



# SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

## Remembering Dr. John MacArthur and His Partnership with SGA in Serving Churches

### INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ A war-torn family grieves . . . yet endures and praises their Lord
- ♦ Young believers remember martyrs who blazed the Gospel trail
- ♦ Michael Johnson and Bob Provost draw lessons from Dr. MacArthur

*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)*



# Tribute to Pastor John MacArthur

Bob Provost, SGA President Emeritus

Dr. John MacArthur was one of the greatest expositors and preachers of all time. His unreserved love for God and His Word encouraged countless believers worldwide to never doubt the Bible.

John was deeply committed to world missions and traveled with SGA to hold 10 pastors conferences for thousands of pastors in Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan. As developing freedom brought false teachers, the president of the Baptists of the Soviet Union, Pastor Jakov Kuzmich Dukhonchenko, asked for John's help in building a biblical doctrinal fence around the entire Soviet Union.

SGA translated John's Study Bible, commentaries, and other books into Russian, printed them, and distributed them widely. Not only in the former Soviet Union, but around the globe, virtually every evangelical Russian-speaking pastor depends upon the Russian version of the MacArthur Study Bible, his commentaries and other books. There were no opportunities for pastors more eagerly awaited and attended than the MacArthur Pastors Conferences.



Dr. John MacArthur, Piotr Konovalchik, former president of the Russian UECB, and Bob Provost, SGA president emeritus.

To me, John was a precious friend. He was always supportive of my ministries in the U.S. and around the world. His burden was to share the Word of God and make Jesus known everywhere. His aim was to take the message of salvation to as many as possible. Tirelessly, John worked to live his life for the glory of God. Personally, he always cared about everyone and would do all he could to help anyone in need. I am so grateful for his friendship and the blessings he was to all our family. Having lived for the Lord all his life, I can only imagine the incredible experiences he is having in glory. Pastor John is, and will be, greatly missed.

Overall, it was a great privilege and blessing for SGA to serve with this great and humble servant of the Most High. It was one surpassing blessing after another. We are so grateful and humbled by Dr. MacArthur's ministries with SGA. ♦



Dr. John MacArthur at pastor's conferences across the former Soviet Union.

## SGA-Supported Churches Help Refugees Trust in Christ Amid War: Svetlana's Testimony

*He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away (Revelation 21:4).*

**Editor's Note:** Your gifts to SGA help support biblically faithful churches across the former USSR. And a large number of those churches are in Ukraine. That help is reaching non-believers for Christ in

numbers not previously seen. Yet it is also helping give comfort to your brothers and sisters in Christ whose lives have been disrupted—losing loved ones, homes, and familiar routines and networks. Despite that loss, Jesus remains their hope. Thank you for helping provide the tangible, emotional, and spiritual support they need. Here is one woman's story:

My name is Svetlana, and I come from the village of **Poltavka, Ukraine**. My life before the war was simple, but full of peace and gratitude. My husband and I lived in our own house, which over the years became not only a roof over our heads, but a real home—a place of warmth, care, and work. My husband worked on a farm, and I looked after my paralyzed mother. We grew vegetables, fruits, kept cattle, and had chickens. We lived our rhythm of life and were happy.

### The end of earthly peace

But on February 24, 2022, our piece of the world collapsed. The war burst into our village with shelling, fear, and despair. The light disappeared, the water stopped flowing, and life became unbearable. The most difficult thing was the circumstances with my mother, who is 87 years old. She is blind, and in recent months her condition has deteriorated significantly. She hallucinates. She needs constant supervision, and now she is under the care of a psychiatrist. It was painful to leave the house, in every corner of which are our memories. But it became impossible to stay. The military helped us to evacuate, including my mother. Now we are in Zaporizhzhia. We live in a rented apartment. It's a completely different life, and everything seems foreign and temporary.

