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SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

Ministries Flourish as Jesus Redeems Lives and Changes Hearts!



INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Andrei's life was like a movie script—a *bad* one. Until . . .
- ♦ SGA-sponsored pastor preaches on TV *and* door to door!
- ♦ *Immanuel's Child* prayer request, and others!

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)

Your Support Helps Plant and Gather a Spiritual Harvest

SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastors Report from the Field

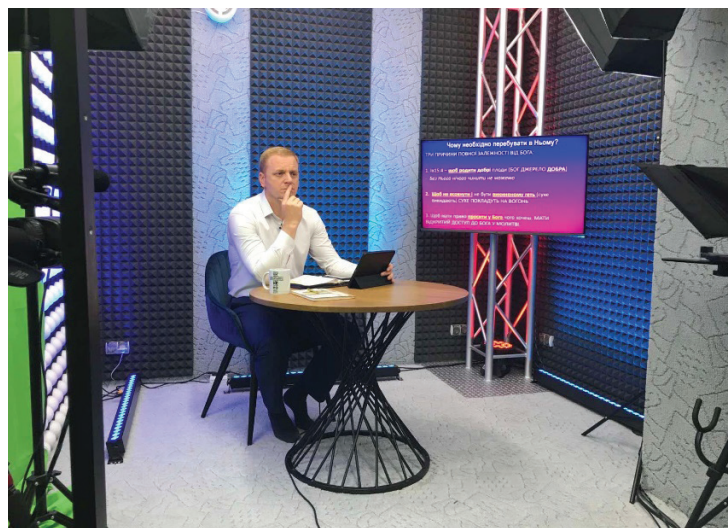
With your prayers and generous support, SGA is sponsoring more than 340 dedicated missionary pastors across Russia and her neighboring countries. As we read through the hundreds of encouraging reports we receive on a regular basis, it is difficult to choose which ones to share. But each one is a living testimony of how our Lord is causing many to “*be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” (1 Peter 1:3).

In **Ukraine**, SGA-supported missionary pastor **Pavel D.** reports that his church is “packed” again



after a year of restrictions related to the pandemic. More than that, his regional outreach is broadened through local television:

Many of you knew that I have been preaching on national television for the last five years and every week we are reaching millions with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But



Pastor Pavel D. preaches on television.

*I was praying and looking for the extra opportunity to go with a local channel that covers three regions around us. Finally, I was able to sign a new contract with a local TV station—a business channel! **Please continue to pray for those who watch these programs every week, and for their salvation.***

*In addition to this TV ministry, I have been going out to mountain villages in the Carpathians, walking door to door and preaching the Gospel. **Many families prayed prayers of repentance with us and***



Services at Pavel D.'s church are very full and he has seen many people repent and ask the Lord for forgiveness.



Pavel D. shares the Gospel in the mountain villages.

invited Jesus into their hearts as Savior. We had eight days of very fruitful ministry with 13 other missionaries who participated.

In **Russia's Khanty-Mansi region**, missionary pastor **Alexander** makes evangelistic visits to Russia's Taimyr region in the far north, where he reaches out to the Nenets people group. During one visit last year, he handed out gifts and Christian calendars, and shared the Gospel with as many as he could. One married couple repented and trusted in Christ as their Savior. **One need in this region is ongoing discipleship, which is difficult because it is so remote.** Pray for Alexander as he continues to make these visits as the Lord provides the opportunity.

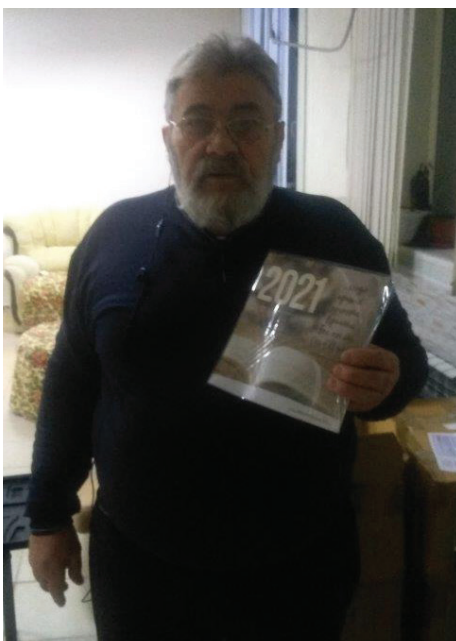
In the **Far East, Pavel R. and his wife Nadya** have been serving for eight years in the Chukotka region, which is on the southern shore of the Arctic Ocean and across the Bering Strait from Alaska. **The**



Pastor Pavel R.'s church meets in a three-room apartment.

spiritual needs there are great, with alcoholism a frequent cause of mortality. Pavel's small local church consists mostly of young people whom Pavel and Nadya are discipling. A major part of their ministry is reaching out to needy families. Nadya teaches English and works with young women teaching them cooking and needlework skills. **They truly are sharing the Gospel at "the ends of the earth" in Chukotka.** Their church meetings are held in a three-room apartment that was purchased for the purpose of worship and outreach.

