



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

Using Your Prayers and Gifts, Jesus Opens Closed Hearts! Read the Stories . . .

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Life is tough for orphans—but Jesus' love reaches them
- ♦ A widow finds new life in an SGA-supported church
- ♦ They wanted their own Bibles, and you helped provide them . . .

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)



Thank You for Supporting this Large Children's Ministry

Read about the wonderful fruit of your giving!

Olga M. and Andrei P.
Children's Ministry Leaders in Russia



Regional conferences.

We are so thankful for your support and prayers! This is a summary of all you have helped accomplish for the glory of Christ.

Children's and Youth Conferences

In 2025 we held **nine conferences**, with 30 to 250 people attending each meeting. The conferences took place in **different parts of Russia**. In several regions, it was the first conference in many years.

The conferences brought together children's and youth ministers from their regions. The program includes seminars, sometimes games, master-classes, and fellowship. Answering ministry-related questions is always a very important part of such meetings.

From **Stavropol**, children's ministry leader Natalya wrote, "Thank God for this conference and many thanks to all the organizers and speakers. It was

a wonderful time for communication, education and relaxation. My husband and I have heard a lot of important information, not only for the ministry, but also for the upbringing of our children. All the topics were relevant and interesting. May the Lord bless the whole team, and give us wisdom in the future." We



Conference for regional leaders.

have invitations to visit **new regions in 2026**, with two conferences already held in January.

Gospel Puppet Ministry

From August 14-16, the **4th Christian Puppet Theaters Festival** was held in **Moscow**. In addition to the theaters of this region, there were representatives from the **southwestern, southern, Volga, and Siberian regions**. There were also those who did not have a puppet theater or established troupe in their churches yet, but who want to create one.

Although the festival is a performance competition, it is still primarily an event that gives great inspiration to develop this important and effective evangelistic ministry to children and adults. Performances by experienced troupes that have been around for years provided an opportunity to learn from their experience in directing, sound, and decorative design, plus acting. There were many training workshops for beginners on almost all aspects of puppetry. Irina, a participant, wrote, "We are a beginner theater, but we have learned a lot—how to make a script, how to play a role, how to control a doll, assemble a screen, how to start a play, even how to find the sponsors we need—we all learned this at this festival. We were all thrilled, and no one wanted to leave."

Conference for Russian Children's Ministers

This was the biggest event for the children's department, taking place in **November 2025**. This was the fifth such conference over 2-1/2 days, and it was a really blessed time. There were 425 in attendance representing 41 regions across Russia. There were 10 round table discussions, 47 seminars, and 32 speakers.

There were more people than we expected, and it was not easy. But we were so blessed! And even more people wanted to come, but we had no more place in the hotel conference center. The topics covered included **Drama, Puppet Theater, Orphans Ministry, Art Ministry, Music Ministry, Teen Conferences, Children's Camps, Special Needs Ministry, and Non-Standard Bible Lessons**. Everybody had an opportunity not just to listen, but to share their experience. And it was wonderful to realize how much everybody has to share. Each



Conference for Russian Children's Ministers.

participant got a bag with presents. **There was also a book edited by SGA, Ten Commandments. It is a very good tool to teach the children.**

God bless you, and thank you for helping us to equip these leaders! ♦

God's Power Brings Salvation

Alexander B.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Belarus

Greetings, brothers and sisters! **On Christmas Day, we again visited a nursing home along with another local church.** One church collected gifts, while the other prepared a puppet show. There have been many years of travel and many years of prayer for the people there. **Our message was about the nativity of our Savior and a call to repentance was given.** The play, "In the Footsteps of Christ," is about repentance.

After the call to prayer, two people approached and we prayed with them. They received Christ. Glory to Him for this!



Alexander with Igor (left) and Maria (right).

