



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

The Lord will use Summer Bible Camps to reach children this year! Read why . . .

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ◆ After Summer Bible Camp is over . . . ongoing ministry begins!
- ◆ The Gospel comes to children in Central Asian villages
- ◆ Your support penetrates a new orphanage in Russia. Exciting details . . .

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)

Ukraine: Summer Bible Camp Ministries in Wartime

Your Support Helps Point Ukrainian Children to Hope in Christ

Vasiliy B.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Ukraine



L to R: Beginning of camp in Vysoke; Making crafts; Morning exercises in the Maryanivka camp; Playing games.

At the beginning, we want to sincerely thank you for the finances that you provided us for holding children's Christian camps—we had a great need for this. Last summer's camp season was rich and meaningful, and only the pleasant memories remain that we were able to make together with you for the Glory of God!

Our plan was to hold camps in the Zhytomyr and Vinnytsia regions. We prayed and prepared as much as possible, and God blessed. We held the first children's Christian camp for the children from the villages of Vysoke, Yosypivka, and Stavyshe, in the Zhytomyr region. **There were 108 children present, almost all the children were from unbelieving families.** The second camp was held in Maryanivka for the children in three villages—Dakhtaliya, Savcheno, and Gorodkivka, in the Vinnytsia region.

For two weeks, we had a unique opportunity to serve the children and bring the Word of God. First, we did exercises to music every morning, then we went into the hall, the Word of God was read, we prayed, and sang songs. The children were then divided into three groups. The first group was **preschoolers up to six years old**, the second group was children from **seven to 13 years old**, and the third group was **teenagers from 14 years old and up.**

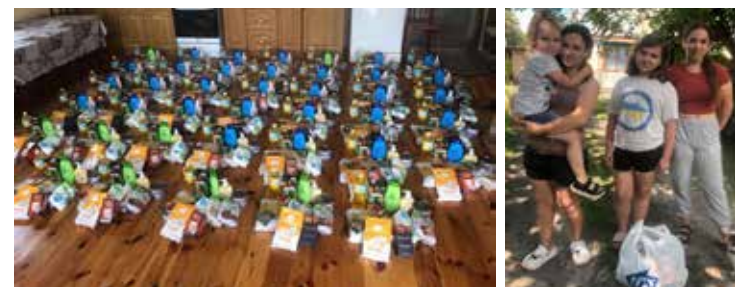
Each group went to their own class and had a Bible lesson for an hour. After the Bible lesson, all the groups were involved in the program throughout

the camp. Each group had the opportunity to make crafts and play sports.

On the last day of the camp, we invited the parents and gave them gifts along with spiritual literature, and held a prize drawing for them—a set of bed linens. There was also a drawing for the children and the super prize was a new bicycle. After the camp, as always, we held a fair and a buffet, where children could buy whatever they wanted for the tokens they earned during the camp for good behavior, and active participation. The parents and children thanked all of us very much for such a holiday that we had made for them and their children. May everything be for the Glory of God.

Thanks to your support, we were able to purchase 40 food sets in June and visited 40 families who are extremely needy, disabled, single, or with many children. As always, spiritual literature was put in the packages with the products.

The following month, we were again able to



L to R: 40 food sets in June; Distributing food to a family.

purchase food and cleaning products, and again made 40 sets. **We invited people to the House of Prayer, held a meeting with them, shared the Gospel, and distributed the food sets.** We also handed food sets to residents of three villages in the

Maryanivka area. Then in August, we again purchased food for 40 families. Some of these were new people, who are in dire need of material and spiritual support. Thank you very much, and please pray with us for peace in Ukraine. All glory to God! ♦

God Opens a Bigger Door in Russia

How Orphans Reborn expanded after a set-back

It has often been said that when one door closes, God then opens another one. When we trust Him with all things, we can truly be at peace when life events disturb us and move us out of our comfort zone. Nadezhda, who leads an SGA-supported *Orphans Reborn* team in Russia, recently had one orphanage close in her region, **but God opened an opportunity** for new children to hear of their Savior.

