



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN



A closer look at how your gifts to SGA are: Sharing the Gospel Equipping the Church Helping the Forgotten

How God Is Blessing Your Prayers & Gifts

- ♦ Sharing the Gospel in Homes, on the Train, and in Prisons
- ♦ From *Orphans Reborn* Child to a Christian School Teacher
- ♦ In the Midst of War, the Gospel Reaches Over 850 Children

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)

From Central Asia to Russia and Back: Sharing Christ One-on-One

Missionary Pastor Uses Every Opportunity to Share the Gospel!

Oleg M.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor



150th anniversary celebration.

I recently took a trip from Central Asia to Moscow for a theological conference centered on the 150th anniversary of the Synodal Bible translation into Russian. After the conference was over, my journey continued to the Russian city of Tyumen, where I met a fellow countryman who has been living in Russia for a long time. After talking with him, I understood that he had become an alcoholic. I shared my testimony—that I was once also addicted, but God set me free, and now I feel useful for God, the church, my family, and society. He has children, and I told him it would not be good for them to hear that their father is an alcoholic. He became thoughtful, and when we parted at the train station, I told him that only the Lord can deliver him and give him freedom. I pray that he heard me!

On the train, I also spoke with a young man who considered himself an atheist. When I talked to him about faith, he said, “How can you believe in something you cannot see or touch?” I replied by

asking, “Do you believe the train driver has authorization to operate this train? Or do you rely on facts?” He said he trusted that he would not be allowed to drive otherwise, and that there are checks and qualifications. I told him that in the same way, the Word of God has also been tested and has changed the whole world. The evidence around us—the sky, the stars, nature, and the crown of God’s creation, man himself—testifies to it. He is currently still thinking about this.

Back at home, I now have a new ministry assistant, Brother Arkady, who also went through a difficult path. He came to faith in prison and after his release decided not to return to his past life but to fully dedicate himself to the Lord and His service. Due to his background, he is very effective in witnessing to those who find themselves in difficult life situations. Our discipleship ministry is bearing fruit, and many local people are attending church. During this period, there were no major difficulties or persecutions from the authorities. The children come to church, and they attend Sunday school, which, is turned into a playroom when needed. We distribute literature, but only inside the church or when people request it during visits. I would like to thank you for your prayers and timely support. Please keep praying for my family and our ministry through the church. ♦



Pastor Oleg preaches.

Evgeniya: A Testimony to the Powerful Impact of Orphans Reborn

Sometimes it is in the stillness of a moment where God reaches out and touches one’s heart. He sees us when we are feeling emotionally defeated, maybe lonely or sad. He hears our cries as we call out to Him. He responds to us in love and mercy, never leaving us alone. What great comfort it must be for the orphan child who has been abandoned by their earthly parents, only to find rest and peace in the arms of their Savior!

Evgeniya is one such “social orphan” who had to be removed from her home and grew up in an orphanage. Her testimony is a wonderful example of how children saved through the SGA-supported *Orphans Reborn* ministry often grow up and keenly desire to reach others as they were reached. “The first time I heard about God was when I was nine years old. It was in an orphanage. I lived there because my mom was very ill and my dad was an alcoholic.



Evgeniya in the orphanage.

One year, my mother felt really bad and couldn’t pick me up from the orphanage during the winter holidays, although sometimes she did. I think it was God’s providence, because it was that year that believers organized a Christian day camp in our orphanage. It was my first encounter with God, the first discovery about His wonderful love and mercy for me. Later, the same believers organized a Christian club in the orphanage and came to us every week on weekends. They played with us and conducted Bible lessons. My orphanage was very close to Moscow, so we were visited by many different people, sponsors, and patrons, but these new people were very special. They were Christians (as I later learned, they were members of the Baptist church) who truly treated us with genuine love. And I felt it. They communicated with us, tried to understand our problems, helped us,

supported us, and were just there with us, which is extremely important for those who do not live in a family.

The hardest part was when our Christian friends left. The club ended and the songs about God ended. I was so sad about it. I hoped so much that they would come again. One day when I woke up early in the morning, all the girls in my room were still asleep. Despite the fact that there were six of us and we lived together all the time, I still felt especially lonely. At that moment, for the first time, I sincerely prayed to God and just asked Him to be with me. And you know, I immediately felt better, as if a weight had been lifted from my soul. It’s been a long time, but I still remember that morning and that prayer.

As the years passed, one family of believers continued to communicate with me and they took care of me—they actually accepted me into their family. It was thanks to them that, when I was 18 years old, I experienced a personal encounter with the Savior Jesus Christ. It changed my whole life. This family supported me in my service in the church, mentored me spiritually, and were always ready to receive me, opening the doors of their hospitable home. God is so good! I’m married now. I have a wonderful loving husband. I work as a teacher at a Christian school. My husband and I are raising two adopted children. I thank God that He found me in this world, touched my heart and changed my life. God’s mercy is great!”



