



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

Where there is pain, Jesus brings compassion and salvation from sin



INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Loving help for Slavic speakers in Israel during the attacks
- ♦ New: The triumph of 2025-2026 *Immanuel's Child* Christmas outreaches!
- ♦ River discipleship touches the lives of children and families

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)

ISRAEL: Your Support for SGA's Compassion Ministry Opens Hearts to the Gospel

Pavel V.
SGA-Supported Pastor in Israel

Editor's note: SGA has a robust outreach in Israel due to the large number of Jewish Slavic-language speakers who have found their way there. This includes many who fled there in the wake of the Ukraine War. SGA has blessed many Messianic congregations and a Bible College due to the prayers and support of Christians like you.

I would like to share a few things about the life of our congregation these days in Israel. While during the war with Iran and a few weeks later, many experienced a sense of anxiety, the situation has seen some improvement now, as people are more optimistic, returning to normalcy, going to work and even on vacations. We continue holding worship services on Friday evenings. We share meals together, have fellowship, and of course, worship God, hearing from His Word and praying together



Top: Friday worship service; Above: Sports club.

for the blessing of Israel and coming of new people to Christ. We run a small group of Bible study and a floorball sports club in the middle of the week.

There are a few people who started attending the church, but are not yet the followers of Christ. They are still on the journey. They gladly **bring their children to our Bible class** and sports club. Some people are here due to their military service and may feel lonely, being far from their loved ones.

Thanks to your support, we are able to provide the needy with grocery assistance. It should be noted that each time they are very thankful to the church for support. **This support is important and quite significant, especially for those newly arrived in Israel.** They have not yet fully learned Hebrew and they have not yet reached the professional level they used to have in their country of origin before repatriation. This affects them and they find themselves in a vulnerable position. **Aided by your prayerful and financial contribution, our church is able to help and encourage these people, and the Lord continues adding to His kingdom.** The supported individuals and families also get involved in different church activities during the week. **They are welcomed at the believers' houses as dear guests.** This is a process, and it goes not always as quickly as we would hope. But the Holy Spirit is working with their hearts, and we notice some changes in their attitudes and how they want to change.

Please pray for the repentance of Rustam and Maria, Enya and Pavel, Yuriy, Alena, Alina and their family and friends; for the Israeli people to be open for accepting the Gospel and for God to give us people whom we can witness about Him. Thank you for ministering together with us! ♦

You and Fellow SGA Supporters Bless Children Again through *Immanuel's Child!*

For many years now with your support, children across the former Soviet Union and in Israel have heard about the birth of Jesus. Men and women from local churches have worked hard to prepare exciting and joyful celebrations. These celebrations are full of games, food, gifts (including a Bible for each child) and presentations that point to the Lord Jesus and share the true, biblical meaning of Christmas.

One of the favorite gifts from the celebration is an ***Immanuel's Child* Bethlehem star** that is given to each child. This star represents a person from America who has committed to pray for them during this season. We received a wonderful early report from Moldova that blessed us to read. *"As we celebrated the joy of Christmas, we are grateful to share how God works through the Immanuel's Child ministry here in Moldova. Your support has helped bring His love and joy to many children during this special season."*

About 30 children in Chişinău took part in the ministry at a local Baptist church. The children were between 6 and 15 years old. Some of them were from the church, while others were friends who do not attend an evangelical church. The outreach included songs, a Bible message about the birth of Christ, and God's desire for people to come closer to Him through faith in Jesus. There were also games that helped the children interact, socialize, and make new friends. Everyone was happy and full of positive emotions.

Thanks to your sacrifice in giving, each child received a gift with sweets, hygiene items, gloves and socks, and school supplies. The children were very happy. Each child also received a small star with the message "God loves you," and together they prayed for the people who made these gifts possible. The Student Bible was one of their favorite gifts because of the colorful pictures and easy-to-read text.



A young girl with a Bethlehem star and a Student Bible.

The Immanuel's Child outreaches are very important for children in the Republic of Moldova. These children will remember for their whole lives that in our church, someone spoke to them about God with love and gave them a free gift. These memories often help them return to God later in life. Even I, as a child, was deeply touched knowing that someone far away was thinking about me and giving me a gift. When I grew up, I understood that only the love of Christ makes us care for one another in this way.

The local organizer, Lilia, sends sincere thanks and many blessings. You are truly precious in the mission work in the Republic of Moldova. Please pray that hearts will be changed, and that many will come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Pray also for the men and women who faithfully serve in this outreach."

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these (Matthew 19:14). ♦

Amazing Evangelism and Discipleship on River and Shore!

Pray as souls come to Christ and grow strong

Andrei S.

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Russia

Over the summer, our church scheduled several rafting trips for ministry. **First, we had a rafting trip for the teenagers.** The main theme through the whole outreach was that Jesus wants to be your friend. If you fall or grow cold in your relationship with Jesus, you can go to Him. He will forgive you and help you as the real friend.