Nadezhda has been visiting an orphanage with about 45 children in it for several years, but just a couple of months ago, the orphanage was closed. However, she loved her ministry to the children so much that she didn't give up. With prayer, Nadezhda began looking for other opportunities to minister to neglected and disadvantaged children. It took her awhile, but she managed to have a meeting with the administration of another orphanage for children with special needs. **She asked if she could come to hold a Christmas Celebration with a puppet theater and presents for the children.** To her surprise, she received a quick answer—yes!

When the team arrived, **it was the first time believers had ever set foot on the premises of this orphanage.** The grounds are vast, the buildings beautiful—large and very clean inside. There was a wonderful hall for various children's events. **Nadezhda and her husband, Pastor Vladimir, went inside with Christmas presents in hand.** The actors for the puppet theater were already there. When the stage and actors were ready, the staff began bringing the children in. There were **130 children** in total for most of the celebration, many of

whom are confined to wheelchairs or bedridden.

The performance was wonderful, with a **clear Christmas message.** The children watched in awe, even those who seemed unable to concentrate or listen, because the beautiful sets and acting captured their attention. After the performance, Pastor Vladimir shared his short message about Christmas and the meaning of the birth of Christ. At the end of the message, they started distributing the Christmas presents. Both children and staff received gifts. Afterwards, when all children left the hall, the orphanage staff shared their impressions with many kind words about how much they enjoyed the performance and how it captivated both the children and the staff. Nadezhda approached the chief administrator and asked her about regularly attending the orphanage, and she was invited to come back later and they would discuss specific topics and timing. Praise the Lord! Nadezhda is very joyful and excited—one orphanage with 45 children was closed, but another with about 130 children has now opened its doors. Nadezhda asks for prayers for her ministry, and for her relationship with the staff and children in this new field of ministry. ♦



L to R: Actors perform during the event; Distributing presents to children.

Your Support Brings Christ to Remote Central Asia

Kids Respond to the First-Ever Camps in Multiple Villages!

Larisa Z.

SGA-Supported Children's Ministry in Kazakhstan

We are happy to share with you the news from this past summer season. With your help, we held **seven outreaches**, including **two camps in remote villages**. Altogether, **more than 700 children of different nationalities and faiths** took part in our projects. For many of them, this was their very first encounter with the Gospel, with an atmosphere of love, respect, and acceptance.

For the first time, we were able to hold camp ministries in remote villages. This was a special blessing for us. Despite the modest conditions, we were given a small building where we could gather the children. We prepared gifts for each child, but before giving them out, the children listened to the story of the Prodigal Son—adapted for kids and explained in a way they could understand within their cultural context. Each child heard this story in their native language, and through it—the message that every person can be reconciled with the Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ. It was amazing to see the children receive this message with open hearts, and we thank God that we had the opportunity to serve them in this way.

We were also able to invite a new Kazakh-speaking group of children from an orphanage, as well as welcome back a group that had joined us last year. For us, this is a powerful testimony of God's faithfulness. With some, we continue building relationships, and with others we are just beginning.



Camp leaders.

In our country, orphanages remain closed institutions, and it is very difficult to gain access there. But God opened the doors, and children who had never heard about Jesus before were able to learn about Him and experience His love! The team that worked in the camps consisted of about 30 people. **What brings us special joy is that most of this team were young people who themselves once grew up in our camps. Years ago, they were just participants, and now they have become full-fledged ministers!**

Some of them were baptized this year, while others are in the process of growing spiritually. Today they are already taking on responsibilities, helping in organization, and serving other children. **This is a clear testimony that the seeds planted years ago are now bearing fruit.** What inspires us even more is that this year graduates of orphanages also served with us. Just a few years ago, they



Children participate in activities at the camps and outreaches.

themselves came to camp as orphans, but now they are encouraging, supporting, and helping today's orphans! One of them said, *"Thank you for continuing to do these camps. We were once kids just like them, and it gave us hope and strength. Now we are happy that we can serve others."*

All of this has been possible thanks to your

support — prayerful, material, and spiritual. Thank you for building this ministry together with us and investing in the future of these children. *So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth* (1 Corinthians 3:7). May the Lord abundantly bless you for your faithfulness and participation! ♦

MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful (John 14:27).