Igor is 57, and is a person with a musculoskeletal disability. He testified that before our arrival, his heart was restless and anxious. After the sermon, peace came to his heart. He had previously read the Bible, but had difficulty understanding it. **And 89-year-old Maria was crying.** She came to pray and receive Christ as her Savior. Thank God that people who are close to eternity are accepting Christ's call! **A total of 21 elderly people and two staff members, led by the director, heard the Word and watched the performance with all their hearts, answering questions.**

Next, we brought this same puppet show to our church at Rossony and held an evening for children. **There were many children who attended.** The guests were from Polotsk, and some of the children were from a family-type home with foster parents. The foster parents were very impressed by the performance and even went to pick up the children who were visiting their grandmother to attend the

evening. There was a quiz, where the children received sweets for every correct answer about Christmas events. At the end of the evening, the children received beautiful gifts and wrote on paper hearts what they would ask Jesus for.

Young Danik and Rita asked for their own Bibles. God answered them immediately through us—we gave these gifts to them. Lera, a 14-year-old girl, was so inspired by the performance that she wanted to participate in them in the future. Some of the children asked God to correct their parents who were alcoholics, so that they could return to their families and live a good life. **Praise the Lord, we continue to have regular meetings and lessons about the Lord with this family-type home.** The children have become more willing to pray, and their prayers have become more conscious, especially for the parents who abandoned them.

Lastly, God demonstrated His miracle in the arrival of new people for our Christmas ministry. Our brother was going to a church for the holiday and invited an acquaintance, and she replied, **"Let's go see how the Baptists celebrate."** **She came, heard the Word, and repented on her first visit!** Her name is Tatyana, a recent pensioner who lives alone. **She has been coming to church for two Sundays in a row now and surprisingly, is not shy about praying when the call to prayer is given.**

She addresses the Lord in her own words, as best she can. This is a great encouragement to us!

Katya and Valentina also repented. God performed such a miracle through our prayers—three women repented, and Lesha, who was too embarrassed to leave his seat, prayed quietly. When the youth sang about repentance before the call to prayer, I noticed how the Holy Spirit was working in Lesha's heart. **He wept and so as to not show it to anyone, quickly wiped away his tears.** The Lord never ceases to save souls and worked in the lives of the people, the children in Rossony, and nearby villages! Praise the Lord for our joint work and for your prayers. The Lord answers! ♦

God Uses Your Support to Change Wary Young Hearts

When a child is feeling lonely, sad, or angry, it is sometimes difficult for them to handle their emotions and relate well to others. **Although the orphanages have a bed to sleep in and daily food to nourish their bodies, it never feels like home to them.** Even when the circumstances are better in the orphanage, the child still longs for home even if the conditions there are bad.

Through the SGA-supported Orphans Reborn ministry, the children can begin to feel the warmth of what a home should look like. As the team members spend time with the children, relationships are developed, behavior changes, and God's love is on display.

Alexander is an **Orphans Reborn team leader in Belarus** who provided a moving example. **"At our meeting, I noticed a girl named Sasha who is 13 years old. Her mother had lost parental rights due to alcoholism. Looking into Sasha's sad eyes, I asked her what had happened. She quietly whispered, 'I'm here alone.' I began talking to her and asking about her life, and before long I saw her smile begin to blossom before my eyes. She really wants for her mother to come and bring her back to their home. Although the conditions here are good—better than at her home—with a warm bed, cleanliness, and delicious food, she still says it's a prison.**

I invited Sasha to join our conversations with the children and participate. You should hear the



Sasha and Alexander.

children's prayers—for Mom to stop drinking and take them away, or for Dad to get out of prison and take them home. Tears flow from my eyes, and even though I'm a grown man, it hurts to hear such prayers. Please pray for the children, that we may have the power of God to share His truth, so that they will come to Him. Pray for the parents to repent."

We also received this word from team leader Vladimir, also in Belarus. **"For several months in a row, I was forbidden to work with the children or conduct Bible lessons. But recently, there was an incident at the boarding school. Four teenagers beat up a young male teacher. The discipline of the children with whom I had once worked with had become much worse.**

This incident showed the authorities the difference between the children's behavior during our Bible fellowship and after its absence. The teachers openly said that Christian work with children, Bible lessons, and our fellowship help children change for the better."