I also have difficulty. Because of the war, I have constant anxiety, fear for my mother, uncertainty about the future. Also, panic attacks began and now a psychologist is working with me. Sometimes it seems that the world has collapsed, and I will not find the way back. My heart hurts for what I lost, but most of all for that calm, real life where there was work on earth, fresh air, apples from a tree, and my mother, who was still smiling. I miss our happy life. Today everything is different.

### "Happiness only in Jesus"

But despite the pain and fatigue, we do not give



Svetlana with aid and a Bible.

up. I know I'm not alone. God is close to those who cry. I believe that the Lord sees our nights without sleep, our prayers through tears. And even now, we're getting help from kind people, volunteers, acquaintances, and strangers asking, "How are you holding up?" We ask for prayers. **This is the biggest support for us—prayers to have peace on difficult days, for peace to come—lest we lose ourselves among the ruins.** I am grateful to everyone who helps—those who do not forget about the refugees, and who did not pass by someone else's pain.

This is love in action. This is Christ among us. We are waiting for victory. But more—we are waiting for healing. **And even if the world has changed, God has not changed.** He remains our shelter and strength.

We continue to pray for our country, for our people, and for our future. People who have experienced such pain only want to be happy. **Now, we have happiness only in Jesus Christ, and in His salvation.** ♦



# Your Support Boosts Ministry to Orphans

*Mission trip also includes honor of martyrs*

Kristina R.  
SGA-Supported *Orphans Reborn* Team in Krasnoyarsk



Driving to Khakassia.

Recently, we went on a long-awaited missionary trip to Khakassia—a place more than 370 miles away from Krasnoyarsk. We went to join and support our friends who are ministering to the orphans of Khakassia. **On the way, we stopped in Zheleznogorsk to a camp for kids from five orphanages, which we visit on a weekly basis.** It was a secular camp, yet we were invited to play games and socialize with the children.

They were so happy to see us, to our great delight, and the educators noticed how much the children loved us. Our visit was a surprise, and I was given the floor to give a short word to the children. After the celebration, our team left in excellent spirits for the long trip ahead of us.

In Minusinsk, we were met by our brother Timofey and hosted at the Kovcheg campsite. This brother always welcomes us with great hospitality and warmth. Early in the morning we went for a morning prayer and a run, and while running we paused near a monument to Christians that had been erected. **Timofey explained that on that spot, several dozen brothers were shot for their faith in Christ during the Soviet era.** What a high price our grandfathers paid for their faith in Jesus!

The next morning, our two teams headed to an orphanage at Lebyazhye. **We talked about fears, and that it is okay to be afraid. But there is One who**



Visiting the orphanage at Lebyazhye.

**can give victory over our fears.** Kostya on our team shared a story about skydiving, when his parachute got tangled up with another's parachute more than 300 feet above ground. In 90 percent of cases, it would have been fatal. But God saved him. He always keeps Psalm 91 in his pocket, and he read it to everyone.

As he was reading, a drunken man entered the hall, swearing loudly and disturbing the audience. But Kostya finished reciting the Psalm, not showing any anger to the man. It was a good example of godliness and confidence for the children. We wrapped up the meeting with handing out small gifts that contained not only candy, but also letters—written by other children at camp for those who are orphaned. They sent the orphans good wishes and words about Jesus Christ. We have been having such classes on Saturdays for a year now. It is a miracle, isn't it, friends? ♦

## MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

*For nothing will be impossible with God (Luke 1:37).*

The faithful missionary pastors and the churches served by SGA across the former Soviet Union encounter many different conditions in their ministries. Some are able to carry out their Gospel ministries with little hindrance, while others run into frustrating and often heartbreaking roadblocks put up by local authorities.