These are only brief snapshots into the lives and ministries of these dedicated missionaries, but their work goes on every day and all year, faithfully serving as ambassadors of Christ. Please remember them in prayer as they proclaim the Gospel! ♦



Pastor Alexander distributed gifts and Christian calendars in Russia's Tyumen region.

How One Team Used Your Support to Help Young Russians Meet Christ

Summer camp uses unique rafting trip to help focus on Jesus



Campers and staff on the river raft.

For the past several years, an SGA-sponsored **Orphans Reborn** team has held **Summer Bible Camp** ministry in a unique way: floating down Siberia's Mana River on a rafting trip.

This year, the camp was run in two separate sessions. **Altogether, 33 children and youth participated, and 16 of them were from orphanages.** This was the first rafting trip for almost all of them. The team built a raft with a double deck. There was plenty of space for the equipment and food, seats with storage space for personal baggage, and a kitchen area. The second deck served as an open space for relaxation, games, and has a tent over it to keep away the sun or rain. It also has an installed engine, which makes boating much easier and quicker on the return to the launch location.

The theme of the rafting camp was **"Find Your Focus."** The idea was to challenge the teenagers to rethink the basis for their lives and to show them correct goals and values. Each day, the teenagers had an opportunity to choose from three discussions, where they discussed the subjects which were urgent

to them. Discussions were led by one of the leaders of the camp, with biblical values being at the core of each one. At the end of the discussion, each team of young people would express what they learned.

During the evening when we camped on shore with a campfire, we shared the Gospel and went from creation to the point of finding a new lifestyle in Christ. In addition to that, a long awaited moment for each one was testimony time, when one of the camp leaders shared their story of how they came to faith and life with God. That helped to build a closer contact with teenagers. A few of them were glad to share their thoughts after the camp was over.

Danil, age 15, said, "Greetings. I really liked the rafting camp. I learned to swim and made new



Danil came to faith during the camp.

friends. It was a really great and interesting event. **At first I did not want to go, but an important thing for me was that I came to faith in God there!** There I had lessons which were very useful!”



Anastasia

Anastasia's testimony is especially moving. She is now one of the coordinators of the camp after coming to faith in Christ herself as a youth going to the camp. She wrote, “The Sinai Camp is a special place for me. **Seven**

years ago, I went to this camp as a child in a non-Christian family. And five years ago in this camp, I surrendered my life to God and repented. There is nothing in my life which surpasses the value of this camp. This year I went as one of the leaders. Once people served me as a youth and my life changed. Now I am in the place of service. I believe that this was not in vain. I am sure that God will do His wonderful work through the ministry of this camp!”

Thank you to all of our ministry partners who helped make this possible. Pray that the seeds of the Gospel that were planted will take root in these young lives! ♦

Remember to Pray for *Immanuel's Child*!

Russian Christmas is celebrated January 7—only a couple of months away. That means *Immanuel's Child* Christmas outreaches to children are coming soon. And when you consider that more churches across the former Soviet Union are also holding Christmas celebrations on Western Christmas December 25, that means the time is even shorter!



Immanuel's Child reaches entire families with the Gospel.

Last Christmas, SGA-supported churches reached almost **40,000** needy children with Christmas gifts, including signed **Star of Bethlehem** ornaments, you helped provide. This was **an increase of almost 7 percent** from the previous year! And this year we expect another year of growth as families come who were blessed by SGA-sponsored Compassion Ministries (also funded through your giving).

Most important of all, **the children and their families hear a clear presentation of the Gospel as they learn the true story of Christmas from God's Word.** So please, begin intercessory prayer in advance for this wonderful ministry, asking the Lord to prepare the way and draw many to Himself in saving faith. We are trusting Him to show us “*great and mighty things*” (Jeremiah 33:3)! ♦



Three girls receive *Immanuel's Child* stars and gifts in Yakutsk.

God Redeems a Wild Yet Devastated Life

Sergei G.

SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Belarus

I warmly greet you, dear brothers and sisters! I thank our Lord for the opportunity to work in His harvest field and participate in the work of evangelism here in Belarus. When visiting people and bringing them the Good News, it is always joyful to see the fruit of the ministry you help make possible. **Sometimes the seed falls on rough soil, but even in such cases, you understand that after a certain time, their hearts can soften,** and the Lord used your actions as another incentive to a step of faith that people will make in the future. But how wonderful it is to see when God's Word reaches people and you see the real fruit of repentance, confirmed by a changed life and the conclusion of a covenant with the Lord through baptism!

We had been preaching the Gospel to **Andrei** for a long time. His life was like an incessant adventure, unfortunately an adventure that led to destruction.



Pastor Sergei with Andrei.

What he told us about himself could serve as a movie script. **Traveling, making money, drinking, stealing, surviving an attempted murder, the complete destruction of his family, money problems, and so on.**

Andrei was in this awful state when we began our visits. But how joyful it is to see how the Lord changed his life! This past August, Andrei was baptized. God gave Andrei the gift of writing poetry and music, and now the Lord is restoring his business and his relationships with his children (he has three girls) and Andrei is now serving the Lord! Thank God! In watching how the Lord lifts up people who have entrusted their lives to Him, you understand that the Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is powerful to save and restore everyone who devotes their lives to Him! Thank you for your participation in such wonderful changes in people's lives!