Vladimir gave the example of Kolya:

"I previously wrote to you about three brothers, Kolya, Petya, and Zhenya. They have aged out of the orphanage and are now graduates. Earlier, when Kolya was in the orphanage and didn't know about God, the teachers and administration spoke of him with horror. He would find a piece of plywood and throw it at the teachers. He would scratch their cars with nails. He was tall, unruly, and embittered—the administrator said he belonged either in a psychiatric hospital or prison. But Kolya heard about Christ, heard the Word of God, and his life changed. After a while, people couldn't believe their eyes that anything good could come of him. God's mercy! Thank God, that through these difficulties, God opened the eyes of those in charge, and I will be able to resume visiting children and working with them!"

Please continue to pray for these orphan children, that many will open their hearts and come to salvation through their Savior, Jesus Christ! ♦

UKRAINE: War and Loss . . . Yet Gospel Hope!

Provided by Danylo B.
SGA-Supported Missionary in Ukraine



Lyubov

My name is Lyubov. I am 67 years old. I was born and have lived my entire life in Ukraine. I spent my best years here, worked here, got married, raised my daughter, and built up our little home. My life wasn't fancy, but it was full of work, caring, and simple human joys. I always believed that doing the right thing, being patient, and loving your family would help you get through hard times.

Mykola, my husband, was my rock and support for many years. We went through joys and trials together, shared everyday life and all kinds of holidays. When he was diagnosed with lung cancer, our life changed dramatically. In 2020, my husband passed away.

After the funeral, my house felt empty, and **the silence was unbearable**. I came back from the cemetery and didn't know how to go on living. It seemed like everything I had lived for was now in the past. Loneliness became my daily reality. I have a daughter and two grandchildren whom I love very much. But life has turned out in such a way that they are now abroad. We talk on the phone, I hear their voices, I can see photos, but my heart cries out for a warm living embrace, for the sound of children's laughter in the house.

The **outbreak of the war** was another heavy trial. Fear, anxiety, news, explosions, sirens—all of this had a deep impact on my soul and my health. I often didn't know where to find comfort and caught myself thinking that I was alone with my pain.

It was during this difficult time in 2023 that **the Lord led me to the First Baptist Church in our town**. I remember well the day I first crossed the threshold of the church. My heart was heavy, but the people welcomed me with warmth and sincere

kindness. **There, for the first time in a long time, I felt that I was not alone, that my life had value.**

In the church, I found peace of mind, support, and lively communication. I made new friendships and later found true friends who now constantly care about me, pray with me, and support me in difficult moments. **I began to read the Gospel regularly. The words of Scripture became a source of hope and strength for me. I began to sing Christian songs,** and through them my heart was filled with peace. I sincerely believed in Jesus Christ and began to see His work in my life in human kindness, in unexpected help, in inner peace that replaced constant anxiety.

My life is still not easy. I am 67 years old, and my health is not what it used to be. The weather conditions are very difficult: slippery roads, cold, short daylight hours. In addition to this, there are prolonged power outages, with no electricity for more than 18 hours a day.

On such days, it is difficult both physically and emotionally. But I still try to come to church every Sunday because I know that this is where I find support and warmth. My pension is very small. It is barely enough to pay for utilities. I often have to worry about medicine, food, and other necessities. **The help I receive at church is not just material support for me; it is a true manifestation of God's love.** It helps me survive and feel that I am not abandoned. Looking back on my life, I realize that through loss, loneliness, and pain, the Lord has brought me to Himself.

I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but I know that today I am not alone. My heart is filled with faith and hope. I thank God for every day I have lived, for the people He has sent into my life, and for the Church, which has become my spiritual family. Even at my age, I believe that life has meaning when Christ is in it. ♦

Equipping Stewardship

Garland Gould
SGA Senior Vice President of Partner Engagement



Garland Gould

Now that we have walked through the *5 Biblical Principles* in past issues of the Good News Report, which is Step 1 of Biblical Estate Design, we move on to Step 2—*Becoming Familiar with the Rules, Tools, and Vehicles Available*. We lack the space in this newsletter to cover all the rules and opportunities available, so this article will not attempt it.