Nine-year-old Anton is from the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, a frontline city where childhood is marked not by school breaks, but instead by the quiet moments between rounds of air raid sirens. He is the oldest child in his family, yet he already knows when to act like an adult. He has a little sister and brother. When things get dangerous, he helps his little brother down the stairs, takes his sister by the hand, and tries to calm them down, saying, *"Everything will be okay. We're together."*

Their family is very needy. For them, the question is not about "things I want," but "what I need"—bread on the table, warm clothes to wear, and some heat in the house. Both parents do their best, but the war cost them their jobs, stability, and peace of mind. At times, it seems that the hardest thing is not the cold or lack of light, but the feeling that life has been on hold for far too long. But Anton is just a little boy. He likes it when things are peaceful at home, when he can have fun with his

little brother, be a good big brother for his sister, and just daydream. His biggest dream of all is pretty simple—he wants nights without waking up because of bombing, and for his mom not to cry about how they're going to make it through the next week. Ten-year-old Masha also lives in Zaporizhzhia, with her mother and grandmother. Her father is away on the front lines of the war. For Masha, the war fills her daily life with sirens, fear, windows shaking from explosions, making her heart pound with such force that it seems the sound can be heard from every room in the house.

Both Anton and Masha are very grateful for the gifts you helped provide. Masha held hers carefully, as if it were not merely a present, but a small piece of a normal child's life. Both of these children miss the ordinary things—like millions of other children across the country. They miss being able to go for long walks, being able to sleep through the night fearlessly; being able to laugh loudly without thinking that danger is lurking nearby. And precisely because of this, such gifts are not just about material things. They are a message saying, **"YOU ARE NOT ALONE!"** When the churches provide such help, they also share the only true source of peace which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As He Himself promised . . . *Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful (John 14:27).* Continue to pray with us for peace to come and for the war to end. ♦



L to R: Anton; Masha.

Reaching Families Through Compassion Ministry and Immanuel's Child

Your Prayers and Gifts Help Open Many Doors for the Gospel

Joy and rejoicing is all the greater as we see the Lord move in the hearts of the lost through ministry He has called His people to do—ministry you help enable through your prayers and support. Compassion Ministry is one such vital outreach carried out by Alexander, an SGA-supported missionary pastor in Belarus. He sent this moving report recently, and it is a blessing to read. His whole church was moved to tears by the power and love of God on display. “Greetings, dear friends! Praise the Lord! These months have flown by. The Lord is working through our church in our small town. We thank SGA partners for supporting Compassion Ministry, and the Lord for the opportunity to help those in need with food. This expands our ability to preach the Gospel.



Bringing groceries to a family.

We usually visit families with many children who lack the means to buy basic groceries. Sister Valya visits one such family, and she tells us of the joy of the children who were given the opportunity to simply eat a hearty meal. One girl from a large family burst into tears when I told her how much Jesus loves her. Thanks to Him, they have food today. We also hold evangelistic services. The Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ is a tremendous opportunity for this. We invite large families to our services. The SGA-supported Immanuel's Child ministry helps us organize these

holiday services. Many hear about Jesus for the first time—the Lord Jesus as Savior! For example, a sister brought a man to one of these services, asking for food near a store. He cried throughout the entire service. Since he had never prayed, I invited him to turn to the Lord with us, and together with the church, we prayed for the salvation of this soul. Sergei (his name) prayed, repeating my words and wept. This moved our church members to tears!

The most touching thing about the services held during the Christmas holidays for me were the children's faces and eyes. Usually playful and laughing, these were the serious eyes of adults, sometimes filled with tears. Yet at the end of the service, they were filled with joy. The conversations with these completely different children from different families taught me the most important thing in my life. The children's hearts need Christ, just as I do, just as everyone else does. They need to see Christ, and we show Him through the unity of our shared ministry—the church, Christ, and our lives. Prayer is the most important link between us and our Creator. Only through Him do people continue to find healing, help, comfort, and salvation from soul-destroying sin. I thank the Lord for the continuing blessed time for preaching the Gospel. I thank SGA for its support in organizing ministries in our town. The Lord sees the sincerity of our prayers and answers them.”

