



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

**Christ is building
His kingdom . . .**
through the work of missionary
pastors and your prayers and gifts!



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

- ◆ God is using pastors and their wives to reach more and more . . .
- ◆ Prodigals and promise—the struggle for souls is intense!
- ◆ From Michael Johnson: The many ways churches are growing.

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)

God is at Work . . . Christ's Church is Growing!

Your Prayers and Support Help Missionary Pastors Reach Old and Young Alike

Khakim S.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Russia



Bible study group in Khakim's home.

My dear brothers and sisters, I greet you! I want to tell you a bit about the people with whom we work.

Dmitri and Ann – Pray for this father and daughter!

The first is a man named **Dmitri**. He is the father of one of my students. He is an alcoholic and goes on binges that can last from two to three weeks. I talked to him a lot about the Lord and salvation, but thus far he rejects the Gospel. I invited him to our home Bible study group that I organized for young students and their parents. I was sure he would not come to the group meeting. **Then someone knocked at the door. I opened it and saw Dmitri and his daughter, Ann.** I exclaimed, “*Dmitri! I bet it will be snowing today. It is a miracle that you came!*” When our meeting was over, Dmitri and Ann left the apartment, but two minutes later they came back. I saw snow on Dmitri’s shoulders. I was shocked to see it. He said that I told him about snow. I said it was a sign from God, and Dmitri had

to believe. Dmitri attended two more meetings in the group, and then he stopped coming. **Please pray for his salvation.**

As for **Ann**, she confessed her sins at our sports camp last year. She wanted to abandon the habit of filthy communication most of all. **She was eight years old then.** It was the influence of her parents. **Even at her young age, Ann drank alcohol (also the example of her parents) and smoked. After her confession, she stopped filthy communications and doing other bad things.** It is hard to say if she is

born again, although I can say that God is working with her and continues to work. Ann also told me that she stopped using filthiness. She can hardly stay indifferent when her parents say bad words.

Once, while traveling with her father in a car, she asked him to switch off the songs with bad words, that he was listening to. Ann asked him to stop listening to such songs. Now he does not listen to such songs in the car when Ann is with him. Ann’s mother warned her that she would stop allowing Ann to attend the lessons if she did not stop reminding her about the use of bad words.

Konstantin – A battle over this young soul!

I am happy about a boy named Konstantin. He is age 11. **He turned to God in the camp last year.** He began to read the Bible with interest right after that. He told me several times that he wanted to be a disciple of Christ (I saw tears in his eyes). At the beginning of a new school year, I noticed that something had happened to him. The expression of



Khakim leads children in a Bible lesson.

his eyes changed. The look was angry. When I read Scripture before the lessons, he did not listen and something distracted him. He was aggressive and proud. Then I found out that he began to smoke.

It turned out that he had become acquainted with local young hooligans. Strangely, when Konstantin’s parents found out that he had begun to smoke, they forbade him to attend our lessons! I talked to them, but nothing changed. I began to pray for him specifically.

Then at our sports camp in June, Konstantin asked to talk with me. **He said he wanted to repent. I asked him why he wanted to do it. He said his sins tormented him.** He prayed and I prayed for



him. The next day, Konstantin told his young group leader in the camp that he had gotten rid of the songs with filthy music on his phone. On the second day in the camp, my student Sofia repented, then Konstantin turned to God. The same evening, Anastasia (the mother of a student) heard the Gospel and repented the same day, asking God to forgive her sins. The next day, other pupils began to turn to God. **Nine pupils out of 12 repented.** Glory be to our Lord Jesus Christ!

Please, pray that God will keep these children, that they will become His disciples, and that more children will come with the beginning of a new school year. ♦

MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

... a man's enemies will be the members of his household (Matthew 10:36).

As Christians, we are forewarned by the Lord Himself through His Word that we will encounter many trials during our walk on this earth. When we come to the Lord Jesus in repentance and faith in His finished work on the cross for us, we often encounter opposition that we never expected. Sometimes this opposition comes from even our own loved ones. But even amid the trials, there is joy.

Vasily an SGA-supported missionary pastor in Belarus, shared a wonderful update on a woman named Ekaterina, who came to the Lord after many trials.

"I recently told you about Ekaterina, a mother with many children, about her difficult way of life. The Lord led Ekaterina through life, sanctifying and cleansing her heart from all the filth of the flesh and spirit. Katya realized and understood that no matter how difficult it was on this path, it was necessary to walk with hope in God, and to remain faithful to Him until the end. After all, the Lord God, as the Bible says, gives each Christian the tests of faith according to his strength, so that it is possible to endure everything. Thus, Ekaterina determined to fulfill God's will to the end, no matter what happens, to make a covenant with the Lord through water baptism.

