



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

You Are Raising Up New Waves of Strong Christian Leaders!

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ From Prisoner to Pastor—You Helped Reach Sergei!
- ♦ Ukraine Seminary Sends the Best into a War Zone
- ♦ Breakthrough in Far East Russia Village!

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)

“When I got out of prison . . .”

The amazing story of a Christian leader changed through your gifts and prayers

Sergei Andreev
Pastor and Student at Irpen Biblical Seminary

I received Christ as my Savior in 2010 while I was in prison. While in my cell, I began reading the Bible and realized that I was a lost sinner. So I turned to the Lord in a prayer of repentance.

Next, I began praying that the Lord would put me into a prison where Christians were ministering so I could receive ministry. **The Lord answered my prayers** and shortly made it possible for me to be transferred to a prison in the

“I felt the need for a deeper study of God’s Word. That’s why I became a student at Irpen. Today, I serve as a chaplain at the prison.”

Zaporozhye region of Ukraine. One of the faculty members from **Irpen Biblical Seminary** was involved in prison ministry and he was visiting that prison. Currently this man is the pastor of the

church where I am a member and an associate pastor.

When I got out of prison, I made the decision to stay in the same area and minister where the Lord had saved me.

The church where I minister

has a rehab center for former prisoners. I stayed at the rehab center for about a year. I was baptized, then found a job and a place to live. The Lord gave me a wife, so I have a family. And I began ministering in the same prison where I had been an inmate.

Yet I felt the need for a deeper study of God’s Word. That’s why I became a student at Irpen. **Today, I serve as a chaplain at the prison, and we try to expand our work to follow people who are released from prison and ensure that they are connected to a church.** Our first step was to develop rehab centers, then when the prisoners are freed, we help them get adjusted to life in the normal world.

I am in the pastoral program at Irpen. I never had a full comprehension of the New Testament. **But now, I think of the words of the Apostle Paul, who said he was preaching the full counsel of God.** Irpen Seminary develops ministers’ character and provides all the necessary tools to clearly communicate God’s Word to people. ♦



Sergei Andreev is now a chaplain at the prison where he once was incarcerated.



Dr. Daniel Block teaching in Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary.

Strong Christian Leaders Are the Future for the Former USSR

Eric Mock

SGA Vice President of Ministry Operations

What a joy to travel to Russia recently with Dr. Daniel Block! He is professor emeritus of Old Testament at Wheaton College. We met with the leaders of the SGA-sponsored Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary. The dedicated students here are pastors and missionaries who are active in ministry, and who are being strengthened in their teaching and preaching of God's Word.

During our time in Novosibirsk, Dr. Block taught on *Deuteronomy—The Gospel of Moses*. It was wonderful to see the commitment of these students and teachers to the whole counsel of God, cover to cover. **This school is vital to equipping the pulpits of churches in Russia.** Dr. Block affirmed to them the *high value* of the Scriptures, and affirmed his desire to let the Word speak rather than man.

Seminary president Eduard Genrikh and the teaching staff are **faithfully guarding the treasure entrusted to them.** These teachers and their students are the future of the pulpits in Siberia and across the vast expanse of Russia. Looking to the future, Eduard and his teachers are excited about the developing doctoral program, which is vitally important to help pastors and teachers gain an even deeper grasp of Scripture. ♦

SGA is helping prepare Christian leaders for today and tomorrow by sponsoring four evangelical Bible schools—Irpen Biblical Seminary in Ukraine; Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary in Russia; Minsk Theological Seminary in Belarus; and Almaty Bible Institute in Kazakhstan. SGA also sponsors several Bible institute programs and affiliated worship music schools in addition to Bible training for congregations in Israel. These schools provide doctrinally sound, biblical training in pastoral ministry, evangelism, music and worship ministries, youth ministry, children's ministry and Christian education. Full seminary degrees are available as well as diploma programs and distance learning study.



In addition to sponsorship of these quality Christian schools, SGA partners also help provide resources such as scholarships, theological texts and materials, facility assistance and, on occasion, sending gifted Bible teachers from North America to assist Russian faculty in teaching at the seminaries and Bible institutes. ♦

Celebrate with Us!

SGA-Sponsored Seminars Are Bringing Effective Christian Leaders to the People of the Former USSR



Thank You for Your Ministry of Compassion!

Your gifts helped provide food and aid for war-torn households in Ukraine

It's been five long years since the military conflict began in eastern Ukraine. The war has inflicted a terrible toll, with more than 13,000 killed and 30,000 wounded thus far*. But you are making it

possible for courageous teams from Ukrainian and Russian evangelical churches to go into the dangerous war zone with food aid and the eternal hope of the Gospel.

According to SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Dmitri Matyukhin, 162 households received help during one such distribution earlier this year . . .

We were able to provide food assistance to several

villages very close to what is called the Line of Contact . . . According to the local authorities, more



In addition to food assistance, Compassion Ministry distributes Christian literature to those in need.

than 140 homes are beyond repair, while 600 are repairable. Those who could evacuate to other cities have done so. Most of the non-displaced population are mostly older people over 60, as well as people with disabilities or no family elsewhere . . . We are thankful for your continued financial support of Compassion Ministry in Ukraine!

Baptist Union pastors in southern Russia also have been visiting the conflict zone on a monthly basis to render humanitarian aid and the Gospel to needy families through SGA-sponsored Compassion Ministry. Please join us in praying for God's increased provision for this vital ministry. ♦



Your support makes it possible for us to reach hurting people in Christ's name.



