



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

Missionary Pastors and Their Families Sacrifice ... and God Brings the Fruit!

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ◆ Despite one challenge after another, the Lord blesses the work of a man of God and his flock.
- ◆ Amazing doors opened in Far East Russia ...
- ◆ Read the grateful testimonies of missionary pastors you support!

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)

A Pastor's Story: Your Support of the Gospel Encourages Hearts During Difficult Days

Pastor Rostislav
Birobidzhan Region, Russia

This past spring, we celebrated the resurrection of Christ—a celebration of victory over death! We see the proof of the wonderful love of God in the sacrificial death and victorious resurrection of our Savior! **His sacrifice was not in vain, and myriads of saved souls are the sure proof. God continues His saving work around us.** As the Lord declares . . . *they turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me* (Acts 26:18).

Many events have taken place this year, and now our country is going through difficult times. **This helps me realize how important it is now to preach the Gospel, when everything to which we are accustomed breaks down.** Difficult times bring many worries and troubles, and **people need not only comfort, but also to be pointed to that which is really important and unchangeable—the news about the future judgment of sin, the work of Christ** and the necessity of repentance, and the hope of eternal life in Him.

In May, I started a **baptism class** and right now there are four people attending. Please continue to pray for Leonid and his friend Alexander, as well as Khazry in Khabarovsk and his wife Anna, for her salvation. **We pray daily at 4 PM for the salvation of people.** Prayer time for this is also part of our Wednesday and Sunday services.

Ivan: Surprised by Kindness

I would like to share one testimony. Once I was walking with our son not far from our home, and we encountered a man who looked like he was homeless. I saw such depression in his eyes. At first, I did not take that into account, but as I thought about it, I felt compassion and also badly that I did

not talk to him. But 10 minutes later, he once again walked past us.

This time, I approached him and began talking to him about how he could be reconciled with God. **His name is Ivan and he is 47 years old.** He was really surprised that I paid attention to him and talked to him kindly. Ivan had spent several years in prison, and while he was there, **he heard sermons from one of our local pastors who visited the prison.**

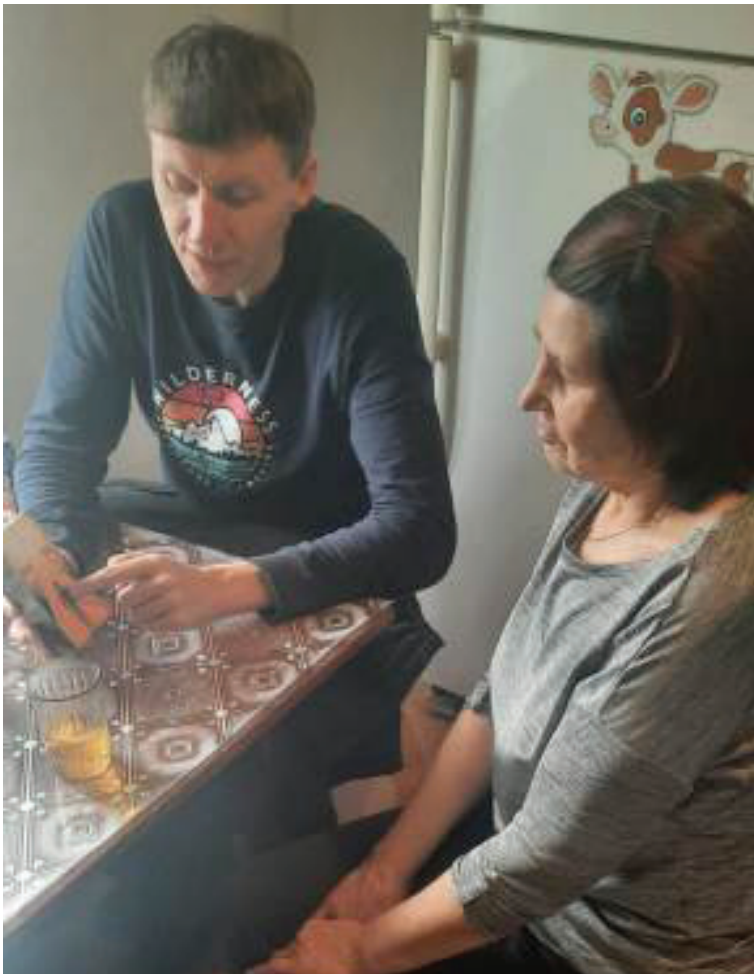
I told Ivan where I lived, prayed for him, and then we parted. A few days later, **I heard someone knocking on my door and it was Ivan. He was dirty, wounded, and really tired.** He asked for help to find a place to stay. He had a job and a small income, but nowhere to live. He had **gotten drunk**



Ivan with Pastor Rostislav.

and had **been beaten and robbed**. We prayed, and the Lord prompted me to take him to a private social shelter. Two weeks later, I met him in the street again. This time he was clean and well dressed. Ivan told me that all was now well with him—his documents and bank cards were found. He had a new job and was well received there. He is rejoicing that he was able to escape such an awful situation. **Pray with me that this will lead to a new life in Christ for Ivan!**

We continue to **witness to, and disciple, people in the villages**, and you can see in the photos the variety of people with whom we're working. **Dear brothers and sisters, thanks be to God for challenging you to be involved in our ministry. I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the Gospel from the first day until now (Philippians 1:3-5).** ♦



(Above and Right) Pastor Rostislav ministers to people in his region.