Oleg is a pastor in Belarus, who shared a situation that is hard to read if not only for the heartbreak it brought to two children. But they are not giving up on reaching out to the children and their families. *"Peace be with you, friends! Today, I will share a concerning situation we recently encountered. Our summer vacation was planned for August. However, there is an event that is a gift for students who regularly attended classes throughout the year and have successfully completed the Sunday school course. It is a summer holiday in a wonderful place (a recreation center) together with the children from Resurrection Church. This year there were two such students—a boy also named Oleg, and Vera. The children were delighted with their stay in that wonderful place.*

*However, they were not allowed to stay there until the end of the holiday. Vera's mother is an alcoholic, which is why the family had been registered with Social Services as being in a dangerous*



Vera at the camp.

*situation. Vera had to attend summer school camp for the entire month. We only found this out later. Social services demanded that Vera be returned home. All attempts to explain to them that both Vera and her mother were happy to be part of a community of children from the church, and to be in a place specially organized for*

*children's recreation were unsuccessful. The school's social worker brought the mother to the recreation center and took Vera home. In the evening, Oleg's parents arrived and also took him home. As we later learned, they had received a call from the school and the education department demanding that they also bring their children home from the recreation center.*



Oleg (far right) with other campers.

*Barely holding back tears, Oleg got into the car and left the recreation center with his parents. The next day, Oleg's mother decided that this could not be left as it was and went to the executive committee of the education department and asked them to explain why her child could not vacation with other children who also attended Sunday school. The authorities apologized for how things had turned out but insisted that they had done everything they were supposed to do.*

*But this story may yet have a sequel. The following Sunday, upon her arrival, Vera brought her grandmother Inna to the church. We met Vera's grandmother, who is a lovely and kind person. Please pray for this situation to be resolved in the long term!"*

This is a sad example of the domino effects substance abuse by parents have on their children. But we praise and thank God for Pastor Oleg and his fellow believers who have stepped into this situation, showing Christ's love to the children and their families! ♦



# The Gospel, Bible History, and Summer Camp in Israel

*Your support blessed believing and non-believing campers!*

Pavel V.  
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Israel



Families at the family camp.

Thank you so much for your prayers and financial support of our **tent family camp**. By God's grace and through your support, we were able to hold the camp earlier this year in May at **Ashkelon National Park**, which is known for its ancient artefacts. These sites were mentioned as early as the days of **Samson, Saul, and David**. God provided beautiful weather and it was relatively calm, even though the campsite was **only eight miles from the border with the Gaza Strip**.

It was the first time for our young church to participate in such a camp outreach. The children participated in a quest, completing various intellectual and physical tasks, as a result of which they were rewarded with "artifacts," which would of



Studying God's Word with the children.

course point them to biblical truths about Jesus Christ.

Masha, her husband, and their three children came to Israel from Russia two years ago. Masha said that after the camp, her children felt that Israel became closer to them. This is important for the assimilation process, because moving to a new country with another language and a different mentality is hard and stressful for many. Her kids became good friends with those from believing homes. Eniya, her husband, and their two children came from Belarus. Eniya testifies, *"We experienced such an incredibly warm communication. Everyone added a part of their soul into it. We learned so many new things."*

**Both Masha and Eniya were grateful to the people who donated for the camp. It was thanks to these donations that they were able to go to the camp.**

Thirteen-year old Mila testified, *"I enjoyed helping others. Also, everyone enjoyed the quest task where we had to set fire to a rope and rip it off, and we talked about Jesus being the Light of the World."* It was a delight to me to see Mila quoting the Bible, which was for the first time, as I do not remember her ever doing it in public!

It was also gratifying to see junior children developing a servant spirit, as they wanted to be involved in the ministry and not just be mere observers.

**Please pray for the salvation of the unbelieving families, and for all the children who were in the camp, as well as for newcomers who moved to Israel so that they adapt in our church community. ♦**

# Equipping Stewardship

Garland Gould  
SGA Senior Vice President of Partner Engagement

In past installments of our stewardship discussion, we have discussed the four steps of Biblical Estate Design: Setting Priorities . . . Becoming Familiar with the Rules, Tools and Vehicles . . . Gathering the Necessary Data . . . and Seeking Competent Council.

