



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastors Continue Reaching Families with the Gospel

How God Is Multiplying Your Prayers & Gifts

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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)

Dad, Don't Worry. Let Me Try to Lead!

Denis K.

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Ukraine



Service at Denis's church.

Greetings, brothers and sisters! I would like to briefly share some events that took place last Christmas. We were planning to organize a celebration for the children of our village. Organizing this event was a big challenge, as our church is small. I reached out to the youth of a larger church for help, and they agreed to assist us in preparing and conducting the event. We actively

began preparations, advertising the outreach and sharing information on social media. But two days before the event, we received a call from that church informing us that due to illness among the youth, they would not be able to participate. So we had to organize and carry out everything on our own. When I told my 14-year-old son Daniel about the situation, he said, "Dad, don't worry, let me try to lead the event, I'll try to plan and organize it." We prayed together, and I decided to entrust him with this responsibility.

Those two days were very difficult for young Daniel. He wept, called me at work, worried. He said that things were not working out, and that he was afraid. Yet he carried on, showing remarkable determination and diligence. Then, one more stressful moment happened 10 minutes before the event started. There were only three children sitting in the hall — my own! I was shocked and thought everything had failed. Yet within just 10 minutes, the room filled up! In the end, 47 children attended the outreach, with 44 of them coming from non-believing families. There were also 30 adults. In total, more than 70 people participated. This brought us

great joy and confirmed that all our effort—especially Daniel's—our prayers, and preparation were not in vain! Daniel had prepared everything, and thanks to his efforts the celebration went wonderfully! It was incredibly moving to see how he dealt with the challenge and how joyful and fun the event was for the children.

After Daniel successfully led the Christmas event last year, he developed a strong



Daniel leads the Christmas celebration.

desire to start a youth club in our church. We gathered together — Daniel, Dana, Alyona, and I — and began to pray for this ministry. After prayer and



Youth club.

discussion, we started preparing, creating announcements and began spreading information among the teenagers. That is how the youth club in our church began. Now, every Monday evening, the teenagers gather

together. During the meetings, they communicate, play games, rejoice, and spend time in a friendly atmosphere. At the end of each meeting, I share a short message — about 10 minutes — so that the teenagers can hear biblical teaching and reflect on spiritual matters.

From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you for your generosity and support. I truly believe that through you, the Lord is showing His care and love. Your ministry and sacrifice are a powerful testimony of faith in action. May the Lord richly bless you, fill your lives with peace, joy, and spiritual fruit. Thank you for being instruments of God's grace. ♦

Equipping Stewardship

Garland Gould

SGA Senior Vice President of Partner Engagement



Garland Gould

As we approach the calendar and tax year end, this is a good opportunity to remind you of strategic ways to give. While many are not inclined to praise the IRS, the tax code does provide incentives for charitable giving. As believers, we should understand these rules

and tools so we can apply them wisely. Some strategies are simple while others are more complex.

Appreciated Assets: If you own assets that have appreciated in value (stocks, bonds, real estate, or precious metals) and you give the asset to charity, you can avoid the capital gains tax that would apply if you sold the asset. In many cases, your income tax charitable deduction may be based on the asset's full fair market value. Timing is important—if securities are transferred directly to the charity or to the charity's broker, the valuation and deduction are

based on the transfer date. If you have your broker reissue securities in the charity's name, the transfer date may be the date the transfer is posted on the issuer's books, which can be unpredictable. Make sure transfers are completed before year end and on a day when market conditions are favorable. If an asset is worth more than you wish to give, there are often ways to donate only a portion while retaining the remainder for liquidation.

Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from an IRA: Many of you already use this option to make gifts to ministries without increasing taxable income. If you are age 70½ or older, you may transfer up to \$111,000 directly from your IRA to qualified charities each year as a QCD. Timing is critical: allow sufficient time for your account custodian to process the transfer so the gift is completed by December 31. We cannot cover every option here, but other strategies include charitable gift annuities, life insurance gifts, gifts of business interests, and gifts of tangible personal property. If you have questions about these or other ideas, please reach out to us at plannedgiving@sga.org or you can call me directly at 407-718-1076. ♦

MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps (Proverbs 16:9).

