



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION  
**Good News Report**

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

# Hearts Can be Hard Ground. But Just Read What God is Doing to Soften Them!

Be inspired by Jesus'  
work through your  
support . . .

## INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Moldova—once cold to Christ—continues to thaw!
- ♦ Children have seen bombings, beatings, and betrayal. But through your gifts, they are opening their hearts to Christ.
- ♦ This mission field is a vast spiritual battle field. But SGA churches are staying strong and 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 Uses Your Gifts to Help Turn Moldova's Rocky Ground into Fertile Soil!

*[Pray] for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity (1 Timothy 2:2).*



Pastor Andrei and his family.

For the faithful missionary pastors SGA serves across the former Soviet Union, it has always been a challenge for them and their congregations to find favor in a community. During the communist years and even before, false stories were spread about Baptist churches—stories that were difficult to overcome. Yet Andrei, a missionary pastor in Moldova, is a wonderful example of how God brings the truth to light over time. Through his continued faithfulness and love for his community, he has gained the trust and respect of the leaders. He quietly and lovingly built relationships with those in authority, and helped others in need. **Because of his faithfulness, the churches in Moldova are now regarded differently. People are hearing the Gospel, and seeing it lived out** in the lives of Pastor Andrei and the people who attend his church.

Pastor Andrei shared that 2024 was a remarkable year for his region, with numerous public events organized by various churches in the city. There were **day camps** with over 300 children, a



Andrei and a local Călărași official.

**Christmas show with a symphony orchestra, and special programs in early summer that brought a lot of people together to celebrate Christian values.** These achievements are the fruit of a common effort and extraordinary spiritual progress that took place in this city and throughout Moldova. **Only 15 years ago, Baptist believers were persecuted and faced many obstacles.** Today, however, things have changed for the better, and the authorities are open and recognize the efforts of the churches.



Pastor Andrei preaches the Gospel at a public meeting at the District Council.

While there are still places where conversion to biblical faith faces difficulties and pressures, the state no longer puts obstacles—on the contrary, it supports the initiatives of believers. Andrei's wife is a medical provider and dedicates her life to saving people's bodies, while Andrei dedicates himself to bringing the good news of salvation through Christ.

He asks, ***"I encourage everyone to pray for our local authorities, that God may give them wisdom and bless them with an open heart for the good of all citizens."*** ♦



Andrei at a police station.

# You Helped Reach Children During Wartime Bombardment

*Christian camp resumes with the help from "people abroad" like you*

Valery K.

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Ukraine

Last September, the residents of Poltava experienced incoming **missile attacks**. There were 58 people killed while 328 were injured. Our air defense shoots down most of the missiles, but not all, which is why we have tragic incidents. The **hostile drones** fly over our village almost every day. Every morning, we wake up in the hope of good news, but there is more negative news. We need rest, but we hold on and attend retreats for encouragement.

This past summer, **for the first time in five years, we managed to hold a children's Christian camp.** At first the COVID pandemic prevented us, then the war. We decided to resume this ministry, because we have already been living in wartime conditions for a long time and we do not know when it will end. The children's camp lasted three days and 57 children came. **They said that they had been waiting for the Christian camp all these years.** Tears came to our eyes when we saw the children



(Left) Teenagers at the camp; (right) younger campers.

jumping carefree on the trampoline and playing games, because this is how childhood should be—not the sounds of explosions and constant tension.

The older group consisted of 11 teenagers, and **14-year-old Matviy** was one of them. His city suffered from shelling and was surrounded, but it withstood this onslaught. He and his family were hiding in the basement, and were unable to cook properly or sleep. They were in constant fear of death. When they left the city, Matviy saw a lot of broken military equipment, as well as dead bodies of people. This left a big negative mark on his life. He also shared that after graduating from school, he plans to enter a military aviation specialty, so we ask

you to pray for his salvation. We had about 20 children who were from low-income families, with many living in dysfunctional families where the parents are alcoholics.

It was also **impossible to hold back tears** when the children received the gifts. For them it was a real joy—at that moment they felt that they were loved. **The camp leaders taught the children to thank God for these gifts, because it is He who awakens people far abroad to help those in need.** Thank you for your prayers and for the material assistance you provided. May the Lord bless you a hundredfold! ♦



Campers and leaders at the Christian summer camp.



# Overcoming Chernobyl's Pain With Hope in Christ

## Your Gifts Reach Across the World to Hurting Souls in Belarus

Boris V.

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Belarus

Dear brothers and sisters, peace to your hearts from our Savior. God gave us many opportunities to share the Gospel and God's love with people and invite them into the House of God. For our **Christmas outreach**, I prepared a message for adults and children about God's gift and the price that was paid so that we could be reconciled with Him. The youth and Sunday school teachers prepared a wonderful puppet drama about two little boys searching for Christmas.

With this delightful message and the puppet performance, we traveled almost 249 miles. The Lord opened the door to a nursing home for us. People were sick and abandoned by relatives at an advanced age. They rejoiced in Christmas like children! The love of God warmed their hearts. We also held a service for parents and children who



Christmas program for parents and children affected by Chernobyl.

suffer from radiation related to the Chernobyl explosion. **The disabled children and families with many children came to our church.** We were able to visit five of our daughter churches with a message and a play. There was a lot of joy, gifts, good spirits, and most importantly we shared the Gospel. We are grateful to God for such opportunities to serve!

