



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

**In Winter's Cold . . .
In Summer's Heat . . .
Under Growing Pressure . . .
Missionary
Pastors See
God's Power!**



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

- ♦ A Christian family rescues three social orphans
- ♦ God works in heart of a Communist Party official
- ♦ Your gifts provide coal—and Christ's hope—for freezing families in Muslim Central Asia!

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)

A Christian Family Steps In

“I want my children to have a good life. I know if they are with you, everything will be fine.”

Diana, SGA Storyteller and Orphans Reborn Team in Central Asia

No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest . . . (Matthew 13:29-30).



Diana with the three children.

This story is about how **the bright light of faith in children’s hearts** burns in the darkness of sin and despair. Yerzhan and Ihsana’s mother grew up in an orphanage. **She fell into bad company and became a drug addict.** She remembers how we came to the orphanage and talked about Jesus. When we found her years later, she already had three children. Yerzhan and Ihsana are her two oldest.

We see that their mother’s life is not going well. But the children didn’t want to choose the path of poverty, hunger, drunk company, and debauchery.

We began to come to visit them and take the children for several days. Since their mother always knew us, she allowed them into our home. The children began to grow up in our environment. We teach them how to cook and take care of themselves. We try to provide them with clothes and shoes.

We call such children **“social orphans.”** They live without a father and with a mother who does not think of them. But now we are their family. We teach the children **Bible lessons.** They **pray** to God and **dream** of getting a profession. They visit villages with us and **learn virtue.** Yerzhan is preparing to be baptized and wants to serve on the worship team. Soon we will start teaching him to play the guitar. Ihsana is always there to sort food and clothes to help the poor. Camp season is also starting soon, and we are excited for them to grow with us.

We are glad that they chose us as their mentors. **We are honored to convey God’s love to these children.** We are always in touch with their mother and share news about the children. She says, *“I am so grateful to you for taking care of my children. I know that my life has become a bad example for them. But I remember everything you taught me when I was still in the orphanage. I really want my children to have a good life. I know if they are with you, everything will be fine.”*

We know this is not about us, but instead about our great God. He can make the lives of these children the happiest. Please remember Yerzhan and Ihsana in your prayers. We don’t want to separate children from their mother. They love each other. The mother is trying to fight sin. Children grow up communicating with us. **We believe that their mother will turn to the Lord because of the devoted faith of her children.** We are working hard until the harvest season. God is in control! ♦

Ukrainian Churches Send Thanks for Your Help!

War brings grief to many—but also repentance

Eugene K., SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Ukraine

There are not enough words to express the gratitude that overflows in my heart for all the help you give us. But especially grateful are people who have been **left without work and income** because of the war. And most significantly, many of them have been **attending our church regularly lately**, thanks to the food aid that you helped provide.

For example, **Vadym** had buried his mother at the beginning of the war. Now he lives alone. He does not have a permanent job—only temporary employment. We met him when we visited his dying mother. We invited him first to the home group, then we invited him to church. And for over a year now, he has been regularly attending all church services and Bible study groups. **He prays out loud now!** He happily quotes memorized Bible verses and participates in all church activities. Pray that he will be able to be baptized this summer.

Vadym shared his brief testimony. *“For me, war is associated with my sincere repentance and fellowship with God. The war helped me to love the*

Word of God, to study it, to absorb it. I paid attention to the Bible because I had never felt such a thirst for God’s Word before. All the horrors that war brings cannot be explained in one phrase. There have always been wars. I am thankful to all of God’s faithful children who take care of us and fulfill this labor of love, providing us with food. I am thankful for the prayers that are carried to the throne of God. But Christians from abroad may not realize what a selfless and necessary ministry they are carrying out, perhaps saving someone’s life! I believe that God Himself is using good people now in this difficult time, and perhaps these people would never have known about their good qualities if there had been no war in Ukraine. May God reward in His grace to all who love us and who pray for our country!”

Another woman named **Liubov** has been attending our church since the beginning of the war. Last year, she became a member of our church. Her

family also has some financial difficulties because of the war. But she is grateful for the help we provide. These two are only a small part of the many people who are grateful for the help we have given them. Many would like to express it in person, but they were too hesitant to speak publicly. Dear friends, I would like to express my gratitude to you—you fulfill a special ministry . . . *One who is gracious to a poor person lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed (Proverbs 19:17).* ♦



(Above Left) Eugene with Vadym; (Above Right) Eugene with Liubov.

MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

For thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth' (1 Kings 17:14).

Pastor Bolat in Central Asia recently shared a report about his ministry over the winter through the SGA-supported *Operation Winter Warmth* outreach, which SGA partners helped make possible.