* These statistics are from the United Nations as reported by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

How You Helped Reach Villages in Far East Russia!

Local Authorities Welcome Children's Ministries

Artyom Zemlyanov
Far East Russia

I am joyful and thankful that the Lord Jesus has opened up villages in our region of Far East Russia for preaching the Gospel. It all began this past Christmas when Anastasia, the head of the local city council, came to the celebration with her children.

Later on, as I prayed about ways to reach the entire Amur region, the Lord led me to communicate with Anastasia again, as the council she leads actually oversees four villages. After much prayer, I made an appointment with her to talk about village life and its challenges. We had a long talk, and then I told her of our plans for Easter when we'd hold a celebration for families in Kuropatino, and our hopes to have future Sunday school classes for children. Anastasia's response surprised me—she gladly agreed and called our plans a good idea!

Easter finally came, and we travelled to the village social club to hold our outreach. We found the hall filled with more than 50 people of different age groups. We had a discussion, sang the hymn *In Christ Alone*, and **then I gave a message about the true meaning of Easter.**

Central to the message were the words of the Apostle Paul from Romans—Jesus died for our sins and He rose again for our justification. And He has risen, He has victory over death! I finished with a call from John 3:16 and noticed complete silence in the room—**people were listening.**

The children's program came next, with a drama adapted from the Chronicles of Narnia, but with our characters speaking words from Scripture.



Artyom (second from right) with the actors from the performance.

"We rejoiced like little children at how the Lord opened doors for preaching the Gospel."

Children, teenagers, youth, mothers, fathers, and grandmothers were listening to the story of an ordinary sinner whose faith was credited to him for righteousness by the King of Kings. The Lord was near, His presence was evident.

I could see the Lord changing people's attitudes toward our team.

Suspicion and mistrust disappeared. The head of the village administration approvingly clapped my shoulder, thanked us for the event, and suggested

future cooperation. We agreed to do summer day playgrounds for children and discussed once again the opportunity to use the social club building for Sunday school purposes. **On the way home we rejoiced like little children at how the Lord opened doors for preaching the Gospel.** Pray for future Gospel opportunities, and that our ministry in these villages will grow. Thank you for your help and partnership in the Lord's work! ♦

CIS IN THE NEWS

School Children Ravaged by Wars

A report released in the spring by UNICEF documented the heartbreaking toll that the war in eastern Ukraine is having on schools across the region. The report claims that since the war began in 2014, more than 750 educational facilities on both sides of the conflict zone line have been damaged or destroyed. UNICEF spokeswoman Henrietta Fore stated, **“Schoolchildren are bearing long-lasting mental and physical scars due to eastern Ukraine’s conflict.** Daily life at school is disrupted by shelling and shootings, forcing children to take shelter in school basements and underground bomb shelters. In many cases, children have become too terrified to learn.”

We are thankful to God for the opportunity to

help evangelical churches reach out in the love of Christ to individuals and families whose lives have been shattered by the conflict. ♦



HOW YOU CAN HELP

For SGA’s entire 85-year existence, provision of doctrinally sound Bible training has been a high priority—going hand-in-hand with proclamation of the Gospel to Russian-speaking people everywhere.

Faithful partners like you help sustain Bible training at Irpen Biblical Seminary in Ukraine, Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary in Russia, Minsk Theological Seminary in Belarus, and Almaty Bible Institute in Kazakhstan. And beyond that, your support helps



maintain our other vital ministries—missionary pastors, children’s ministries, Russian-language Bibles and literature distribution, compassion ministry, and so much more!

The graduates are going forth to make an eternal difference through the churches they serve! Your generous gifts sustain these training centers for new waves of leadership, as well as helping support SGA’s many other ministries.

We praise and thank the Lord for you daily. Please consider how you can help today. ♦

Canadian Connection

This issue of the Good News Report focuses largely on Biblical training and the obvious benefits to local churches. From the beginnings of SGA it has been one of our goals to establish solid Bible-based churches in communities all across the former Soviet Union.

One of those schools we support through SGA Canada donors is Ukrainian Baptist Theological Seminary in Lviv, Ukraine. It is growing not only in numbers but impact across Ukraine and beyond the country's borders. Teaching all classes in the Ukrainian language brings students back to their roots.



We are always humbled to visit in the local villages and communities where our missionary pastors serve. Sitting to have a meal together, listening to their hearts, staying overnight and rising to see them tackle a new day with enthusiasm is humbling. Each one is excited to see how God will use them to honour His name in their place of service. Your gifts of their support is vital to sustaining them in economically difficult conditions.

Most summer camp experiences for children and young people will be history by the time you read this article. However, the memories will live on in their minds and hearts for years to come. For many it will have been the first time they heard the Good News that God loves them. Thank you for your part in making an eternal difference in young lives.

Conflict continues to be the reality that thousands of people deal with in the Slavic world. Pray for safety and wisdom as they seek to live in such conditions. Our assistance through various avenues of compassion ministry is vital to survival. The world news reports have long since moved on to other stories but the struggle continues, especially in eastern Ukraine.

Time is balanced between Canada and the Slavic countries where our brothers serve. We share their stories across our nation so that you may pray and encourage fellow believers a world away. Each time we board and depart an airplane we enter and exit such vastly different worlds. We leave a part of our hearts in every place we stay. It reminds us that "God so loved the world . . ."

Thank you for loving the world that is so precious to our Lord. Thank you for sharing in this amazing task of sharing a Global Gospel!

Partners Together,

Bill Ball
Executive Director, SGA/Canada



A Bridge of Hope

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