teens came from different social backgrounds. New children came, invited by other children. Unfortunately, not all the parents with whom we talked would let their children come. Yet the Lord filled the church house with children, and we thank Him for it. Glory be to God for a good meeting! Rafael exhorted the children, read the Word of God, and we worshipped Him with songs and prayed. The children took part in relay races, competitions, and games. We were overfilled with joy, seeing happy children. At the end of the meeting, we gave gifts and prayed for them.

Please pray for Anatoly that the Lord will touch his heart and lead him to repentance. Pray for Ivan and his mother Marina, that the Lord will lead them to repentance. Also intercede for the development of relationships with unsaved parents who allow their children to come to us. Pray for spiritual revival here, and for completion of our church building. We thank the Lord and you, dear friends, for your love and care, for your prayers. Your labor is not in vain in the Lord! May the Lord bless you. ♦

# UKRAINE REPORT: “Now they come to listen to the Word of God!”

*Your prayers and gifts support Gospel outreach*

Mikhail M., SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Ukraine



Trip to the Kherson region.

I thank God that I and my family are among the living. In June, I visited the Kherson region five times. We take bread, food, and medicines, and we hold services. We also evacuate people away from there. We pray with them, feed them, and take them. They tell what they experienced in their lives.

I will never forget this past June when we were at the distribution aid center in Kherson near the railway station. We had come with the deacon of the church in the morning. We were hoping to return by noon due to the shelling becoming more constant at noon. We had started talking, and about 50 elderly people came to us and told us about the horror of the war that they had to go through.

One old woman said, “We were beaten, burned with bombs, robbed, killed, and recently drowned. We don’t know what will happen tomorrow. We live for today.” I offered to evacuate them, and she replied, “We are 70 years old, where should we go? We will be here. What God will give?” I replied, “You know that in the Bible, a man said that when there is war, then I will still trust in God.” Another woman was standing next to her, and she said, “This is what David said.” I asked her if she ever read the Bible, and she

answered that she did. We all stood together for prayer, and then the shelling began—on houses, and on pharmacies. All the people automatically got down on the ground, and we were told that everyone has two minutes to run to cover. We decided to pray and go back home. We were leaving the city, and on the way out four rockets hit the store. There was an ambulance near the store. The driver was only 27 years old and was sitting in the ambulance, where he died. I prayed to the Lord that he would save at least the deacon, because he has six small children. But God saved him and me, and we returned home alive. Thank God!

**We also continue the service of helping displaced people.** There are more of them every Sunday, especially from the Kherson region. We help with everything we can, some with medicine, clothes, and some with shelter. We distribute products to all of them. We do it after the worship service. **We ourselves are amazed at how God works in our region.** People constantly came to the church for help, but now they come to listen to the Word of God! This is how God leads our church, which opens up new opportunities for serving people.



Distributing aid to families in need.



discussion, a prayer, then there is further communication at the table. People testify that this service helps them a lot not only in economic matters, but also in spiritual matters. **Thank God for this opportunity!** We experienced such blessings during this period. Thank God for you—for your support, help, and love for us. May God bless you, your church, and your family! ♦

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Winter is always a challenging season across the former Soviet Union, especially in countries where poverty is especially severe, such as in Central Asia. In countries where military conflict is raging such as Ukraine, attacks on



Sergei is an SGA-supported missionary pastor in Ukraine.

infrastructure have left thousands without heat, and power outages are frequent. Your faithful prayers and support help the faithful churches SGA serves reach out to needy individuals and families who are thus afflicted—and so much more. **You help provide Bible-training, Bibles and Christian literature, children’s ministries, food, and other compassionate aid to equip the churches for their ministries.** We are so thankful to the Lord and to you. Please pray about how you can help today. ♦



As temperatures plummet, a family in Ukraine receives blankets and food through SGA-supported Compassion Ministry.

# *Insight* FROM MICHAEL

## Wars Go On. God's Word Goes Forth.

*For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land' (Deuteronomy 15:11).*

This month, we at SGA are celebrating our 90th year of ministry! Over the next 12 months, we'll be sharing on that subject periodically in the Good News Report. Seeing what the Lord has done for His glory and for the sake of the Gospel across those 90 years has been truly humbling, and amazing. And this special anniversary comes amid truly troubling times in our fallen world. But lifting

Christ's name high in a fallen world is exactly what He calls us to do.

Even in the best of times, there are always those individuals and families who have very little when compared to most others. Worse still are the lives of those within a war zone. The effects trickle down to almost all of society. We have seen this in Ukraine's ongoing war with Russia. We see it now in Israel amid the war with Hamas terrorists. **So many lives have been shattered, and the wearied people are**

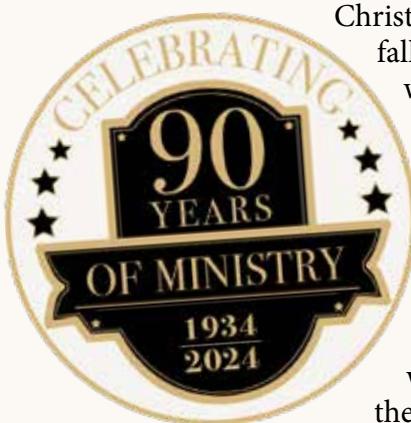
**looking for some kind of hope.** And that is what the faithful Bible-teaching churches SGA serves have been providing. Not just some kind of hope, but the real, only hope there is—the Lord Jesus Christ.

In our publications, we endeavor to share many stories from these conflict areas. **The stories are often heartbreaking, but also are great testimonies of the power of God to reach and heal broken lives as men, women, and children turn to the Lord in faith and repentance.** For that, we rejoice. **Only the Lord knows how long these conflicts will go on. But the work of His church must continue on, in both war and peace.** With your ongoing prayers and support, we will keep doing what SGA has done since 1934—equipping faithful churches with the resources they need for effective ministry—for the glory of Christ and in His name. We are, as always, so deeply thankful for all that you do in support of SGA's ministries!

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](http://www.sga.org)  
E-mail: [goodnews@sga.org](mailto: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  
Scott Rich  
Josh Tillman  
Dr. Robert W. Provost, *President Emeritus*

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



Enhancing Trust