When this covenant day came during her preparation for baptism, Ekaterina had to go through some difficulties with her family, both on the part of her unbelieving husband, as well as the young children. Thank God that He helped in all this, even saving the life and health of one of the children.

On this appointed solemn feast day, Ekaterina made a covenant with the Lord, receiving water baptism, and promising God to serve in good conscience. My dear brothers and sisters, friends, please support me and the church in praying to God for Ekaterina, so that the Lord may strengthen her first of all spiritually, but also physically, in all circumstances to live in hope and trust in the Lord."



Ekaterina's baptism.

In Matthew's Gospel, the Lord Jesus foretold that ... a man's enemies will be the members of his household (Matthew 10:36).

As believers in the Lord Jesus, we know the great joy of salvation—knowing that our sins are forgiven because the Lord took them upon Himself, and that we belong to Him eternally through faith in Him. We have wonderful times of fellowship with one another, and even more joy as we learn more of God through His Word, seeing how His eternal purpose for good stands throughout the ages. We look forward to the day when we will be in His presence forever with life eternal.

But in this life, sometimes the cost of discipleship can be very high. Our fallen world is deeply opposed to God, and the life-changing Gospel. Some people are enemies of righteousness, seeking to oppress and persecute all who desire to live godly lives. Satan works through these enemies. Perhaps the most painful and difficult of all comes when we face hostility from fathers, mothers, siblings, and yes, even children. But it is then that we must—with God's help—stand lovingly firm in our faith and be a faithful testimony.

In the former Soviet Union, how often we have seen amazing testimonies from those who were former communist functionaries, or prison officials who came to faith because of the faithful witness of believers they oppressed? Nothing is impossible for God, and He can use even the opposition of His enemies to spread the Gospel even farther! ♦

God is Reaching Souls in Belarus

Your Support Helps Reach Children for Christ

Nikolai S.

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Belarus

I am thankful to God that our church has a vision for children's ministry. Today, our church provides a lot of opportunities to work with children. **We now have more children in our church than adults! So many come from unbelieving families to the church.** We always try to feed them and tell them about God.



Children at the Vacation Bible School.

In June, we held a Vacation Bible School. The children who attended came from **large, low-income, socially disadvantaged families**, and there were two orphans. The children proved to be very difficult—there were **three kids who were completely out of control**. At first, we even wanted to send them home from the camp because of their behavior, but God touched one of these three. Young

Maxim had reflected on his behavior. The Bible class he had been in was teaching about **the meaning of life, why we appeared on this earth, why we live, and where we will go after leaving this earth**. Maxim began to ask Alexander questions, and even started to talk about it with his friends who were misbehaving. All three boys began to think about it. In the end Maxim repented. Thank God!



Maxim

In July, the church held another Bible school. The team who conducted it lovingly carried out children's ministry. I saw them come together in the evening hours to pray. They asked God to help them and enable them to better present the Gospel to the children's hearts.

This is a very difficult labor. Several times they invited me to pray and I prayed with them. I am very thankful to God that He prepared such great people. The guys were not only from our church, but also three brothers from Golgotha Baptist Church in Minsk. They are working sacrificially for God. I saw that the adults, elderly, and youth are needed as an important part for the ministry in the church.

During the camp, I saw how united all the church members were. People constantly asked me how they could help and participate in the children's ministry. I thank God that people in the church love God and each other. I am very grateful to God that you are praying for me, my family, for my wife Tatiana, and for all our ministry.

Please pray that we will have funds to build a playground for the children's ministry. We also pray for you and your ministry and thank you for your prayer support. ♦

Welcoming a Prodigal and Training in God's Word

Yegor M.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Russia

I want to tell you a short story about a man named Maxim. As a church, we pray for professed believers who have left the church. It does not mean they are sentenced to always be outside the church. We believe that the Lord can show them and lead them on the way back.

Maxim had made a profession of faith in 1992 as a teenager, then got baptized a year later. Then he moved to another town and stopped attending church. In the past 30 years, he became a dentist, then married and divorced several times, and he has four children. He no longer had fellowship with any church.

Praise the Lord, recently Maxim came back to our church, saying that he is tired of being alone. We had a long conversation with him. I invited him to join the Bible study group at my home, and to join the *Foundations of Faith* classes at the church. He was very encouraged by our conversation, and he is now a very good student—he is happy to get all the knowledge from the Bible that he has missed in the past 30 years. We pray for Maxim to grow in Christ and to have strong faith. Please join us in our prayers!



Yegor and Maxim; Bible study at Yegor's home.

The Value and Importance of Bible Training

Bible study is vital for people like Maxim, and people in all situations.