Evgeniya with her family.

SGA-supported *Orphans Reborn* teams continue to make regular visits to orphanages across six former Soviet countries and in Poland, sharing the Gospel with children who are longing for the peace and hope Evgeniya found. Please continually remember them in prayer! ♦

Youth in Belarus Capture the Vision for Video Ministry

Alexander K.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Belarus

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I greet you with the love of the Lord. Just as Paul once thanked God for Titus's zeal for the church in Corinth (2 Cor. 8:16), so we thank Him for the zeal He has placed in your hearts for Belarus. This is very important to us, and especially your prayers.

Today I want to tell you about two teenagers who regularly come to our church. They are brothers, named Grigory and Stepan. Grigory loves programming and plans to study it after school. Stepan has a more humanities-oriented mindset; he feels things more seriously and deeply. Both of them are very good, responsive young men. They attend

classes for teenagers, and during the sermon at church, they write answers to questions that I prepare in advance for the teenagers. Both always give the right answers. It's clear that they not only understand everything correctly, but they are clearly interested in the Scriptures.



(Top) Grigory; (Above) Grigory and Stepan.

Recently, I decided to involve them in ministry. We record and post online sermons and



Stepan records the service.

conversations at our church. I invited Stepan to be the cameraman in recording the videos, and Grigory to be the editor. He edits the footage, plus the addition of captions and pictures. The boys are very smart—they quickly mastered everything and now enjoy this ministry. Their videos on YouTube get several hundred views. For religious content in our environment, these are good numbers. Feeling needed, the boys have become even more involved in church life.

I invited them to join me on a boat trip down the river this summer. Naturally, they agreed. I hope that on this trip we can become even closer and discuss serious and important matters. They believe that God exists, but they are unsure of their salvation. Please pray that the Lord will continue His work in their hearts and grant them a new birth, if this has not yet happened. We wish you peace and grace from God and the Lord Jesus Christ. May He multiply the fruits of your ministry! ♦

Much Prayer, Much Power in Action, Even in Wartime!

Pavel D.
SGA-Missionary Pastor in Ukraine



Pastor Pavel and his family.

I sincerely thank God for your faithfulness to the Lord and for the long-standing support you have been providing to Ukraine. First of all, life here has become very difficult because it is now the fifth year of war—lawlessness and constant shelling across the entire country. In addition, the Iran war has caused diesel and fuel prices to rise, and now they are almost \$9 per gallon. As a result, the prices of food, groceries, and all other goods have doubled, and perhaps even tripled. This is the worst period in my 43 years that I can remember.

In our ministry, we are doing everything we can—and even what seems beyond our ability—so that the Gospel can continue to spread. We are continuing regular meetings in the villages with young people, holding Bible studies, studying the Word, and more. We also thank God for the large outreaches and for sowing the seed of the Gospel during the



(Top) Girl with a Bethlehem star and gift; (Above) Immanuel's Child Christmas outreach.

Christmas season.

We were able to use the Christmas season to hold outreaches where we purchased gifts for the children. I can say with confidence that most of these children had never held such a gift in their hands before. This was the first outreach where we are currently planting our fifth church. Then we had another large gathering in our main church, where we brought children with difficult life circumstances. This group included mainly orphans, those who lost their parents in the war, and those living below the poverty line. Our House of Prayer was filled with these children, and every child received a Christmas gift.



Meeting with children.

We were still able to hold several more meetings in the Carpathian Mountains where I am from, and the first place I went to was my own former school. There were about 250 children filling the hall who heard the Gospel. After that, we visited another village, and in each village, we gathered between 250 and 300 children. By cooperating with other kind-hearted people, we were able to reach around 850 to 900 children. This is to the glory of the Lord, because it is not our achievement—it is what God is doing! I sincerely thank you for your help and your support. May the Lord bless each and every one of you! ♦

Christ's Compassion Is Opening Hearts in Central Asia

Igor L.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Kazakhstan



Distributing aid and sharing the Gospel while visiting families.

Not long after an evangelistic outreach, we had the opportunity to visit three families who were open to us and desired to talk about the Lord Jesus Christ. Before the trip, we prepared food packages that included essential items (sugar, oil, grains, tea, and flour), as well as sweets (cookies, candies, and wafers). We also bought some fruit (bananas, apples, and oranges). The children were filled

with indescribable joy, as they usually only see these things during the New Year's holidays. The adults were very open, and we had meaningful conversations with them. They invited us to have tea, and while talking about various topics, we were able to gently guide the conversation toward spiritual matters and point them to Jesus Christ. We also had the opportunity to pray with them in their homes. These are very poor families, and this food assistance was a great support to them—they were very grateful.