Now we will begin looking at the Five Biblical Principles that inform our priorities. These principles are:

- **God is Owner of All**
- **The Priority in Estate Distribution is Dependency**
- **The Motivation for Estate Distribution is Love**
- **People are More Important than Dollars**
- **It is Required That a Servant be Found Faithful**

As Christians, we understand that God is indeed the owner of all. Scripture reminds us that He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, the gold, and silver (see Psalm 50). The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are not even our own but have been bought at a price (1 Corinthians 6.20).

But what does God's ownership of all look like

in our lives? Have we thought through this reality and how it applies to the assets God has entrusted to us, plus our responsibility to plan for those assets? Many have told us that they didn't even pray about the decisions they were making, it was simply a secular exercise with the motivation to "avoid probate and leave everything to the children." As believers in God's ownership, let's ask Him what He would like us to do with what He has entrusted to us, when we no longer have use of it.

If these principles or any others raise questions, please remember we are eager to serve you. We have two booklets to help you, the **Estate Planning Guide** and the **Inventory Form**, at no cost to you. We look forward to speaking with you and serving as you consider God's plan of stewardship for your estate. ♦



Garland Gould

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

SGA-supported Bible training—as noted this month in our feature article on the late Dr. John MacArthur—has



Compassion Ministry in Russia.

remained our mission's top priority through the years, and it truly undergirds all that we do in support of evangelical churches across the former Soviet Union.

Your faithful and generous support helps accomplish this and so much more—provision of **Bibles and Christian literature**, **Compassion Ministry**, children's outreaches such as **Summer Bible Camps**, **Orphans Reborn**, and **Immanuel's Child**, as well as provision for the ministries of missionary pastors. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Bible camp in Central Asia.

# Insight FROM MICHAEL

## We're still learning from Pastor John MacArthur. His homegoing gives us an opportunity for reflection—and action.

The recent homegoing of beloved pastor and Bible teacher Dr. John MacArthur has had me reflecting on his wonderful legacy of partnership with SGA through the years. As SGA president emeritus Bob Provost noted in this month's feature Good News Report article, perhaps no other man has had such a deep, profound impact on Bible-preaching churches across the former Soviet Union.

The pastors and Bible students that SGA serves always eagerly awaited translations of John's books and theological works. When he was able to travel over to the former Soviet Union and hold pastors' conferences with SGA, the pastors would joyfully sit for hours and listen as John taught, followed by question-and-answer sessions that would last for quite a while. They were so eager and hungry for God's Word, and they couldn't get enough. John MacArthur's impact in strengthening the pastors and their churches in sound biblical theology cannot be overstated.

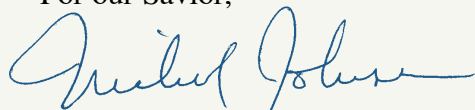
SGA is thankful for his friendship and partnership through the years, and we will remain in prayer for John's family, as well as for Grace Community Church—a congregation he pastored for 56 years. We will also be in prayer for The Master's University and The Master's Seminary as they prayerfully seek the Lord's will in the days ahead.

**Considering John's rich legacy, I am also pondering a larger question that all of us ought to ponder with prayer. What sort of legacy will we leave behind when the Lord calls us home?**

By all means, we must remember what God's Word says about the different roles in His church. *All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they . . .* (1 Corinthians 12:29)? The Apostle Paul goes on in the same vein and his meaning is clear.

We are not all expected to be a pastor or teacher like Dr. John MacArthur. We all have differing gifts and abilities from the hand of the Lord. But what are we doing with those gifts and abilities? Are we using them for the glory of God, and to do His good works while we are here? Are we ready and willing to share the hope that lies within us as He grants opportunity? I pray that is the case with me, and trust that is the case with you as well. We can all leave a godly legacy of faith. And we are deeply thankful to God for the one left by John MacArthur.

For our Savior,

  
Michael Johnson, President



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