We had both school children and higher ed students who have started their studies at universities. Some of them shared their personal experiences of how they forgot their Best Friend and how they returned later to Him, Who forgave them, and restored their relationship with Him. It was a very frank and honest testimony.

Next we had a family rafting trip. This one was mainly for fellowship and recreation for all the Christian families. The goal of that trip was to help with **building relationships among husbands and wives, and among parents and children.** In such a way we helped to build unity in families. **Healthy families build healthy churches.**



Rafting trip for fathers and sons.

Our next outing focused on the men, and the men could bring their sons with them. The goal was to help men identify and fulfil their calling to be leaders in their families and in their lives. We also had a rafting trip of fathers with their children from Krasnoyarsk and Divnogorsk. This was followed by a trip for teachers from Bogotol.

After similar outings, mid-August was the end



Anniversary celebration in the village of Kandat.

of the rafting season, but not for our ministry in remote villages. I received a phone call from a village that we had visited with a Christmas program. She asked us to come with our bouncy castle on their Village Day. We decided that we would go and help. **So we were able to participate in celebrating the 75th anniversary of the village of Kandat. This was our first experience of being invited to participate in a public event by a village including our presentation in their program!** I think that this is the fruit of our ministry in those remote villages, which we have visited regularly during the last few years with a Christmas performance and presents for children. We distributed some food sets there for families with low income.

During the celebration, I was introduced to a local official in charge of social work. He asked us for help. They have families with no fathers, and families with parents who are addicted to alcohol. **In differing circumstances, I was able to see the hand of our Creator. He made our path and all the circumstances in such a way that they improved our ministry and evangelism.** It was nice to realize that people recognized us and that they were glad to see us. They were open to invite us to visit them again. Thank you for your financial support—without your participation we would not be able to do as much. Praise be to God! ♦

MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on” (Mark 12:43-44).

Sometimes in ministry, it is easy to become discouraged if one doesn't see apparent fruit right away. But learning to rely on God to bring fruit in His time leads to great joy, as Andrei, an SGA-supported missionary pastor in the former Soviet nation of Moldova, recently shared with us.

“I would like to share with you a testimony that happened this summer. Several churches including ours organized an evangelistic outreach using a mobile medical clinic right at our church. There were several doctors and a free pharmacy. We invited people from the city and there were a lot of people, mostly elderly. The doctors examined the patients and gave out free medications. Meanwhile, people waited in line. We talked with them and shared the Good News. Afterward, we invited everyone to church for the Sunday service.



Top: Singing songs; Above: Playing games during the camp.

The following Sunday, only a few people came. Among them was an elderly woman named Vera, but we did not get a picture of her. She has had two strokes, is paralyzed in almost half her body, and moves very slowly with difficulty. We greeted her and the ones who did come with love and open hearts, as Jesus Christ commanded us. However, the Sunday after that, she was the only one of all the invited people to come. We asked her why she came, what motivated her, and she said the whole world had turned its back on her after her illness, everyone except us. She felt unwanted. No one visited her. All her friends and acquaintances had forgotten her, but we accepted her as she was and cared for her with all our hearts with love. She began attending every Sunday. Her husband brings her to and from the church.

Then, we held a children's day camp, announcing the event in advance at church. Vera invited her grandchildren to the camp. She spent the entire week with us—even helping out a little due to the lack of volunteers. She only has one hand, but she helped out a little with the music during the games—turning it up or down on cue, and where needed. She said she takes her medications regularly, but when she's with us, she forgets she's in pain and doesn't take the necessary medications at all. She simply doesn't need them. God works great miracles through such small things!

Vera now attends our church every Sunday and sometimes persuades her husband and grandson to attend the entire service with her. They may be mere listeners for now, but I hope they will one day open their hearts to the Word they've heard. We ask you, dear brothers and sisters, to pray for Vera and her family! Thank you again for being with us, for your prayers and support, and for your concern about us! May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you!” ♦

CENTRAL ASIA: Your Prayers and Support Help Minister to *Many* Ethnic Groups—and the Deaf!

Pavel T.

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Central Asia

Greetings to you, dear brothers and sisters! We continue to gather every Sunday, holding worship services and offering prayers. **Here in Central Asia, our church is multi-national.** We have **at least three groups of people**—Russian-speaking brothers and sisters, children who do not speak Russian but only sign language, and the native language of our nation. We also have brothers and sisters who are deaf. For a long time, sermons in our church were delivered exclusively in Russian, with rare exceptions. In these cases, our children could only perceive information through sign language.

A month ago, our church council raised the issue of the spiritual well-being of our children and proposed that the first sermon in the services be delivered in our language, and the second in Russian, with a separate message for the children. This was agreed on, and initially this was received with caution by our Russian-speaking congregation. But gradually, the church is becoming accustomed to this "unusual" arrangement.



Services in different languages allow all in attendance to hear and understand God's Word.

