



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

# Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

## Trained servant-leaders plant and grow churches in wounded nations— filled with waiting souls!

You are part of God's  
plan to reach them.

### INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Even non-believers flock to hear the Word of God!
- ♦ Bombs cannot overcome the love of Christ or His soul-piercing truth.
- ♦ Even young people want to learn—and communicate—the Bible!



*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 Opens Doors for EXPANDED Bible Training!

*He Uses Your Generous Gifts to Change Lives for Eternity*

Dr. Larry Duncan  
SGA Director of Bible Training

We are so thankful for the prayers of SGA partners that undergird the fruitful Bible training ministries supported by SGA in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. Earlier this year, I traveled to Moldova arriving on a Saturday afternoon. Then on Sunday, I traveled to a village about 30 minutes away from the Bible school in Chisinau, which is Moldova's capital. I worshipped at a church plant ministry in Criuleni located on the border with Transnistria, which is a region that broke away from Moldova shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. A brief military conflict took place, and since then, this has been considered a "frozen conflict" with no immediate resolution on the horizon.

## New Birth in a Barren Land

I was picked up by Pastor Eduard and his wife Natalia, who then drove me to the church plant ministry in Criuleni. I was informed that 80



Dr. Larry Duncan with SGA-supported pastor Andrei.

percent of those who attend the worship service at this church plant are not believers. SGA-supported

Compassion Ministry is important in helping the church to reach people in this village. Andrei, an SGA-supported missionary pastor, preached a message first. After another song, I preached from Psalm 23 and tied it into the truth that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. I emphasized that the only way to have God as our Shepherd is to know Him through Jesus Christ. There was then a special message for the ladies present. At the conclusion, two people came forward—one old and the



Church plant in Criuleni.



Larry preaches at the church plant.

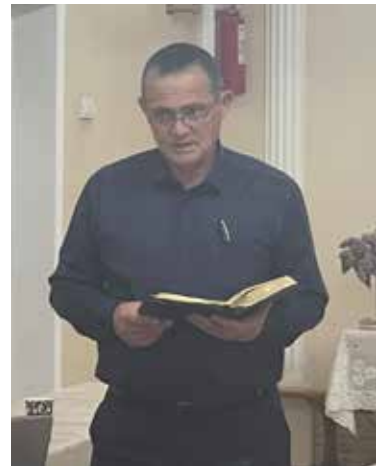
other young—and Pastor Eduard prayed with them.

Eduard informed me later that they prayed the prayer of repentance and trusted Christ as their Savior! **The older lady requested to be baptized soon since she did not think she should wait due to her age.** It was a joy to realize that two from this village had come to repentance and faith in Christ! Anna was the name of the younger lady and Alexandria the elder. They asked that we do not publish their photographs, but it is a joy to share about their salvation. **This is truly reaching into an area where there are no evangelical churches of any sort.** Pastor Eduard is key to reaching the villages in this part of Moldova. Please continue to pray God's blessing upon our still developing relationship with the evangelical churches there.

## SGA-Supported Pastors Grow in Numbers and Strength

I need to mention another important event, which your prayers and support helped make possible. A year ago, I was in Almaty, Kazakhstan, with Dan Nave—one of the instructors at the SGA-supported **Almaty Bible Institute**. He was teaching the book of Ephesians. One of the students enrolled was named Shukhrat from another Central Asian nation. He engaged me in conversation about possibly coming to his country and SGA resuming training there, which had not been possible for some time. Afterward, SGA senior vice president of ministry operations Eric Mock and I traveled there

together and met with the Baptist Union leadership, and they officially invited us to begin *Antioch Initiative* training there. I was able to go later on and was able to teach in the third session of four that was scheduled for this academic year. Shukhrat has been instrumental in



Shukhrat teaches.

organizing the beginning of these sessions. And now, the men are being equipped without having to travel outside of their country. This is a huge blessing for the brothers, and they express their deep gratitude. One of the students, Oleg, said this after the session concluded:

*"I am grateful to Dr. Duncan for coming to us from far away and teaching us about God. I realized that I didn't know much about God and I thought I knew enough not to take a theology course. God called me to repentance, which I did. I want to take this course again on my own, in a quiet environment and not only to realize, but also to be penetrated by the realization of the omnipresence and omnipotence, and the love of God for me, a sinner."*



Antioch Initiative class in Central Asia.

Please pray for God's continued blessing on all of the seminaries and Bible institutes you help support through SGA. It is having an eternal impact for the Lord's glory! ♦



# Your Support for Irpen Biblical Seminary Keeps Bearing Fruit!

## *SGA Donors Help Rebuild Damaged Structures as Vital Training of Pastors Moves Forward*

Eric Mock  
SGA Senior Vice President of Ministry Operations

The SGA-supported Irpen Biblical Seminary in Ukraine has endured significant challenges since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Early on in the war, the school took a direct hit from 30 mortar rounds during an attack on the city of Irpen. This did substantial damage to the seminary building, which was built in the early 1990s with SGA's assistance. Only the worship center, library, and dining hall were undamaged.