He writes, "We are involved in **preaching the Gospel in the industrial districts of Saran** where they have factories for mechanical rubber goods, a chemical plant, and constructed housings. Thanks to your support, we are involved in **planting a new church based on the Nadezhda (Hope)**

Rehabilitation Center, and are praying about possibilities to help those in need in our area. The Lord heard our prayer and answered, sending His blessings through your hands! With your help, we were able to implement the **Winter Warmth ministry**, having provided 16 families with warm blankets, individual hygiene items, and grocery packages. One family was a Christian family with many children. The mother's name is Anzhelika. Apart from the items that I mentioned above, we **helped the family buy heating coal, as they had run out of it in the midst of freezing weather.** Anzhelika and her children heartily thanked Jesus Christ and His church for this help!

Along with believing homes, we were able to help those families who had just started their path in seeking God. Among them is Nadezhda, who is **raising six children alone.** Her eldest is 16, and the youngest is two years old. When I told her that it was a gift from the Lord sent to them through His faithful children, she said, **'God is a living God, I know this for sure now!'** Another woman, Elena, asked for a copy of the New Testament, and expressed her desire to attend our services! **It is hard to express in words what I felt when I saw these needy, often sullen people preoccupied with their thoughts start smiling with tears in their eyes."**

For desperately needy families in Central Asia where poverty is severe and widespread, our



Helping Nadezhda (above left) and Elena (above right) through the *Operation Winter Warmth* ministry.

loving, unchanging God moves in His grace and mercy to provide for those in great need, and to call them to Himself.

When food is plenty and people have all the things they want or need, it is so easy to forget that all our blessings come out of God's grace, mercy, and provision. Yet when we suddenly find ourselves without, and can't see a way out of our circumstances, the Lord uses our desperation to remind us of His love and our need for Him, and that He is our provider at all times. He calls us to repent of our sin and to trust in Him as Lord and Savior—indeed, the only Savior that there is. As God's Word reminds us . . . *there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved* (Acts 4:12).

We praise and thank the Lord for Bolat's ministry in Central Asia—a **part of the world where Islam is dominant and opposition to the Gospel is harsh.** Please remember Bolat and his church often as they boldly serve the Risen Savior in a difficult part of the world. ♦

Thanksgiving in Conclusion of 74 Years of Fruitful Ministry with SGA

By Ruth Deyneka Erdel

It was the spring of 1950, and I was about to graduate from Bob Jones University. I knew I needed to make a decision about where I was going to serve the Lord. I had heard much about the thousands of Slavic World War II refugees living in Eastern Europe. My father Peter Deyneka had founded Slavic Gospel Association in 1934, and the ministry was having a fruitful evangelistic outreach among them. After praying about this missionary opportunity, it was then that I applied to go as a missionary to these refugees through SGA.

I sailed to Europe on the ship *Queen Mary* on July 7, 1950. I was especially blessed to make that journey with my father, who was going there to have a special summer ministry among these Slavic refugees. Indeed, it became a very blessed summer of ministry for both of us! After my father returned to the US, I continued to serve in Frankfurt, Germany, as well as Austria and France, until January 1953 when I had my first furlough.

In November, 1953, I married missionary Rev. Jack Shalanko. SGA then assigned us to serve the Lord at Radio Station HCJB, in Quito, Ecuador. There we spent almost 30 years doing radio programs in Russian, English, and Spanish. Those



Ruth and Jack served together through radio ministry.

were wonderful fulfilling years of giving the Gospel to millions of Russian-speaking people and to others around the world. Many of these listeners trusted in the Lord as their Savior. Jack went to be with the Lord in 1993.

After Jack's homegoing, I continued to serve the Lord at SGA's office located then in Wheaton, Illinois, as well as at the Russian Baptist Home for the Aged and the Russian Youth Camp in Ashford, Connecticut. Over the next years, I also made more than 20 ministry trips to Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus. There I was invited to minister to thousands of Slavic women and children who spoke Russian. Many of these women were new Christians. They began to ask me to write books for them on how to grow spiritually. With the Lord's help, I have now completed two books for them: *My Father's House* and *Daughters of the King*.



Paul and Ruth

On June 1, 1996, I married Rev. Paul Erdel, a retired missionary to Ecuador. He has been a great help and encourager to me in my writing. Now, the time has come for me to retire after 74 years of ministry. I thank the Lord with all my heart for allowing me to be an SGA missionary for all these years! I thank the Lord for the many who throughout these years have encouraged me, supported me, and PRAYED FOR ME! I do not regret one day of my missionary life. It has been a great joy to serve the Lord! ♦

Editor's Note: For those who wish to continue to support Ruth, you can make your gift to Slavic Gospel Association and designate it for the support of Ruth Deyneka Erdel.

The Gospel Impacts the Heart of a Communist in Russia's Far East

Maxim, SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Russia



Vlad at the church.