Indeed, the motto of SGA founder Peter Deyneka was “Much Prayer, Much Power.” A fuller version of that motto is “Much Prayer, Much Power. Little Prayer, Little Power. No Prayer, No Power!” Alexander and his church devote much time to intercession for their people, their community, and specifically for those who will hear the Gospel through their labors. And God is bringing forth the fruit to the rejoicing of all! ♦

Equipping Stewardship

Garland Gould

SGA Senior Vice President of Partner Engagement

This month, we continue looking at *Biblical Estate Design* and specifically the 5 Biblical Principles. To review, these principles are:

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 we have discussed the first four Biblical Principles and now we look at Principle #5, **It is required that a steward be found faithful.** Our Scripture reference for this principle is found in 1 Corinthians 4:2, which reads . . . *In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.* While Paul is addressing his role as an Apostle, he uses the word “steward” to describe his responsibility for the task. Likewise, we have been given a “trust” in the property and people God has

blessed us with. This principle is simply a call to action. God has blessed us and now we need to put plans in place for the disposition of this trust. The starting point for these decisions is prayer—ask the Owner what He would have you do with that which He has entrusted to you.

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. Let us remind you that this information and service is our ministry to you and not contingent on any future gifts. ♦



Garland Gould

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Children's camps and outreaches in Kazakhstan.

Tens of thousands of children across the former Soviet countries look forward eagerly to summer and camp season. Not only is it a break from school, but it is also a time of great fun and fellowship. Camps have been part of their tradition dating back to the Soviet Pioneer Camps. When atheistic communist rule ended, the faithful churches SGA serves stepped in and held their own Summer Bible Camps, making them Gospel-focused. Your support for these camp outreaches is deeply appreciated, along with all the other ministries you support through SGA—*Orphans Reborn* and other children's outreaches, Bible training, provision of Bibles and Christian literature, Compassion Ministry, and so much more. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦

Insight FROM MICHAEL

Many forms of Bible Camp . . . but the same Gospel

The children's ministries supported by SGA partners across the former Soviet Union—*Immanuel's Child* at Christmas, *Orphans Reborn* year-round, and **Summer Bible Camps**—all have a special place in my heart. I know they have a special place in the hearts of our partners as evidenced by their generous giving. Above all, these ministries have a special place in the hearts of the faithful churches we serve.

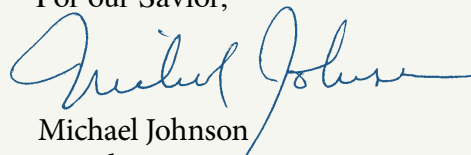
Our brothers and sisters in the churches take the Lord's attitude toward children to heart. He said . . . *Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these* (Matthew 19:14). They realize that reaching children with the Gospel is vitally important to the future of the church should the Lord tarry in His coming. **They are the next generation of pastors, youth ministers, music ministers, children's workers, women's ministry leaders, and evangelists.** They seek every opportunity to involve young children in the worship services, sharing songs, reading poetry—some of it written by the children themselves.

Sunday school is key, as is Vacation Bible School during the summer. And by God's grace, we have been blessed to see the fruit of these ministries time and time again. Perhaps no greater blessing is seen than a young boy or girl reached with the Gospel, for example during a camp ministry, then grow up to lead other children to Christ just as they were reached.

Summer Bible Camp season runs from the beginning of June until the end of August. That is two months from now, and preparations are already in the works. The forms the camps take will vary. Some will be true camp sessions at an actual facility where the sessions run for a week. They might take the form of an excursion or rafting trip down a river, with camping on the riverbank or lake shore. Due to local ministry conditions, others might have to be held in a playground or on church grounds as a day camp outreach.

But no matter the venue, the goal is the same—to lead boys and girls to faith in Christ. Please join us in praying in advance for this camp season. We are asking God to enable us to reach an even greater number of children this year with the love of Christ. Thank you in advance!

For our Savior,



Michael Johnson
President



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