



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

In War . . . Freezing Cold . . .
and Dangerous Opposition . . .
**SGA-Supported
Pastors Press
On With the
Gospel!**



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

- ♦ A miracle healing in Ukraine . . . and salvation for many children!
- ♦ SGA-supported pastor **ARRESTED** in Central Asia
- ♦ Michael Johnson: Only the Lord knows what we face next



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)

Pastors Brave Freezing Temps and Spiritual Darkness in Central Asia

God is using your prayers and gifts to open doors

Central Asia can be deadly cold. Yet it is an increasingly fertile mission field for SGA-supported missionary pastors. This past winter has been truly a busy season for them.

Oleg is one such pastor who ministers in one of the Muslim-dominant Central Asian countries. Not only are your prayers and support helping him reach people in great need, but they are also helping to send out young believers to reach their peers with the Gospel . . .

Hello, dear brothers and sisters. I thank our Lord for you and your service to our people. I thank God for putting my family on your hearts, and for the help you have rendered to us. The cold season is here again—winter arrives late in our republic, but at times due to passing storm systems, it gets extremely cold, and many people start falling ill as they are not prepared for such cold temperatures. Many people, especially children, are suffering from colds and flu. Thank God, we have prayers from believers that encourage us during difficult times. I continue to work in social services and visit the districts of our region, participating in home groups and leading one home group in a nearby town.

Our church continues to engage with needy and homeless people. Apart from feeding them every Tuesday and Thursday, we have started distributing a loaf of bread to everyone who comes. We anticipate that with the onset of cold weather, more people will attend our meetings, as it becomes harder to find sustenance compared to summer. However, we are glad to serve all those in need, aiming for the glory of Jesus Christ to be revealed through these services, and for these individuals to experience God's love for them, realizing that they are not forgotten or abandoned.

Our church has a bakery, and now we provide hot bread to homeless people and children in one of our towns. Our brothers and sisters visit there for ministry, conducting sessions with children and adults.



Distributing bread to people in need.

The church youth started visiting one of the hostels in our city where very poor families live with many children. Knowing these families, they take bread to their rooms, interact with them, inviting them along with their children to holidays and sports events.

During each meeting, the youth share a biblical story and pray with the families. I have visited these families several times with our youth, aiming to communicate with the people, yet we approach these interactions delicately, as we don't want people to think we are buying their favor with gifts and bread.

Every Wednesday, along with a brother named Peter, I visit a small town where predominantly Uzbek-speaking people reside. We got acquainted with an Uzbek family there—they have a child with cerebral palsy. When we visit them, we take a



Praying for the child with cerebral palsy.

translator to communicate and pray for the girl and her family. According to them, often after the prayer, she feels much better, and they thank God for His mercy towards them. In addition to this, we travel to the border with Uzbekistan and bring the Holy Scriptures in the Uzbek language. We continue to assist needy families, and now we are supporting 90 families with food. Thank God for this service, because we see much joy in people as prices for groceries increase each time. God never leaves any issue unresolved, and we haven't faced difficulties in visiting

these families. Once again, I want to thank you for your love for us and our people. We wish you abundant blessings from God, His mercy, and protection. May God keep you, your families, and your church!

Please pray for Oleg and his fellow workers as they share Christ's love in a region where opposition to evangelical churches is great. We praise God for the eternal impact Oleg is having in his region! ♦

Your Support at Christmas Blessed This Family—and Spread the Gospel!

Vladimir B.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Russia

Greetings to you, dear brothers, and sisters. Our family is grateful to SGA partners for the Christmas gift you sent us. We continue to serve despite the different difficulties and trials. The children are growing up, the older children get involved in the ministry—they sing in the children's choir, participate in different ministries, and got involved in the Christmas service. We are also in expectation of the seventh child in January!

I wanted to share a little testimony about the life of our church. The time flies by very quickly, and soon we will celebrate the 4th anniversary of our ministry. **In our church we have many teenagers, children, and youth, which is a great blessing.** There are also foster families in our church, one recently adopted their seventh child. Therefore, we try to give them attention. Each week, we have Sunday school, which also shows the need of classrooms for children, which we do not have right now. During the week we have a group for teenagers. They meet for prayer and fellowship. The boys have even started to build a small car with their own hands!

Our church is praying for a youth leader—this is our need. We thank the Lord that our services are being attended by people who do not know God. We work with them, praying that the



Children participate in the church service.

seeds of faith will grow in their hearts. Some of them started to attend our adult Sunday school class. We are also grateful to the Lord that several people expressed their desire to be baptized.

Pray with us for new church leaders, such as elders and deacons. Please also support us in prayer for the unity of our church and for our spiritual growth. Pray for the leaders in women's and youth ministry. Once again, I thank you for your prayerful support and assistance! ♦

Editor's Note: Each Christmas, SGA partners help provide Christmas gifts of \$100 each to faithful missionary pastors and church workers across the former Soviet Union. This is such a great blessing for them and their families, and they are deeply thankful to God—and to you!

MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

Because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me (Philippians 2:30).

When is the right time to be bold for our faith in Jesus? For most, it is in the context of our Sunday morning service. For a few more, it might be the grocery store and someone you meet when shopping.

But how do you feel about sharing your faith when it might mean you are fired from your job or lose a friend? How about even under the threat of death? There are many through the history of the Soviet Union who testified to Christ shortly before they were executed. An estimated 175,000 followers of Christ around the world are martyred for their faith each year.

A faithful pastor in a former Soviet and predominately Muslim region attempted to hold an Immanuel's Child Christmas program and, as the church reported to us, was immediately arrested.



IC program in a predominately Muslim region.

"This is one of the villages where the pastor distributed humanitarian aid in the past where the need is great. With the assistance of SGA, he opened a new location for preaching the Gospel, and has been conducting camps and Immanuel's Child there for several years. This time he came with his team, and by the end of the outreach, 15 police officers had arrived and began searching the house where the service was taking place, interrogating him and also the owners. The search yielded nothing except books and Bethlehem Stars. But all the books were officially approved by the government, so the police could not

label them as illegal or terrorist literature, as they originally wanted."

This pastor was brought before the authorities and interrogated. But the pressure from the authorities didn't stop the pastor from lovingly sharing his faith.

"He was asked questions and he answered them, testifying about Jesus that He is the Son of God and the Savior. He referred to the Bible, citing some passages from the Bible and the Koran, and the two policemen listened very carefully. One of them remembered that Christians once treated him very well when he was at another job, and the other asked how to make a Savior save you. The pastor told them, and this policeman said 'Amen, that Jesus is the Savior.' When they arrived at the police station, the bosses began to threaten and accuse him of terrorism, and these two policemen tried to defend him. It took more than seven hours before they were released. He was then summoned to an "anti-terrorist" office the following day, where he left copies of the New Testament and again shared the Gospel. After being released again, he went to the next village and held an Immanuel's Child-supported outreach."



Testifying about Jesus at an IC outreach.

This brother walks in the footsteps of his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. It is in such times that our Lord is most ready for us to share of our hope within. Be faithful, for God is always faithful! *Your lovingkindness, O Lord, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies (Psalm 36:5).* ♦

Your Support Helps Launch a "Year of Mission" Half Way Around the World!

Viktor G.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Central Asia



Pastor Victor and his family.

For our country's Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptist churches, 2024 has been declared *The Year of Mission*. Our goal is to establish new churches and home groups, and we pray that through faith in Jesus Christ, every Christian may be enriched with hope and participate in the work of God's harvest field. We do not know what the rest of the year holds for us, but if we believe that the future is in His hands, then we look forward with hope, confidence, and inspiration, clothing ourselves in the . . . armor of faith and love, and with the helmet of the hope of salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:8). Without a doubt, with faith we are ready to continue fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, who commanded us to go and make disciples of all nations.

Over the last quarter of 2023, my wife Irina and I continued to work in the Lord's field almost every day. My wife often prepares hot meals for homeless



Service at Victor's church.

and socially vulnerable people while I disciple them in God's Word. In addition to all the children's and teen ministries in our church and beyond, we organized a Christmas program for the kids with gift-giving. There were a lot of children and teenagers. Some visited the church for the first time, especially at such a festive event. We told all the children about the birth of Jesus Christ and the purpose for which He came to Earth. The children and their parents sincerely rejoiced and thanked the Lord God for everything they saw and heard.

In October, a wedding took place in our church for a young couple, Sino and Sabrina. They are both originally from a Muslim background.

Some years ago, the Word of God was sown in their hearts. They repented and turned in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. After some time, both became members of our church. Currently, Sino serves weekly in one of the districts in our region, where the worship service is conducted in the national language. Sabrina actively participates in our church's worship group, singing hymns in both Russian and our national language. Now, the Lord has united their hearts in marriage! **In addition to these events, we organized a trip to the mountainous regions, sharing Christ with the people of these areas and distributing Bible calendars.** We also provided the needy with food assistance.

Please PRAY for these ministries to the indigenous population, for our children's and youth ministries, and for the ongoing construction of our House of Prayer. Beloved brothers and sisters! We heartily congratulate you, your families, and your churches! *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:14).* ♦

UKRAINE: A Miracle Healing and Many Salvations

A Pastor Thanks SGA Supporters in a Time of Open Doors

Ivan B.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Ukraine



Members of pastor Ivan's church.

Dear partners, brothers, and sisters, I sincerely greet you with the love of Christ! Our merciful Lord gives us further opportunities to work for His Glory and Kingdom.

