



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

BIBLE CAMPS SOON TO OPEN!

Your Prayers and
Support Reach
Children in the
Former USSR

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Hardened Young Man Opens to Jesus at Camp
- ♦ God uses Siberian Bible Camps to Change Hearts
- ♦ More Great *Immanuel's Child* Reports Pour In!

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)

“You are the man I was looking for.”

Pastor Sergei Volokitin
Sukhinichi, Russia

The Sukhinichi shopping center is an excellent location for reaching people and having Gospel conversations. **We are able to reach many young people and teenagers who go there for free Wi-Fi.** Each person we meet responds differently to hearing the Gospel, but they usually listen to us.

*God will answer in the way
He knows. You have to seek
God, first of all.*

Recently, I talked to a 40-year-old man from Moldova who is also named **Sergei**. When he found out that I am a pastor, he invited me to visit him at home and to bless his house. I told him that his wish was a good wish, but that we do not bless homes. Rather, we bless people with the Word of God. Sergei replied, “**You are the man I was**



Pastor Sergei Volokitin ministers to children and youth.



Pastor Sergei teaches the Word of God and prays with many people of Sukhinichi.

looking for.” I was surprised!

Sergei has two sons, and the older boy has autism. When I came to Sergei's home, I noticed a strong smell of alcohol. Sergei introduced me to the boy and said, “Please, bless him and talk to him that his problem might leave him.” He added that his family had visited many doctors and specialists, but nothing had helped.

I asked Sergei, “What do you expect from me?” He answered, “I want you to pray that his illness will leave him, as he was baptized when he was a baby.” I then replied, “Yes, I will talk to your son. But first of all, I want to talk with you. **Baptism without faith is nothing.** It is important that a person believes in God and He will reward those who seek Him. I will pray for your son, but only God saves and heals! God will answer in the way He knows. You have to seek God, first of all.” Sergei bowed his head and said, “You are right. Please, help me.” I shared the Gospel with him and then we prayed together.

Please pray for Sergei and his family as we continue to visit them, and that they will be able to believe in God with sincere hearts. ♦



The man's family is grateful for the opportunity to know the Lord.

God's Love Changes a Young Heart!

Your Support of VBS and Summer Camp Ministry Bears Fruit

Pastor Pavel
Belarus

As we prepare for this summer's camp and Vacation Bible School (VBS) activities, I'd like to share the fruit of what you helped accomplish last summer. We are so thankful for how God worked!

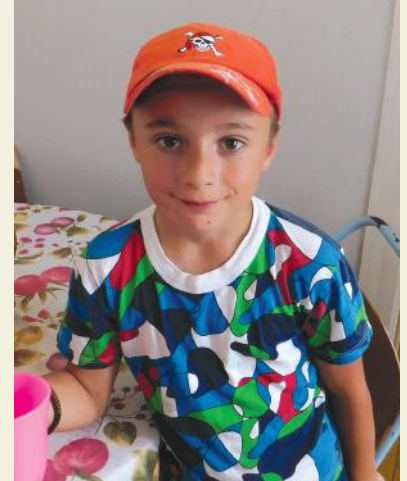
"He asked the Lord to forgive him for his bad behavior, and then I prayed for him. By the fifth day, Yaroslav's behavior had completely changed."

The VBS was held for five days. It rained at first, but we prayed and God answered our prayers with good weather during the rest of our time. We had 28 children take part including five new children. **Our program consisted of songs, prayers, learning Bible "Gold Verses," worship, fellowship, and crafts.** As we worked with wood at one craft session, I shared the Bible story of how Jesus calmed the storm.



The children enjoyed the Vacation Bible School.

I would like to share the story of one new boy who came to VBS. His name is **Yaroslav**, and he was very disobedient, disregarding all our rules. We worked with him for several days and tried to change his behavior. **We were very amazed on the fourth day when he expressed the desire**



Yaroslav at VBS.

to pray. He asked the Lord to forgive him for his bad behavior, and then I prayed for him. On the fifth day, Yaroslav's behavior had completely changed. He asked if he could pray before the meals and thank God for the food and the cook. He helped me with some work at the VBS and we became friends.