You Are Blessing Faithful Pastors and Their Families at Christmas!

Urgently-needed medicine, replacement of torn coats, car repairs, and other needs

For several years now, SGA partners have generously given funds to provide **special gifts for faithful, hardworking missionary pastors and church workers** across the former Soviet Union, including worn-torn Ukraine.

Each October, we again invite our partners to participate in this blessing as the Lord leads. **We'd like to share a few thank you notes we received from last Christmas to encourage your hearts.** ♦

*With great gratitude to you, dear brothers and sisters, I want to thank you on behalf of all the pastors of the **Mogilev region** for the Christmas gifts that each pastor received. Upon learning of the gift, one young pastor who had just entered the ministry at first simply covered his face with his hands. **Holding back tears of gratitude, said that on Christmas Eve he didn't even have money to cook a Christmas dinner for his family.** Every time I met with a pastor or church worker, I heard similar things—now I can **repair my car**, now I can buy, etc. May the Lord almighty bless you abundantly in everything!*

- Pastor Sergei (Belarus)

*Peace be with you, dear friends in Christ. Many thanks to you for the special congratulations of the pastors that you send us at Christmas. At the end of last year, I got very ill with Covid. I stayed in bed for more than a month, had a high temperature, pain, and a complete loss of strength. But, by the grace of God, the disease receded and He gave me healing. Your help was very timely, as it was **necessary to buy expensive medicines, undergo a course of treatment, and then also recover from this serious illness.** I am very grateful for your prayerful and financial help. May our loving Heavenly Father reward you with mercy and blessings!*

- Pastor Mikhail (Russia)



Pastor Yuri and his wife Natalya.

*Dear friends, I sincerely thank you for the Christmas gift for me and my family. It's like an answer to prayer, like God's blessings, like a Christmas miracle. This year, we had a lot of expenses connected with the education of our children, and **approaching Christmas we realized that we had no money for the most necessary things.** My wife Natalya needed a new coat as **her old one was torn and it was freezing cold.** It was possible to despair, but we decided to entrust everything to God. What joy awaited us in the morning! Not only could we get Natalya a new coat, but we were able to have a festive dinner at Christmas for our whole family. We have been greatly emboldened in our faith and hope in God, strengthened in His love and care. May God bless you and reward you for serving Him!*

- Pastor Yuri and Family (Belarus)

*I am a missionary pastor in eastern Georgia. Thank you for the Christmas present! I will use these funds for **groceries for my family, and the leftover funds will buy medicines for my son.** Once again, thank you!*

- Pastor Zurab (Georgia)

Your Gifts to Compassion Ministry Open Doors for the Gospel in Far East Russia!

Vladimir K
SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Russia



(Above and Right) Pastor Vladimir and Eduard went house to house visiting families on their evangelistic trip.

This year, together with another missionary named Eduard, we went for **an evangelistic trip to the Tattinsky region and a village there.** The village in question is about **186 miles from Yakutsk** and is Eduard's hometown. We are grateful to our God and Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. This trip had a humanitarian purpose—we went from house to house in order to take the Gospel there, and it is already yielding fruit.

This is the **fourth trip** we have made to this village. We visited many families, where we had a warm welcome and people were open to hear the Gospel. **We brought food and other aid such as clothes, which we distributed to needy families.** We are thankful that Stepan, the head of the village administration, has a very good opinion of Christians. Some time ago—back in the 1990s when the Soviet Union was collapsing—the doors for the Gospel were open in our country, even in heathen places like Yakutia. But Stepan was not the head of the village then.

His car broke down in the bitter winter near where believers were. Our brothers came and helped

him, taking his broken-down car to the garage and repaired it. They also provided him with dinner and hot tea. When he got up to leave, they gave Stepan children's Bibles and some other literature. He remembers this event to this day!

Even prior to his becoming head of the village, he distributed the literature he had to other villagers. Among them was Eduard, who was a small boy at that time, and he received a children's Bible in his house! Such an amazing story! Stepan stays in contact with Eduard, and the doors of the administration are always open for our brothers!

During this particular trip, a husband and wife we were visiting repented before God, and we were very glad! We pray for them to grow spiritually. **The work of spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is advancing throughout Yakutia, just like our Lord commanded.** *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth* (Acts 1:8). ♦

Christ's Love in Action Among Ukrainian Refugees

Since the war broke out in Ukraine February 24, SGA partners like you have risen to the call and made it possible for us to help the faithful churches in the former Soviet Union to respond to the great needs around them. Thousands of men, women, and children have been displaced from their homes, and our brothers and sisters are laboring diligently to

help them with their immediate needs through SGA-supported Compassion Ministry.