God Heals

I want to share with you one of the testimonies that happened in our small local church. One of our sisters in the church has a non-believing granddaughter who suffered from brain cancer a few years ago. The church prayed, and the Lord blessed her with good treatment and a successful operation. There were no traces of cancer left in her body—it was simply a miracle of God. But a few weeks ago, this 30-year-old woman—who has a husband and two children—was again diagnosed with a malignant tumor during a regular examination by her doctors. The doctors did not give any guarantees, but took her to the hospital for an urgent operation.

The church was very strong, devoted in prayers before and during the operation. Everything went extremely successfully and blessedly. Her healing came so instantly that even the doctors were extremely surprised.

Usually, the type of anesthesia she had requires

a whole day for recovery, and this young woman woke up while she was still in the operating room. She was strong enough to get up two hours later and wanted to eat very much. **This is an extraordinary miracle of God, and a testimony to this family about the power of God and His mercy.** After she returns home to the village, I plan to visit their family to thank God together. As a church, we continue to pray for their salvation. Join us in prayer!

God Draws Young People!



Day camp for children.

We are looking forward to summer camps already. Last year, throughout the summer the Lord blessed us with the opportunity to hold a **children's day camp**. We were allowed to do it at the **village stadium and the sports hall** of the local vocational school.

There were **110 children** who visited the camp, and adults were also present. In a different village, children's evangelistic meetings were held on every other Saturday. There were more than 100 children and adults who came to these meetings every time. **The meetings were filled with fellowship, games for children, Bible lessons and much more. After these meetings, more children began to attend Sunday school classes.** Also on Saturday, classes are



(Above Left) Children at the camp; (Above Right) Children study the Scriptures.



Ministry for teenage girls.

held for children to study the Scriptures at their level. Each week we had approximately 20-25 little friends attend these classes.

Also, separately for the young people, the meetings are held on Saturday evenings, where they study various biblical

topics, sing together, grow, and have fellowship for spiritual growth and development. **My wife started a ministry for teenage girls, where they go through Bible lessons learning about God, and His vision for women and girls.** At each meeting, 15 or more of the girls came, most of them are not from the church and they came to all the meetings with joy. They all look forward to the next meetings.

Dear friends, thank you very much for your ministry with us through financial and prayer support. We thank God for you! ♦



SGA-supported missionary pastor Vladimir and his family serve in Russia's Tyva republic.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

With each month of the **Good News Report**, we are only able to share a fraction of the wonderful reports we receive from faithful SGA-supported missionary pastors across the former Soviet Union, and from congregations in Israel. **But they provide a vivid, encouraging picture of the fruitful ministry you help make possible.** From Compassion Ministry, support for planting churches, provision of Bibles and Christian literature, Bible training, and children's ministries, you help accomplish so much for the glory of Christ. **Please pray about how you can help today! ♦**

Insight FROM MICHAEL

What Will the Next Years Hold for SGA? Only God Knows, But You Are Part of a Mighty Work.

Having returned not long ago from a visit to **Moldova** and seeing the fruitful work of the churches there, **I am very excited and thankful for the opportunity for SGA to begin serving these brothers and sisters and their ministries.** We will have more to say on that at a later date, but this visit was yet again a fresh reminder of how God is at work through His people across the former Soviet Union. You read about their churches and their outreaches each month in the *Good News Report*, and pray for their needs each day through *Prayer & Praise*. **It was so refreshing and encouraging to see their dedicated Gospel ministries again first hand, and what they are accomplishing for the glory of Christ.**

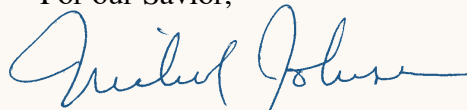


As noted in January, SGA is observing our 90th year of ministry this year. As I look back over our legacy, it is humbling and amazing to think that **this international ministry founded by Peter Deyneka got its start in the back room of a humble Chicago shoe store.** In that eventful year of 1934, Russia and the other countries that made up the former Soviet Union were 17 years into atheistic communism—a ruthless dominion that would last another 53 years. **After communism collapsed, an all-too-brief period of freedom began,** and the Lord made it possible for SGA to work directly in-country serving the churches and equipping them to seize every ministry opportunity they could. **Fast forward to today, and we see most of the former Soviet countries taking backward steps into authoritarian repression, and evangelical churches are once again under pressure.**

Yet one thing has not changed—and that is SGA's commitment to serve them as they faithfully proclaim the Gospel to their people. As always, the Lord sovereignly works through the preaching and teaching of His Word, and the Holy Spirit draws men, women, and children to salvation through repentance and faith in Christ.

What will the next years hold for our brothers and sisters, and for SGA's ministries? Only the Lord knows for sure. But we have our command from Him—a command that remains in force until He comes . . . *Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation* (Mark 16:15). Will you continue to partner with us in this great work? I humbly thank you in advance for your prayers and faithful support.

For our Savior,


Michael Johnson, President



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