And it didn't stop there. After the VBS was over, I visited his mother and brought her a food parcel. She had broken her leg and was at home. She told me that Yaroslav had been helping her with all the work at home such as cleaning the house and washing dishes. **I am so happy for Yaroslav and pray that God will continue His work.** We sometimes don't see the

immediate results of our ministry, but the seeds are planted and we can see the fruit later.

I know that the children enjoyed our VBS, and they asked us to hold it again this year. It is a good testimony for the children's parents and the residents in the village. The people recognize us and treat us with respect, and we give all the glory to God. **I thank you for your prayers and financial help!** Please pray for our VBS this year, especially that God will bring many boys and girls to Himself! ♦

Your Gifts Provide Christian Summer Camp in Russia

Vasily Kolesnik and Tatyana Zhurba
SGA-Sponsored Children's Ministry in Tomsk

Melnikovo is a village of some 8,000 people located in the Tomsk region in western Siberia—a place known for bitterly cold weather in winter. Yet in the summer, sunshine and warm temperatures abound, and it's the best time for trips, hiking, boating, and making new friends at **SGA-sponsored summer camps organized by the church in Melnikovo**—camps you helped make possible.

*“This is the only place where
I can send my children
without fear and worry . . .”*

Each day began with morning exercises led by Yelena, our sports coach. Then the group leaders, Tatyana and Natasha, held **Bible lessons** and then crafts. Our team also consisted of cooks, watchmen, and a driver working in shifts. Nikolai coordinated everything at the camp, which we called “The Pearl.” **At the end of the day, Pastor Sergei taught the children about the love of God, and the lessons were good for us to hear as well as the children.** One of the parents responded afterward to express her thanks . . .

“Camp always means joy for us. Two of my children went to the camp. This is the only place where I can send my children without fear and worry, as I am sure they will be looked after carefully. They will be taught good things. They experience and witness humility, peace, and a broader outlook in the camp. The children change for the better. I am happy about it



All of the children who attend the camp have "seeds" of the Gospel planted in their hearts.





and they are happy too! My daughter began to read the children's Bible and asked me to get her a copy of a regular Bible. My son told me in detail how Christ was crucified and how He had risen from the dead. I am sure the seeds in their hearts will not die. I would like to thank all who made the camp possible!"

At the camp, 14 children repented and many of them prayed for the first time. We plan ongoing **follow-up** with the children, inviting them and their parents to the church. We also add our thanks to everyone who prays for us and supports our ministry. **Please pray with us for this upcoming camp season, and that God will bring forth much fruit among the children.** ♦



God Reaches a Record Number of Kids through *Immanuel's Child*!

Final results still to come—but it's already more than ever.

God blessed the SGA-sponsored *Immanuel's Child* ministry with **another record-setting Christmas season**—thanks to God's provision through your faithful support.

Even though the counts are not yet complete, you helped reach at least 30,114 children, with two of every three—20,349—being from unbelieving families!

Immanuel's Child is the annual Christmas outreach to tens of thousands of children in the lands of Russia. SGA-sponsored churches hold celebrations in church buildings and other locations. Loving workers give children Star of Bethlehem Ornaments that say, "God Loves You!" in Russian. Eric Mock, SGA vice president of ministry operations, reports:



"I'll go back many times later visiting homes and find there was an *Immanuel's Child* star stuck up on the wall in the children's room and they

wanted me again to pronounce the name out loud . . . Long after Christmas is gone, that ornament is still hanging there because those children believe that there is an American family praying for them."