There is also an orphanage in Novaya Shulba. We met two children from this orphanage—a boy named Sergei and his younger sister Marina. We began visiting them and telling them about God. They are not able to attend church services, but they listen attentively, ask questions, and are already sharing about Jesus with their friends. We also prepared packages with sweets and fruit for them.

One woman to whom we have been ministering has started attending church regularly. Her name is Natasha, and she comes together with her son. Along



Church service in Novobazhenovo.

with the believers from the church at Novoshulbinsk, Natasha and her son traveled with us as we visited and encouraged a group of believers in the village of Novobazhenovo. I am very grateful to the Lord that He is leading me, my family, and this church in this way. He is opening new families to hear and receive the Word of the Lord Jesus. I thank God for your kind hearts and being vessels prepared for service. I sincerely ask for your forgiveness that I did not take any photos of the ministry visits—we were so engaged in the ministry that we only remembered after we had already left! I also thank God that He provides opportunities for us to serve and uses us in building His kingdom. ♦



Pastor Igor and his family.

Equipping Stewardship

Garland Gould
SGA Senior Vice President of Partner Engagement



Garland Gould

Now that we have briefly walked through the first three steps of Biblical Estate Design, we move to step 4, which is Seek Competent Counsel. After you've done the work of praying, learning, gathering data, and putting your plan together, now you need competent professionals to help make your plan a legal document. The key word in this step is competent. I prefer working with a Christian brother or sister as my professional advisors, but if they are not competent, the plans may fail and I have come up short in my role as steward. So, as you seek or consider your current

advisors, make sure they are competent. Likewise, the “do it yourself” will kits have improved, however, it may be unwise to be your own counselor.

We have a Guide to Planning Your Estate that will offer more information and explain in more detail these rules and options. We are happy to send this to you in either printed form or electronically. In addition to the information in this guide, we may be able to suggest competent advisors in your area through a couple of networks we are connected to.

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 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. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you've read the Good News Report for any length of time, you can see that the faithful missionary pastors SGA supports are foundational to our mission across the countries of the former Soviet Union, Poland, and in Israel. These dedicated

pastors are planting new churches, carrying out evangelism and children's outreaches, and Compassion Ministry to needy families. Your support also makes it possible for the provision of sound Bible training, Bibles and Christian literature, and so much more. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Sharing the Gospel in a hospital in Kazakhstan.



(Top) Church service with Roma people in Russia; (Above) Baptism in Ukraine.

Insight FROM MICHAEL

SGA Is Sharing the Gospel with All Ages

I am thankful to send you this issue of the Good News Report because it truly illustrates the fruitful outreaches of the faithful churches SGA serves across the former Soviet Union. If you wonder while reading how it is possible for them to do all that they do, you wouldn't be alone. Being there in person to witness their ministries in action is truly a whirlwind of sorts. Those of us on staff who travel overseas to meet with the pastors often tell first-time visitors, "Sleep when you get home!" And it's true. From sunup to sundown, their days are full of outreach, praying all the while that someone will hear the Gospel and come to faith in Christ.



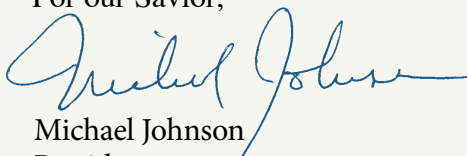
In the churches, it is not uncommon for someone to stand up and interrupt the order of service because they want to repent and trust in Christ immediately. And accordingly, the service (or even the sermon) will pause while the person comes forward and prays a prayer of repentance and faith in Christ. There is much rejoicing!

- Children are reached through a variety of ministries: Sunday school, Summer Bible Camp, or during an orphanage visit by one of the *Orphans Reborn* teams you help support.
- Families in desperate need are reached during home visits when churches come with food aid and loving compassion.
- Men and women are reached one-on-one through home visits or even street evangelism where it is possible.

As missionary pastors travel on the road, circumstances often lead to meeting someone unexpectedly, and the door opens to share the Gospel. And yes, if these faithful pastors are living in a country or region where persecution takes place, the judicial hearings before officials or judges can present yet another opportunity to tell others about the Lord, much like in the early church.

I can't overstate the importance of your ongoing prayers and support for the SGA-supported missionary pastors and their churches. In their reports to us, they continually express their love and thanksgiving for you—our partners in ministry. You are helping them accomplish much more than I could ever adequately express.

For our Savior,


Michael Johnson
President



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Enhancing Trust