However, let us share a few key points beginning with the word *familiar*. It is easy to get bogged down in many details and minutiae in the estate planning world, so gain a basic understanding and then trust your advisors. A second point here is that while we can, often with good reason, bemoan our tax code and the IRS, there are MANY

opportunities for creative charitable giving that are important to know about. These can be as simple as understanding how important the way an asset is titled to the complex use of trusts to effectively pass assets to heirs and ministry partners.

We have a *Guide to Planning Your Estate* that will offer more information and explain in more detail these rules and options, and we are happy to send this to you in either printed form or electronically. We think this guide will help you gain this familiarity and hopefully inform your prayers as you seek God's guidance. Please let us know if we can answer any questions and if you would like to receive the brochure, *Principles of Estate Planning*. We also have an informational newsletter that you might 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. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The churches and faithful missionary pastors supported by SGA are truly the foundation of almost all ministry taking place across the nations of the former Soviet Union. They shepherd their congregations, plant new ones, conduct and oversee evangelistic outreaches, render aid to the needy, and disciple new leaders for the churches. Your faithful prayers and support help them accomplish all of this for the glory of Christ. You also help provide Bibles and Christian literature, support doctrinally



Immanuel's Child in Russia.



L to R: Visiting widows; Firewood for a needy widow.

sound Bible training, equip children's ministries such as Summer Bible Camps, *Orphans Reborn*, *Immanuel's Child* ministries at Christmas, and so much more. Please pray about how you can help today. ♦

Insight FROM MICHAEL

Conflict, persecutions, false religions—yet one thing hasn't wavered

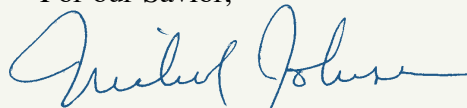
I will build My church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

Through the years, I have had several opportunities to travel over to Russia and her neighboring countries to see firsthand the fruitful ministries of the pastors and churches you help support. The ministry conditions in which they work are varied. Missionary pastors in Central Asia minister in a predominately Islamic context, and their Gospel labors must be carried out very discreetly. Even those nations differ in the level of the pressures that can be encountered by evangelical churches. In the former Soviet nations of Eastern Europe, there is more freedom for the churches to minister, but they still must be cautious and aware of restrictions. In vast Russia, it all depends on where you are at across the country's 11 time zones. **In many regions, the churches encounter comparatively few issues, but in other places such as the Caucasus where Islam is strong, evangelical church ministry can be very dangerous.** The war between Russia and Ukraine has imposed significant dangers for the churches with ongoing bombardment and destruction, yet they carry on with their ministries with joy, dedication, and commitment.

One thing has not changed, and by God's grace, will not. And that is SGA's mission of service to these faithful churches and their ministries. Since 1934 when SGA was founded, there have been many events across the former Soviet Union and indeed the world. There have always been wars, skirmishes, disputes, repressions, deprivations, and political upheaval. But the Lord's calling on His churches to make disciples and proclaim the Gospel has never changed. The calling He gave to SGA founder Peter Deyneka and our first board of directors on that January day of 1934 has not changed—and that is to serve and equip faithful churches in those lands to accomplish their ministries. Providing Bible training to their pastors and church workers remains priority one. Equipping them with Bibles, Christian literature, theological works, and other resources they need for effective ministry continues on with God's provision. Supporting faithful missionary pastors in their ministries remains paramount.

Finally, it is as true today as it was 92 years ago—SGA's faithful partners are vitally important in carrying these ministries forward both in giving and in ongoing prayer. I am so thankful for you and what you help accomplish for the glory of Christ!

For our Savior,



Michael Johnson, President



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Enhancing Trust