In the last three months, I have been doing a lot of teaching at my church. I continued to hold Bible classes for our brothers and sisters, teaching *History of New Testament* and *Bibliology*. I am getting some good feedback from the students, some of them say that it is something they really



Top L to R: Bible class at church; Preachers School class for young men; Bottom L to R: Christian leadership class for youth and teenaged leaders; Foundations of Faith class.

longed for—learning to navigate the Word of God, learning to understand His will and His action in our lives. I also started a new *Preachers School* for young brothers who want to learn how to share Scripture with the church through sermons. We have four brothers who attend the classes and they are very motivated for a new ministry.

Besides these classes, I started some other courses in Christian leadership for our youth and teenaged leaders. It is also a very good time for open and sincere discussion of complicated issues that our leaders face in ministry. We talk about our goals in ministry, problems that prevent us from achieving these goals, and ways to solve problems. I continue the *Foundations of Faith* classes for brothers and sisters who want to become members of our church. Some of them joined recently.

Dear brothers and sisters, once again I thank you for all of your support, both spiritual and financial! It is very important for our family. May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you richly and may He continue His work in our lives! ♦

You Can Bless Missionary Pastors this Christmas!

Each year, SGA supporters like you have a wonderful opportunity to bless faithful missionary pastors across the former Soviet Union with a special \$100 Christmas gift.

These pastors and their families live very frugally with much of their resources going into their ministry. Such a gift helps enable them to get gifts for their children, meet urgent medical situations, fuel to heat their homes, and other needs. Here are some notes of thanks from last year's effort:

"Greetings, dear brothers and sisters! We greet you on the great holiday of Christmas! We are thankful for the entire team—you and SGA—who have been with us in ministry for 25 years. We love you all and thank God that you have been with us all these years in serving God on this not easy, but blessed journey. Thank you for your help with our children's ministries and many other projects. Thank you for everything, dear friends! May the Lord protect you, bless you, and reward you a hundredfold."

Vasily Korobov, UECB of Turkmenistan

"Once again, with gratitude and joy, we accept this Christmas gift from you and thank the Lord for your

loving hearts, and showing your love in deeds. This is a great support for us, especially at this time when utility and other expenses increase with the onset of cold weather. We also have to buy winter clothes for our children. May the Lord bless you, your churches, and your families. May God reward you abundantly according to His riches for your labor! Blessings to you and all the best from God."

Viktor and Natalia, Belarus

"Peace be with you, brothers and sisters! Thank you for your participation in the life of our family. You have shown Christian love not only in words, but in deeds and have given us a helping hand. You have sacrificed not only to the best of your ability, but beyond your ability, God is our witness. May Christ Himself fill your every need



Natasha with her daughter.

according to the riches of His grace!"

Yuri and Natasha, Belarus

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Bible study for internally displaced people in Ukraine.

The Apostle John said at the end of his Gospel that the world would not be able to contain the books that could be written about what our Lord Jesus did during his time on earth. We often feel that way when we see all that He has enabled the faithful churches SGA supports across the former Soviet Union to do.

Hardworking missionary pastors accomplish so much with few resources. Your gifts help equip them with Bible and theological training, Bibles and Christian literature, support for children's ministries, Compassion Ministry, and so much more. And we are thankful! Please consider how you can help today. ♦

Insight FROM MICHAEL

How many ways does God use missionary pastors? *Many . . .*

Once or twice a year in the Good News Report, instead of emphasizing a single ministry area such as *Orphans Reborn* or Bible training, we focus on the fruitful and varied ministries of SGA-supported missionary pastors across the former Soviet Union. I've commented before on the sheer volume of reports that we get from our brothers and their families. Their love for the Lord and passion for sharing the Gospel with the lost jumps off of every page. It is hard not to be blessed and



uplifted when you see how God is using them to reach lost men, women, and children for Christ.

The ways are so varied. Some are able to engage in larger **evangelistic events**, while others are in regions where ministry has to be carried out far more discreetly. They share Christ **one-on-one**. They share Christ in **hospitals, nursing homes, and even prisons**.

They organize **sports ministries to reach youth and young adults** with the Gospel. They hold **summer camp**

ministries with all the usual activities for children in addition to Bible lessons. Some are in areas where they can hold an activity like rafting down a river, all while witnessing for Christ and modeling His example during the trip.

There are regions of Russia where the climate and terrain are very difficult, including bitterly cold temperatures that last for weeks. That won't stop the pastors and evangelists. The only access to some of the villages is by riverboat or by driving up a frozen riverbed in the winter. **Even on snowmobiles!** Christmas will be here before we know it, and by God's grace, thousands of children will be reached with the Gospel as they receive Christmas gifts you help provide.

I truly pray and hope that as you read, you will get a sense of the eternal impact of what is happening. Thank you as always for your faithful partnership in helping to make it all happen!

For our Savior,

Michael Johnson
President



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