Most, if not all of us as believers have had circumstances arise where it became evident that the Lord had been prompting and directing our steps all along, even if it wasn't as clear at the time. Alexander R, an SGA-supported missionary pastor in Belarus, shared this wonderful account of how the Lord led him and his church into becoming a special blessing for a needy pair of children and their family. "Last fall, my children and I had prepared some things to bring to the church. It wasn't urgent, but I clearly remember something compelling me to go now. So the children and I loaded everything into the car and drove off.

As we approached the church, we saw a group of children who seemed to be waiting for us outside. They reminded me so much of my own childhood—

those protruding simple clothes that were a size too big—probably inherited from an older brother and no longer in the best condition. Parking the car, I asked the kids, "Can you help me to bring the things into the church?" They were very happy to help. I invited them into my library and offered them books to choose from in the children's section where I kept children's Bibles. Afterwards, I told the kids that we were soon to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. I gave them some money for ice cream as they'd worked so hard. We said goodbye, and I hoped I'd see them again. I sent the photo of the kids to our church prayer group and asked them to pray. Afterward, one of the sisters said she saw a strange group of children heading straight to the House of Prayer . . . and that she was already praying for them!

Time flew by, and Christmas finally arrived. As our small church hall filled with children, my wife said to me, "Look, these are the same kids you met near the church!"

Two of the kids came—Vova and his brother Ignat. We had this Christmas gathering twice—one was planned for the younger children, and the other for the older ones, only on a different day—Vova and Ignat came a second time. But that is not the end. Vova and Ignat started coming to our children's ministry meetings. They took the children's Sunday service very seriously and were never late.

At Easter, our Sunday school children prepared songs and poems, and Vova and Ignat were delighted to participate. And they came to the celebration with their mother Tatyana! She told us



(Left) Vova and Ignat with the Sunday school class; (Right) The brothers participate in the Easter service.



how her children look forward to this day at church, and how they prepared and dressed. Tatyana was thrilled that her children had found such friends. I think this story isn't over. Pray that the Lord will continue His work in saving this family and bringing in new children." ♦

Yulia: A Long Journey to the Foot of the Cross

Polikarp T.

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Ukraine



Yulia

Among the many testimonies we see and hear, there are stories of quick changes, and there are those where it takes a lot of time, tears, conversations, and prayers for someone to come to Christ. Yulia's story is exactly that. Yulia grew up in a dysfunctional family. Her father left them when she and her siblings were still small. Her mother mostly neglected her daughter, so Yulia was sent to a boarding school. From time to time, she saw her grandmother, but her grandmother was elderly and could not fully take care of an active teenage girl. Then at age 15, Yulia came to our church.

At first glance, Yulia was very open, easily engaged in conversation, smiled a lot, and quickly made friends. It seemed that she was easy to be around people. Later we began to notice something else: many people treated her with caution. Later it turned out that Yulia had a habit of taking other people's things. At first it was small amounts of money. Then she would take a bank card, buy something for herself, and return it unnoticed. When she was caught, she almost always denied everything.

There were long conversations with her and warnings along with tears. There were promises to change. But after a while, it all happened again. And

again—now with larger amounts involved. We sent her back to her grandmother again and I told her, "We wish you all good, but you yourself must take a step towards God. The Lord changes lives, but it happens only when people stop justifying themselves and begin to honestly admit their sin. This time Yulia remained with her grandmother about six months. This time when she returned, we saw a different person. Gradually she began to read the Scriptures. She took notes on sermons. She could often recount in detail what was said in the group or service. Months passed. Few believed that the changes were real. From the beginning of our acquaintance to the moment of her repentance, three years passed. Three years of struggle. Three years of falls. Three years of chances. Then Yulia said she wanted to be baptized. I asked her why, and she said, "Without God and the church, I will be lost. I have already been there . . . Help me!" Her words touched me deeply and I understood that she was telling the truth. There are things that social programs will not cure. The human heart needs Christ!

A year has passed since then. She is a regular in services and groups. She has noticeably grown spiritually. When I look at Yulia, I wonder what would have happened to this girl without God, without the church, and without people who gave her a chance again and again? The greatest miracle is a changed human heart! ♦



The boys choose books from the church library.



Vova and Ignat at the Christmas outreach.

Gospel Hope Amid the Human Tragedy of War

Valentin L.
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Ukraine



Gathering for wives and mothers of fallen soldiers.