Pray for the people we are visiting now, in particular a man named **Gennady**. Life took this man to different parts of the world. As a military man, Gennady traveled through almost the entire former Soviet Union. He is currently living near our church.

Unfortunately, his family does not live with him. But an interest in God's Word has appeared in his heart. For over two months now, he has been visiting our services regularly. The Lord is knocking on his heart. Please support us in prayer for him. Pray also for us that the Lord will give us guidance from above and direct us to those people whose hearts yearn for the knowledge of His will! ♦



Visiting Gennady.

CIS IN THE NEWS

Russia Seeks to Cut Abortion Rate by Half

According to a recent story in Radio Free Europe, Russia's government is looking to halve the number of abortions that take place in the country by 2025. The plan is part of a long-term blueprint to improve Russia's demographic situation in the midst of a resumed decline in population growth. There had been an earlier decline that had begun to reverse slowly over the course of a decade, but that has now reversed again back to a downward path. The official document reveals a goal of ensuring that 80 percent of women considering an abortion undergo consultations with a doctor, with a focus on increasing the

likelihood that they reject the procedure.

For many years now, the former Soviet bloc has had among the highest abortion rates in the world. **Evangelical churches—including some sponsored by SGA—have been ministering for years to women in crisis pregnancies, and praying that the Lord would bring about a change.** We are thankful for this news, and pray that God will open many more opportunities to help needy women and their families. SGA will continue to sponsor missionary pastors whose churches have crisis pregnancy centers as part of their overall ministry. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

... therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure . . . (2 Thessalonians 1:4).

Every day, SGA-supported missionary pastors faithfully carry out their ministry where God has planted them across the former Soviet Union. The conditions where they live vary greatly, with many in nations where oppression of Christian believers is severe. **Yet as they did during the atheistic communist years, they press on sharing the Gospel, and winning the lost to Christ—their testimony and example going before them.**

Yet you are a vitally important part of their ministry. Your gifts help to support their work. **And your support undergirds children's ministries, the distribution of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, Bible training, Compassion Ministry, and the kinds of outreach you read about in this *Good News Report*.** Thank you! Please pray about how you can help today to influence lives for eternity. ♦



Distributing Bibles and aid in Tomsk Oblast, Russia.

Canadian Connection

As another year quickly draws to a close, we are reminded of God's steadfast love that never fails. From the stories in this *Good News Report* edition, you can read of how the Lord is graciously bringing people to Himself despite the hardships and challenges in the former Soviet Union countries where SGA partners with local churches.

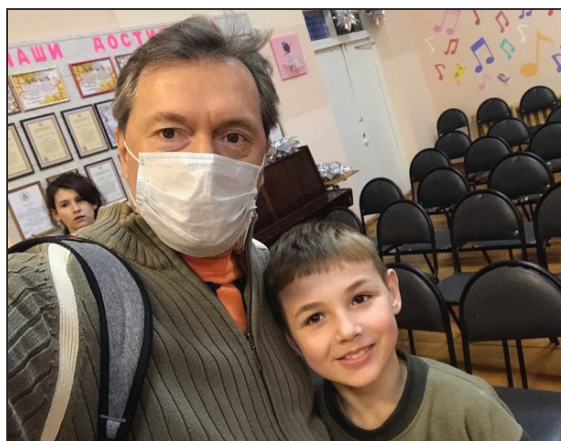
This has been a transition time from complete lockdowns to gradual returns to a new normal way of doing ministry. For us in Canada, we recently completed a western trip visiting donors in homes and churches mainly in the Edmonton, Alberta, area. With protective protocols in place, we remained vigilant and respectful of individual comfort levels.

At the time of writing this article, we still have not received a Letter of Invitation to apply for a Russian visa. We would ask you to pray about this necessary documentation for overseas travel. COVID-19 is still very much a real threat to many in these Slavic countries, with numbers of cases on the increase once again. Pray for the brothers and sisters as they need wisdom and strength for the task at hand.

We are grateful for each one who contributes faithfully to the projects and regular monthly support for our local missionary pastors. No words can express how much of a blessing this is to these incredible servants. It is our joy to travel in these remote villages and communities saying thank you to them for you. They will often share how doors are opening for expansion if resources were available. Sitting among them and recalling God's strong hand amongst them is the joy in serving Jesus.

Immanuel's Child gifts are pouring in with anticipation of reaching 50,000 children this Christmas on January 7th. It is still not too late if you haven't contributed \$35.00 to change a child's life this Christmas. Give us a call or connect through our website today and make your donation. As a director, it is on my bucket list to spend Christmas handing out these stars and packages in several churches. Would you like to join us? Send us a note and we can make this become a reality.

Read each of these articles and see how God's Word is going forth in even greater ways. Thank you once again for joining this movement of God to the Slavic world!



Serving together,

Bill Ball

Executive Director, SGA/Canada

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