But from those ashes, this vitally important school is rising and continuing to develop future pastors and church workers for fruitful ministry. The new president of the seminary, Pastor Mykola



Students of the certificate program at the seminary.

Romanyuk, is teaching a course called Pastoral Leadership in the certificate program track, and a course called Practical Ecclesiology is being taught by both Pastor Oleksandr Bokoch and Mykola Romaniuk.

These courses help to underscore New Testament teaching about the church and its mission. They also have a very practical application governing the structure of the local church and the effective work of fraternal and pastoral councils, church membership, and discipline. These are all being studied and discussed by student pastors with teaching pastors guiding those discussions.

Later this year, the fall track of study will begin for all students at Irpen Seminary.

**Please be in prayer for this, and for all SGA-supported seminaries and Bible institutes across the former Soviet Union. We praise and thank the Lord for the opportunity to serve and strengthen the churches He is building today! ♦**



Classes at Irpen Biblical Seminary.

## MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3).*

Children in Russian orphanages often carry deep emotional scars. They seem totally hardened to everything and resist all efforts to get close to them and model Christ's love. But then God begins to work in the children's ravaged hearts, and the transformation brings great joy to the team—even if it is only a small change at first.

In Russia's Krasnoyarsk region, **Orphans Reborn** leader Mikhail recently shared the story of a troubled, misbehaving young boy named Nikita, who seemed to care about nothing.

*"Our Nikita lives in an orphanage where insulting the teacher is a common thing. Nikita encourages this behavior and leads other kids away from the right path, urging them to mock or humiliate other kids. Nikita pretends that he is a mean guy, but I can see that he is wearing only a mask. Once I overheard some filthy swearing in one of the rooms. I went in there and saw a young, handsome guy swearing loudly in the presence of his teacher, a young woman. She looked at me and sighed. 'That's the way it is, and nothing can be done about it.' I snatched the phone from his hand, and he jumped up and started to yell. He was running after me, demanding that I give the phone back, so I stopped and with a smile told him that I would give it back to him when he apologized to the teacher. Nikita said, 'No way!', to which I replied, 'Then I won't give you the phone!'*

*Nikita apologized to the teacher, so that was how our first meeting went—not the most hopeful, but still we got to know each other. Thankfully, God arranged it so that Nikita went to our working retreat. At first he was making faces, showing that he couldn't care less about anything or everyone. But it was obvious that he liked it at the retreat, that he wanted to understand it all, while pretending to be indifferent, of course. He was afraid that he would lose his 'tough guy' mask if he befriended us. Once or twice Nikita was so caught up in his work that he*



Nikita (left) and another orphan at the work retreat.

*forgot to put on his mask of apathy.*

*Later, Nikita recognized that something was going on in his heart. He just couldn't figure out what it was. I remember the last day when Nikita, aware that they would soon return to the orphanage, remembered his mask again. He came in and started jeering, saying that he did not like it and wouldn't come here again, and that he did not learn or understand anything at all. But soon he forgot to play his assumed role, and started remembering moments from the camp with fire and warmth in his eyes. When saying goodbyes to the boys from another orphanage, he said to them, 'See you, guys, on the next trip!' That's our Nikita, whose character is not easy at all! I am very grateful to God that Nikita was able to experience our team and our faith in the Lord from the inside! And something tells me that in a month from now, I will see Nikita at the summer working retreat!"*

In many ways, young Nikita appears to be like any other child. But in other ways, he carries himself with a tough, malicious attitude that a hardened adult would display. Some of these children have seen and experienced things that no child should ever experience. But our God is able to soften even the hardest hearts. What a blessing and joy it is to be a part of rescuing these neediest of children for the glory of the Lord Jesus! ♦



# How You are Helping Develop Youth for Ministry

Denis

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Ukraine

Greetings, brothers and sisters! Thank you for your prayers and financial support of our family, so that we can serve full-time in God's field, especially with youth.

Inna is a member of our team and she has



Inna meets with girls.

started inviting young girls one by one for coffee, to pay more attention to each of the girls and give them an opportunity to share. At first, Inna was very worried and prayed, but God led her and

everything went great! God works even through such small moments! She told me:

*"During our meetings, the girls showed initiative in communication, raising topics that concerned them. Most often, conversations revolved around interpersonal relationships, and events taking place in the church, as well as various life situations. It was nice to see that they were open to listening and ready to share their thoughts."*

*Leila is one girl with whom I correspond a lot. Leila was interested in what the purpose of a woman's life is from the point of view of the Bible. We talked about how God has a special plan for each person and how important it is to find your calling. This aroused her sincere interest, and she wanted to learn more about the biblical view of life's purpose. This period was very productive and useful.*

*The girls are searching for themselves, trying to understand in what area they want to develop, and are seeking to understand more deeply the issues of faith and destiny. I enjoyed participating in these conversations and supporting them in their search."*

We thank God for the youth. **Our meetings, communication, games, and reading the Bible**



Meeting with youth.