For over a year, we have been ministering to parents and wives of fallen soldiers who are grieving the loss of their loved ones. There are over 300 families in our small town who lost their dear ones on the frontline. Our goal is to help them navigate their grief and to find hope in Jesus Christ and the promise of the resurrection. For example, Juliana lost her stepfather in the war, so she personally understands the deep pain of grief and loss. As a psychologist, she led an art therapy session during our meeting, helping women find healing for their souls through creativity and art. Both Iryna and Olena recently came to Jesus after experiencing great loss. Iryna lost her only son on the frontline, while Olena lost her husband. They shared powerful testimonies about how God helped them move



(Left) Juliana; (Right) Iryna and Olena.

forward after their tragedies and gave them strength hope, and purpose again.

Over the school break, many children from low-income families lost access to free meals from the government. In response, we organized a food distribution specifically for children. After we opened public registration over 1,000 children signed up in just two days! Last Saturday, we handed out 200 food bags to 200 people, supporting large families, families in need, and refugees from eastern Ukraine.



(Top) Bags of food; (Above) Families line up to receive aid.

The war has also had a deep impact on orphanages. As the danger increased, the children had to be moved for their safety and many are being placed with families. Our church sees this as a

ministry and we provide food to these foster families along with the Gospel.

Antonina, a kind woman from our church, opened her heart and home. Little Vanya came from a truly disastrous situation—his family was marked by violence, and he was taken away for his own safety. Vanya is deeply traumatized. He is afraid of people, always on the verge of tears, and only feels safe when he's in Antonina's arms. She took him and other children in, and she cares for them with all her strength. Every week, they come to our church



(Left) Antonina with her foster children; (Center and Right) Other families from the church with their foster children.

services. Nastya, the older girl, has already given her life to Jesus, and she is now preparing for baptism.

We are praying for God's continued direction in this ministry. Our greatest prayer is for this war to finally come to an end. We place our hope and trust in God regarding this situation. As we witness the pain and suffering that so many people in our country continue to endure, we pray and believe that God will bring this war to an end soon. I want once again to say thank you, and we appreciate your support so much! ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We are so thankful for the faithful missionary pastors you help support across the former Soviet Union, in Poland, and in Israel. They and the churches



A missionary pastor in Russia baptizes a new believer.

they serve are the reason SGA exists—to help them advance the Gospel with every opportunity the Lord grants. Your prayers and support undergird their ministries, and your gifts help accomplish so much more—including Bible training, children's ministries, Compassion Ministry, and provision of Bibles and other Christian literature. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



A missionary pastor in Belarus shares from God's Word.

Insight FROM SGA

Partners who have been a part of SGA's ministries for some time know about the various outreaches they help support—Bible training, children's ministries such as Summer Bible Camps, *Immanuel's Child*, and *Orphans Reborn*, plus Compassion Ministry, distribution of Bibles and Christian literature, and others. One foundational reality behind all these ministries is this. The faithful missionary pastors, church workers, and churches that SGA supports across the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and in Israel are the ones who own and carry out all of these ministries each day. Their effectiveness is seen through the various kinds of fruit that their ministries produce.



Fruit does not always mean large numbers of people responding. As the Lord directed, Gospel seeds get planted by His people with all who will hear. The germination of the Gospel seed is in the hands of the Lord, who . . . *causes the growth* (1 Corinthians 3:6). Some men, women, and children respond immediately to hearing of God's rich mercy and grace through Jesus Christ. With others, it takes steady, committed cultivation over time, sometimes even months or years. God is sovereignly working in those people according to His timetable. And one day, that individual who has been the recipient

of patient, loving ministry finally believes, repents, and trusts in Christ alone as Savior and Lord.

Our brothers and sisters rejoice in this fruit, and they themselves are reaping a harvest of joy and thanksgiving as they see God working—both through them and in the hearts of the people they are reaching. Their joy and faith is

“ . . . they themselves are reaping a harvest of joy and thanksgiving as they see God working—both through them and in the hearts of the people they are reaching.”

undimmed even in the midst of great challenges and hindrances put in their way—often by other religious groups or governmental authorities who are opposed to the ministries of evangelical churches. But the opponents of the Gospel never have the last word, and never will. The Lord will build His church, and nothing will stop Him. Praise God that we get to be a part of it!

For our Savior,

Eric Mock
Senior VP of Ministry Operations



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