Now our children can hear the Word of God preached in their native language!

Last spring, we held a large fellowship for the deaf. For five days, 35–45 deaf people were able to



Signing during the service.

communicate only in sign language. The seminars were led by ministers Valera and Oleg who had come from Ukraine, and also are deaf. Many topics concerning the spiritual life of those who are deaf were raised. Given the severe lack of communication among deaf people here, such seminars are of great help in edifying and encouraging our brothers and sisters who are thus afflicted.

We devote attention to our children as well. We planned for a two or three-day children's playground, possibly including a trip to the mountains. I would like to emphasize again that deaf brothers and sisters often have hearing children. This leads to a lack of communication between parents and children in families, as sign language here is not very rich. Therefore, children also greatly need full Christian communication, which we strive to fulfill, through the playgrounds.

Dear brothers and sisters! **Thank you very much for your continued support of my ministry. Please support me in prayer, that the Lord will guide me, grant me wisdom in the ministry, and direct my thoughts.** We always face difficult issues, as well as difficult people who create difficult circumstances. Therefore, I always need God's guidance. May God bless you and reward you a hundredfold for your sacrifice! ♦

Equipping Stewardship

Garland Gould

SGA Senior Vice President of Partner Engagement

In past installments 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 are looking at the **5 Biblical Principles**; these principles are:



Garland Gould

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

At this point, in previous columns we have discussed the first three Biblical Principles and you may recall that we describe *Principles #2* and *#3* as our "directional arrows" as they guide our decisions about our distribution, and then *Principle #3* reviewed our motivations for distributions.

Now we look at *Principle #4*, **People are More Important than Dollars.**

Our Scripture to consider is the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. While a deeper look at this

parable would be helpful, today we will consider the father's reaction when his son returned. The son was celebrated and the money was not primary. The *relationship* was primary. The application is that as we pray and consider our distributions, God will instruct us as to how these decisions will impact the relationships we leave behind. **Or, consider it this way, after we have received our hug from the Father, we want our loved ones still here to also be hugging, not quarreling.**

So pray, **"How will this distribution of money affect the relationships I am leaving behind?"**

Additionally, *who* you leave in charge requires this same prayer. For example, while the oldest child left in authority may be your best decision, consider how one sibling making these decisions for their brothers and sisters may impact the relationships. While there are no guarantees that your loved ones won't quarrel, you can make decisions that can make it less likely.

Please let us know if we can answer any questions about these principles and if you would like to receive the resource, *Principles of Estate Planning* brochure. We also have an informational newsletter that you may find helpful and interesting. You can reach us for either, or both, at plannedgiving@sga.org. ♦

Editor's Note: This information and service is our ministry to you and not contingent on any future gifts.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Throughout Scripture, we can learn of our faithful God's compassion for the poor and downtrodden. The Lord Jesus modeled true compassion during His earthly ministry, and He expects His people to follow His example. Our brothers and sisters across the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are thankful for your provision in helping them render aid to the needy. Your gifts accomplish so much more—provision of Bibles and Christian literature, Bible training, children's ministries, missionary pastor support, and so much more. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Delivering boxes of aid in Ukraine.

Insight FROM MICHAEL

Compassion and the Gospel Go Hand-in-Hand

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience (Colossians 3:12).



We know from God's Word that the Lord places a high premium on His people being compassionate. We also know from Scripture that compassion is one of His divine attributes, as Moses recorded. *Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth" . . . (Exodus 34:6).* The Lord works in us through the Holy Spirit conforming all who believe in Him into His image. As we share the life-changing Gospel as we have opportunity, a heart of compassion is bound up in all of it, and should be. We want to see others saved as we have been saved, knowing that to continue in unbelief and rebellion leads to God's sure judgment.

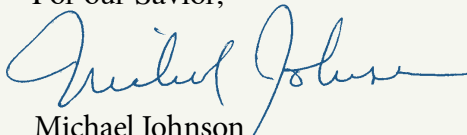
What else are we told in God's Word about how His compassion works? The Apostle Paul asks his readers . . . *Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance (Romans 2:4)?* Our brothers and sisters across the former Soviet Union, in Poland, and in Israel take these Scriptures to heart in the course of their ministries.

Engaging in Compassion Ministry—delivering food and other much needed humanitarian aid—is not the most important part of their outreach to their people. Proclaiming the Gospel as Christ commanded is. But demonstrating loving compassion by helping people in great need is a key component of their churches' ministry in their cities, villages, and regions. In so doing, they are demonstrating their faith in action and showing the compassion of Christ. And we see from the many reports they send in that such outreach is having a great impact.

Many have come to faith in Christ as they hear the Gospel, with the door opened by receiving help when they needed it most.

At SGA, we rejoice at getting to be a part of what God is doing through His churches, and with your help in supporting the Compassion Ministry they carry out. Please continue to pray with us for a bountiful harvest as more hear the Gospel.

For our Savior,


Michael Johnson
President



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