Peace and grace be to you, co-workers in the harvest field of God! I want to share with you the good fruit of our ministry in **Far East Russia**, and to share prayer needs.

We witnessed an amazing Gospel opportunity in the fall of 2023. We were doing road repairs around the church building. We had to hire bulldozers and backhoes to move the ground. The neighbors of the church building were curious about this work, so they came and watched. They asked different questions. We gave them a tour around the building, and we used that chance to tell them about God. It was an unusual opportunity. While none of the neighbors have yet come to our church services, one man named Vlad—the owner of the firm from which we hired the machinery—came to our church service as the result of such a tour. Later he also came to our meeting with the men.

We had a lengthy conversation with Vlad about God and he asked us to pray for him. At the end of the last year, he was elected as a representative of the Communist Party in local government. He

came with that news to our church, and we were able to have more fellowship with him, and I prayed for him. Presently Vlad attends our meetings for men, and comes to different church events, but he has not yet repented before Jesus. **Therefore, pray with us that God would open his heart!** Amazing thing is that this man, while being an unregenerate person, is an active witness about Jesus in his business, in the administration, and among his neighbors.

He regularly comes to the church during the week in order to get the Bibles or New Testaments, which he distributes as he tells people about Jesus, and he shares testimonies that the Word of God helps people in their life. **He never comes to church alone. He always brings new unbelievers with him.** This is somewhat amazing for me, and I am surprised by the way God is reaching out to people with the Gospel!

For our Christmas ministry, we were able to be bold in taking the Gospel to many people. We spend time in preparation for the celebration. We ordered Christian calendars, made and signed postcards for



(Above Left) Christmas program at the orphanage; (Above Center and Right) Christmas program at the church.

our friends, organized special dinners, and prepared a Christmas play for the children, which we showed in our church and at the orphanage. On the next day after our outreach at the orphanage, we had another in our church building. God brought about 200 children and adults to the Christmas celebration.

This was unbelievable! We received many messages from believers and their non-Christian friends, expressing their gratitude. **Several adults with their children started to attend church services on a regular basis.** One woman, who came to church after the Christmas event, was weeping a

lot. After the church service, I came up to her and asked whether she was all right. She told me that just two weeks ago she lost her husband at war. Now she has no husband, and the children have no father. **All those days she lived with no hope and she had such a depression, but today she saw the light from God and found hope in Jesus Christ.** The sisters from our church came to her and prayed together with her.

We are so glad that the Lord, who was once born in Bethlehem, continues to enter many hearts even today! Please keep praying for our ministry! ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

SGA-supported missionary pastors are truly the bedrock of all SGA-supported ministries across the former Soviet Union. It is a joy to serve them together with you for the sake of the Gospel. Whether it be provision of doctrinally sound Bible training, Bibles and Christian literature, support of children's ministries such as Summer



Ministering to children in Ukraine.

Camps and *Orphans Reborn*, or support of the pastors and their families in ministry, you are truly making a difference for the glory of God in many lives. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Rehab ministry in Central Asia.

Insight FROM MICHAEL

The pressure is increasing on pastors. Please pray!

As is the case with the November/December issue of the **Good News Report**, the May/June issue covers two months and is focused on how your faithful support helps equip faithful missionary pastors and their families for fruitful ministry.

Along with others on the SGA team, I have had numerous opportunities to travel to Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and the other former Soviet countries to see the pastors and their churches *in action*. Every time, I come back home blessed and encouraged having seen the wonderful fruit of their service to Christ.



These faithful pastors lead such an intense ministry schedule.

Many are planting more than one church at a time, and carrying out visitation, one-on-one evangelism, children's ministries, camp outreaches, prison ministry, and even church-based drug rehabilitation. They are living examples of . . . *whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might* (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Many of these pastors **work full time jobs in addition to their full time church ministry**. They joyfully make great sacrifices for the opportunity to share the life-changing Gospel with one more person—man, woman, teenage youth, or child. **I can't help but also consider the great pressures many of them face in regions where opposition to the Gospel is strong, such as in the Muslim-dominated lands of Central Asia.** Churches in the European, non-Islamic parts of the former Soviet Union are not immune.

Pressure from governing authorities is increasing by the day. In Belarus, churches are being forced to re-register with the potential of not having their registration accepted. Russian evangelical churches face great pressure to back the war in Ukraine, although they have taken a pacifist position on war for years. But they go on lovingly and boldly proclaiming the love of Christ and the hope of the Gospel. **They are an inspiration and example for us all.**

Please join me in offering up regular intercessory prayer for our brothers and sisters across the former Soviet Union. Ask the Lord to bless them, encourage their hearts, and provide for their needs. **Pray also for SGA as we continue to help them in any way that God opens to us.** We couldn't do it without you!

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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