I especially remember a conversation with an elderly man. His name is Anatoly and he is 70. He brought his three grandchildren to the church. His health deteriorated a lot after the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and efforts to extinguish it.



Anatoly and his three grandchildren.

Perhaps that is why his son is dying of cancer at the age of 40. Anatoly's three grandchildren remain with their grandfather. His grandmother lived in Ukraine and was a Christian, a member of the Baptist church. He still has a Bible from the 1920s. He wants to donate it to our church. **Word by word, we began to talk about the soul and the forgiveness of sins.**

Anatoly promised to come to the church service. I am going to call him and visit his family to tell him more about Christ. **Please pray for Anatoly, for his dying son, for his grandchildren, that the Gospel of Christ may shine to their hearts!** Praise the Lord that over 300 people were able to hear the Gospel during these days.

**Pray with us for the precious souls of the children and adults.** We give thanks to our Heavenly Father for your sacrificial hearts, for your support of our family in the ministry, for your prayers and zeal for the work of God. ♦

## MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

*It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all (1 Timothy 1:15).*

There are few people in this world who are without regrets that bear heavy on their hearts. For those who follow Christ, most wish they had followed Him sooner. In most Western nations, we hear of Christ and maybe have attended a church in the past, but we go on to walk our own way apart from Him. Regrettable actions always follow. Most come to faith after living a portion of their life they regret. These sinful choices are forgiven through the matchless grace of God. But with eyes to see, we realize that the consequences of our sinful choices can be overwhelming. **In Christ, however, those regrets become guideposts, markers that remind us never to go that way again.** Christ, by His grace, carries our burdens and sets us free to follow Him. We cannot change the past. But we can live a new life in Christ without regrets, healing old wounds and walking forward in Christ.

Pastor Peter ministers to many in **eastern Ukraine** who have not only struggled with the war, but with past choices. Natalia is one such person. *"At our first Bible study group, Natalia listened very carefully and then came to me to tell me about her pain and grief. She told me that a few years ago her daughter had been killed right on the street. This is the same street in the neighborhood where our church is located. The tragedy of this murder was that her daughter's murderer has not been convicted yet and is still at large. These are the realities in which we live today. I listened to Natalia and prayed for her, asking the Lord to intervene in this case Himself, for God's truth to be in this situation, and for Natalia to have the strength to submit everything to His righteous judgment."* Natalia heard of the grace of God, but remained overwhelmed with the death of her daughter. Looking backwards to this pain, she had almost no power to move forward.

In time, her eyes began to move from her pain to her Savior, **yet she battled with regret.** *"A few*



Natalia (gray sweater) at the church.

*months later, during our last conversation, Natalia expressed her regret that she had not heard about God and who He truly is. "I realize now," she says, "that everything in my life could have gone in a different way. If only I had known about God earlier and heard the truth of Christ. If only I had had the opportunity to study the Word of God and attend a church where Jesus Christ was preached. I would have prayed and my daughter might not have been killed. I believe that there would not have been such grief in my family," she said.*

Pastor Peter pointed Natalia to Christ. Although her heart ached with regret, the past cannot be changed. Her new focus on Christ gives her strength for each day. And as Pastor Peter says, out of our love of Christ and for others, we should seek out broken hearts and point them to the grace of God in Christ. May many who only know pain and regret find hope in Jesus Christ, and in Him the power to move forward each day. ♦



# How Orphans are Learning to Forgive—and Find Christ's Forgiveness

## SGA Supporters Fund Outreach to Emotionally Struggling Orphans

### SGA-Supported Orphans Reborn Team in Smolensk, Russia

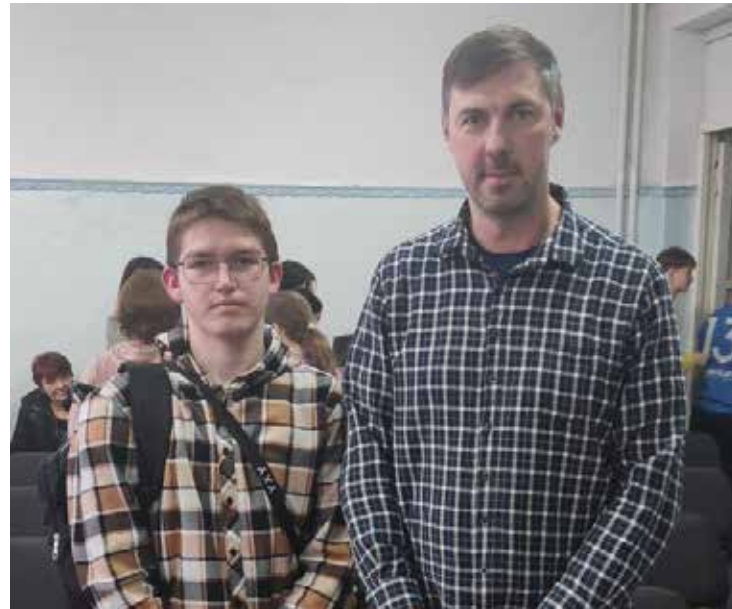
One of the most difficult topics for the orphans is forgiveness. They feel that they suffer when they are not guilty of anything, and realize that they are in the orphanages because of the actions of others. In their hearts, they still love their parents and wait for them to come to take them home. But it is so difficult for some to forgive when:

- you remain in the orphanage for Christmas, while other children are taken by some relatives.
- you remember your dad is beating your mom.
- you have scars made by your own father when he was so drunk that he didn't realize what he was doing.
- you're being bullied. You don't get any comfort, but somewhere in your dreams there's a kind mother who will intercede and hug you.

**Every time when we begin to discuss forgiveness with the children, we know that there will be difficult questions and ask for God's wisdom.**

In one lesson, we discussed forgiveness and shared what the Bible has to say about it. We told the children about our forgiving Heavenly Father and discussed forgiveness in their lives. A boy named Mathey said, *"When you do not forgive, you have a heavy stone in your heart. But I am afraid to get rid of this stone, I get used to it. But I want to feel joy and lightness."* **We had a very good discussion with him, telling him what can we put into our hearts instead of this stone.**

When we hear such questions, we understand



Mathey with an Orphans Reborn leader.

that we are doing serious ministry. Mathey is a very attentive boy—he always asks serious questions and thinks a lot about our lessons. Another of the boys came to Nadya after the lesson and said that he cannot forgive his mom. He had a very angry expression on his face, but also tears in his eyes. He said that he would never forgive her, but also whispered, *"But I want to love her, I need to love somebody."* Nadya gave him a hug and they prayed together.



Boys who had a conflict.

In addition to all this, we gave the children an opportunity to ask each other for forgiveness if they feel that they have done anybody any harm. Two boys actually had a quarrel before the lesson, and one of these boys raised his hand and asked for forgiveness. Everybody

clapped. The boys became friends again!

After one of the lessons the head teacher of the orphanage asked us to have some tea together. She called several active teachers as well. **They told us about the children and the influence of the Bible lessons. They see very positive results. The children are very active in listening and they retell**

**the stories to each other during the week. Besides, they said that the lessons influence the teachers as well. They look at their own life in a new way, and think about what we tell them. During that tea break they asked some questions about God and Christianity!** We appreciate your help and prayers. Please pray for these children with us. ♦



An Orphans Reborn team visits children in Smolensk.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

SGA exists to serve the Bible-preaching churches of the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and in Israel. Helping to equip the faithful missionary pastors of the churches is one of the paramount ways we do this with your support. Your generous gifts not only **help support the pastors and their families in ministry**, but also provide **Bibles and Christian literature, Bible and theological training, Compassion Ministry, children's ministries, and so much more.** We are so thankful for you and each one of our partners. Please pray about how you can help today. ♦



Pastoral conference in Belarus.



# Insight FROM MICHAEL

## The Former USSR Was a Tragedy. *But God Had a Plan . . .*

Most of us have probably heard the line, “It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.” It comes out of a classic Charles Dickens novel about the French Revolution and its impacts, but has been applied many times in many nations as people consider the times in which they live.

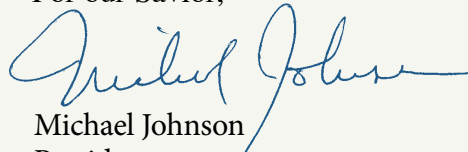
**It is certainly no different these days across the former Soviet Union, where upheaval of one kind or another has been constant since the Soviet breakup in 1991.** There was the initial shock and subsequent turmoil of the Soviet collapse, followed by an all-too-brief period of recovery and hope for better things and more freedom. **And as happens all too often in our fallen world, it did not take long before turmoil arose again, including shattered economies, political divisions, and various wars.** Many men, women, and children suffered, and despaired of hope.

**But the story doesn’t end there.**

All throughout the troubles, our faithful Lord continued reaching into peoples’ hearts through the proclamation of the Gospel by His churches. As God’s Word was faithfully proclaimed and compassion lovingly shown by believers, the Lord drew thousands to Himself in faith as the Holy Spirit worked in their hearts. You—SGA’s faithful partners in ministry—have been a part of it all through your prayers and constant support. **Each day, we receive tremendous reports from missionary pastors and their churches reporting on the fruit of their labor.** They never fail to express *their thankfulness for you*, and their great joy in knowing that brothers and sisters here are praying for them.

Through your intercession, you encourage them on in their tireless ministry to their troubled people. I can’t thank you enough for your faithfulness in support of the churches that God is building across **Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, and the other former Soviet countries.** Add in the former Warsaw Pact nation of **Poland**, and then reaching **Russian-speaking immigrants to Israel**, and you can see how God is using our tiny mission to accomplish much more than would appear possible given our small size. But God isn’t hindered by that. He uses the small to accomplish great things! Join me in praising Him with thanksgiving for what He has done.

For our Savior,



Michael Johnson  
President



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