**leads to results in their lives, influencing and forming their foundations for adulthood.** They have a desire and are not shy to read the Bible in front of everyone and share their thoughts, knowing that we will listen to them and support them.

We use volleyball as one of the tools to disciple young men. There are some guys who play very well and there are those who need to gain experience.

Another great blessing is that the team members are only 20 years young, but they are **already participating in ministry and some are preaching.**

Please keep me in prayer that I can wisely answer the questions of unbelievers and build up believers! ♦



Volleyball with youth.



Young people participate in ministry and preaching.

# Equipping Stewardship

Garland Gould

SGA Senior Vice President of Partner Engagement



Garland Gould

not know the details of an electrical circuit and how it works, you can be confident that if we flip a certain switch, the current flows as it should. The same is true here. While a comprehensive understanding of this information isn't possible, you can become comfortable with basic concepts and ideas that will give you confidence that the plan will work the way it is designed.

In last month's column, we underscored that Biblical Principles, and a spiritual foundation provide **Step One** of four, or of a "well done" estate plan. Let's look at steps 2 and 3 this month.

**Step Two** is to be *familiar with the rules, tools, and vehicles available for your planning.* While you may

**Step Three** is to *gather the necessary data.* This is often the area of planning, while not complicated, to which a failed plan can be traced back. The most sophisticated estate plan, orchestrated by the most intellectual and clever planner, will fail if the information is not complete, or is incorrect. We have an "inventory form" that will help you consider your "People," "Property," "Plans," and "Planners." Without this critical information, you cannot make your best plan—we will help you ensure this step is thorough and accurate.

Next month we will look at **Step Four**, and begin to look more closely at the Biblical Principles that lay the spiritual foundation from **Step One**. Please let us know if we can answer any questions and if you would like to receive the brochure, *Principles of Estate Planning*. You can reach us at [plannedgiving@sga.org](mailto:plannedgiving@sga.org). Also, we have an informational newsletter that covers a variety of planning information that we would love to provide for you—just let us know. ♦

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Of all the ministries the Lord has enabled SGA to support, **Bible training remains the top priority** of the churches we serve, and thus remains our top priority. **SGA-supported seminaries and Bible institutes help**



Youth forum in Belarus.

**prepare young pastors for future ministry, and trains up church workers in music and worship, children's and youth ministry, evangelism, and Christian education.** The Gospel is the foundation.

Your prayers and faithful support also helps provide Bibles and Christian literature, support for children's ministries such as **Orphans Reborn, Summer Bible Camps, Immanuel's Child**, and vitally important **Compassion Ministry** to needy families. We are so thankful for all that you do. Please be in prayer about how you can help today! ♦



Antioch Initiative class in Yakutsk.



# Insight FROM MICHAEL

## Students at SGA-Supported Seminaries and Bible Institutes Look Ahead!

There have been many rewarding moments and visits to the former Soviet Union in my personal history with SGA. Among them are the visits I've had the opportunity to make to SGA-supported seminaries and Bible institutes—*especially graduation ceremonies.*

Most of us can look back to the days when we graduated from either high school or college. Feelings were joyful in the main that our school days were over, but within the joy was also a bit of trepidation. Lord willing, a whole lifetime lay ahead, and what direction would we go? Maybe we planned one career but something diverted those plans into something else. Perhaps we went right into the career we had chosen while still in school. Sometimes those who did not know the Lord in their school days later on entered into a personal relationship with Christ, and that changed our vocation to ministry as God led.

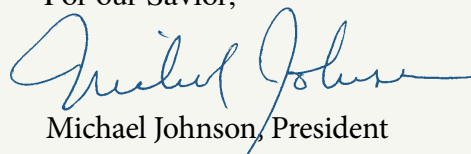
Both the students who are graduating from the seminaries and Bible schools that SGA supports, and those still enrolled, come from a wide variety of backgrounds. And the Lord is directing them to diverse missions:

- Some have already served as pastors or in various church ministries, and wanted to strengthen their ministries with a deeper theological background.
- Others are young students who have the desire to be pastors, and the classes they attend will ground them more firmly in sound Bible doctrine.
- Many want to become teachers themselves and pass on the knowledge they have gained to other upcoming students.
- Still others are drawn to church ministries such as worship and music ministry. Music is very important to the culture across the former Soviet Union, and the students in this track take courses that will give them a sound foundation for biblical worship that glorifies God.

Undergirding all of this is the desire to obey the Lord's Great Commission in proclaiming the Gospel and making disciples. Everything in ministry points to that overarching goal.

One thing that all the students have in common is deep thanksgiving to God, and to you because you help make their education possible through your support of SGA. **Please know that you play a vital role in the future of the Lord's church across Russia and her neighboring nations.** I can't thank you enough.

For our Savior,



Michael Johnson, President



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