The children also receive **children's Bibles, Christian literature, gifts, and follow-up by trained Christian workers.**

While final numbers are still being gathered from Russia and her neighboring countries, we can tell you that more children were reached through *Immanuel's Child* this year than ever before! *Oh, give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples* (1 Chronicles 16:8). ♦

The Exciting Numbers (partial figures)

Children Reached	30,114
Adults Reached	13,268
Number of Churches.....	516
Children from Unbelieving Families	20,349
Children Repented	1,036
Adults Repented.....	268
Children Starting Sunday School	1,580
Adults Starting Church Attendance	702



CIS IN THE NEWS

Ukraine President Signs Constitutional Amendment on NATO and EU



Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko addresses the country's parliament on February 19.

In a move certain to increase tensions with Russia, **Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko signed a constitutional amendment earlier this year to join NATO and the European Union.** While admitting that his country still had a long way to go to meet membership criteria,

Mr. Poroshenko told the Ukrainian parliament that securing Ukraine's membership in these Western organizations was his "strategic mission." While the March 31 Ukrainian presidential election had not been held as this issue of Good News Report went to press, Mr. Poroshenko said his plan was to make a formal bid to join the EU by 2023 and to negotiate an action plan to join NATO.

Russia has long opposed former Soviet nations making moves toward NATO, viewing it as a threat to national security, and this has also led to increased tensions with the West. The conflict in eastern Ukraine with Russia-backed separatists—in addition to Russia's annexation of Crimea—has further stoked these tensions. **Please pray for evangelical churches in Ukraine as they proclaim the peace of Christ and help families who have been devastated by the conflict.** ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can help participate in one of the most life-changing annual ministries you could imagine—399 *summer camps* supported by SGA, across 10 nations of the former USSR. Every year, God opens the hearts of more children, motivating you and me to help reach them!

In fact, our ministry's prayer is that you will help us reach no less than 30,000 precious girls and boys—up from 21,661 last year. Will you be His instrument to help reach them?

These camps are 399 bright stars of hope in a dark sky of despair. Every summer, God sends *more* children to find Christ's joy and truth. And we must be faithful to pray and prepare! Please join us as we pour our hearts into this glorious rescue mission! Your support of SGA helps accomplish this, and so much more—Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, compassion ministry, sound Bible training, and children's ministries, including *Orphans Reborn*. None of this could happen without you, and we are deeply thankful! ♦



Canadian Connection

One of the “new normals” I have come to appreciate overseas is radical life transformations. Many who have little to no hope—humanly speaking—experience changed lives. This involves everyone from young children in orphanages to seniors hardened by the trials of life, and many of every age in between.

It reminds me of that passage in Galatians 2:11-14 where the Apostle Paul opposes Peter’s hypocrisy being a Jew, yet living like a Gentile. He expounds the truth of being justified by faith in Christ alone concluding with . . .



I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

Living by faith in Christ changes everything from our thoughts to our actions. We have purpose and promise as followers and true disciples of Christ our Saviour.

David Platt wrote, “The Spirit of God has empowered every follower of Christ to accomplish the purpose of God for the glory of God in the world. This includes the so-called wrong people: those who are least effective, least brilliant, or least talented in the church. Building the right church, then, is dependent on using all the wrong people.” Isn’t it amazing how God takes ordinary people like you and I to build His church!

We partner with very ordinary people all across the former Soviet Union to form the church of God. We provide resources and opportunity, then allow God to do His work in their hearts for eternal transformation. Many are turning to Christ, repenting of their sin, and following the Spirit of God’s leading. Unsaved mankind cannot explain the life transformation witnessed in so many lives.

Thank you for assisting these committed believers entering orphanages, prisons, schools, community centers, social gatherings and the everyday lives of lost people. Churches are growing, people are repenting in every age demographic, believers are being baptized every month, and Bible schools are experiencing record growth.

Your prayers and gifts are so appreciated by those who could otherwise never have the privilege to grow in Christ.

Partners Together,

Bill Ball
Executive Director, SGA/Canada



A Bridge of Hope

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