More than that, they are hearing the life-changing Gospel, giving them eternal hope in the face of such devastating loss. Below are a few snapshots of how your help is making a huge difference in many lives for the glory of Christ! ♦



Yaroslav repented and accepted the Lord last year. He has kidney cancer and needs constant therapy. Yaroslav has not received his pension since the start of the war, February 24. Through SGA-sponsored Compassion Ministry, believers have helped provide Yaroslav with his much-needed medicine.



Olya is a forced migrant from Kharkiv. She came with her parents, her younger sister, and her own three children. They settled in a house where no one had lived for a long time and there were no beds. The local church helped them with beds and the family is very grateful for the help in the midst of the war.



Lydia and her family lived under enemy occupation for five days. Due to constant shelling, the family was forced to leave their home. It took them four days to get to an unoccupied part of Ukraine. The family is very thankful for the humanitarian aid provided by believers, and is receptive to the Word of God.



Gennady, his wife, son, and elderly parents lived in the Kherson region. They were under occupation until June 28. The family did not have their own vehicle to leave, and there were no more evacuation buses because they were blocked by the Russian military. The family was forced to negotiate with private carriers to provide safe passage through checkpoints, which cost all of their savings. The family is very thankful for aid provided by local believers.

CIS IN THE NEWS

A Diplomat's Prediction: Prolonged Ukraine Conflict

A senior Russian diplomat recently told the Financial Times that he sees no possibility of a diplomatic solution to the war in Ukraine, and expects a long conflict. Gennady Gatilov is the Russian government's permanent representative to the UN in Geneva. He added that the UN ought to be playing a bigger role in ending the war, and accused the US and NATO of pushing Ukraine to walk away from negotiations. *"We do not have any contacts with the Western delegations,"* Gatilov said. *"On the protocol side we do not see each other . . . Privately we do not have any contacts, unfortunately . . . we simply do not talk to each other."* The war broke out February 24 when Russia invaded Ukraine, and the invasion was quickly

condemned by Western countries, followed by severe economic sanctions.

We continue to pray for peace and an end to this awful war, which has shattered so many lives and has had global impact as millions of displaced refugees have sought asylum wherever they can. **The faithful evangelical churches SGA serves across Ukraine, Russia, and the other former Soviet nations continue to do all they can to aid the refugees, provide for their needs, and lovingly share the Gospel as God provides opportunity.** Pray with us for the ongoing resources needed to support the churches during these difficult times for their ministries. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The reports and testimonies regularly sent to us by faithful SGA-supported missionary pastors across the former Soviet Union never cease to inspire us and encourage our hearts. They have always faced



A Ukrainian woman receives aid through SGA-sponsored Compassion Ministry.

difficulties in their ministries, and all the more now especially in Ukraine and Russia with the outbreak of war in February. **Each year, we have the opportunity to bless them and their families with a special Christmas gift, and we're praying for a large response to bless even more pastors and church workers this year.** Your

prayers and support provide so much—Bibles and Christian literature, Bible training, children's ministries, humanitarian aid through Compassion Ministry, and more. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Pastor Sergei is a Ukrainian missionary pastor who continues to serve the Lord in the midst of the war.

Canadian Connection

These last number of months have brought about war, reopening of churches after an extended pandemic disruption to a normal routine, and economic inflation causing a strain on many households. There is much uncertainty for our overseas partners, however we continue to support an army of servants working in local churches that do not stop. Their bravery and commitment are what is needed during these days.

In this issue of the **Good News Report**, you will read of men and women sold out for Christ and His church. As we visit and speak to them, there is hardly a hesitation in doing what is necessary for those in their village, town, or city. Some have relocated due to the war in Ukraine, while many others have remained where they are, caring for the practical and spiritual needs of thousands in their vicinity.

SGA has resolved our stance in assisting however we can in each location. Letters come back to us saying thank you for standing with them. This long-standing partnership with fellow believers in each country has proven itself to be a relationship that lasts. We will not abandon them regardless of the political dealings in each country.

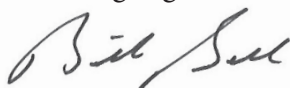
Having just returned from the country of Georgia where we participated in a pastor's conference with about 40 men, we see the determination and drive etched in their faces and declared by their voices. God is at work in ways we sometimes don't see or even realize. This happens in our own communities as well. Pray and encourage your pastor today!

At Christmas, we seek to share a special gift with each of our pastors we support by way of a financial "bonus." We try to make it something that is helpful, and by it saying they are appreciated. You can give towards this by marking a one-time gift for "Pastors' Christmas" and this will be passed on to them.

Most of our men and their families whom you support rarely move about as pastors do in our Canadian context. Once they land in a community, they stay for their entire life fully devoted to those before them. It is humbling for us to witness such resolve. In many communities, the pastor has worked with two or three generations of people.

Read these reports and be blessed today!

Serving together,



Bill Ball
Executive Director, SGA/Canada



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