



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

Through You . . . God Reaches Ukrainian Refugees, and Trains New Leaders for Strong Churches!

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Read the amazing work of God among war refugees!
- ♦ Sound, strong pastors and ministry leaders are on the way!
- ♦ Summer Bible Camp in a remote area—with a divine surprise . . .

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)



Help from the Lord . . . and You . . . Touches Ukrainian War Refugees

Pastor Oleg
Ukraine

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth (Psalm 121:2).

I send the warmest greetings to you with love of the Lord Jesus Christ! Thanks for your care for us and for your support for our ministry! We used the funds you sent for the purchase of groceries and hygienic goods, which were given to the many displaced refugees and needy local people. **We were able to reach more than 50 families made up of more than 250 people this past summer.**

These are people of different ages and from different social statuses. They are united by the fact that they fled from hostilities to a safer place. Some have started coming to Sunday services. There are also women who have started attending a Bible study group every Monday.



Pastor Oleg with Mykola.

Ready for baptism!

One woman named Tanya who moved with her husband from the embattled Luhansk region in the east has repented and is getting ready for baptism. Praise God!

From drinking to Christ

Mykola is a man with a big, kind heart and a bold witness! He learned about the Lord from his old grandmother who was a member of our church and is now in eternity. Mykola regularly attends church services. He has major health issues —he's had three strokes, a heart attack, and has problems with his legs, but this does not prevent him from attending worship! When his friends, neighbors, and even relatives sometimes invite him to have a drink, he answers them firmly: "I am going to the House of Prayer, to pray to God for myself and for our boys at the front, just leave me!" Having health problems, Mykola is unable to work as he would like. His wife is unwell also and has had several surgeries. Therefore, these packages are a great support and help for this family! Pray for Mykola's family to come to know the Lord as their Savior.

A family flees amid bombardment

Olena, her husband, and two children lived in the Donetsk region. In the spring, the invaders began massively shelling the city with heavy artillery. The authorities started a mandatory evacuation. The family was taken out of the shelling zone by an evacuation bus. Now the family lives in a village near here. Olena received the Word of God, food, and hygiene products as a gift. She thanked us for the aid and care.

Seeds planted begin to take root

Next are several women and their families and each of them have two or more children. When these women were children, they attended the House



(Left to Right) Olena; Galya, Tanya, Diana, and their children.

of Prayer, Sunday school classes, and children's Christian camps. They had grown up in a dysfunctional family. They would watch constant quarrels, and drunkenness every day. The children were raised in the street. Now both their mother and all the ladies occasionally attend church services, mostly on holidays thus far, but the understanding that they need to change their lives is growing all the time. At the moment, it's impossible to get a job in the village. Therefore, these grocery sets and hygiene items are very necessary for them. Galya, Tanya, and Diana sincerely thank SGA and donors for the care which is shown in this difficult time.

Christ beckons to her

Finally, there is Natalia. She has a husband who suffers from cancer. A lot of money has to be spent on treatment and medicine. They accepted our aid with gratitude, and with great joy and tears. Some time ago Natalia attended church services, and promises to come again. Please pray for Natalia and her husband, and for them to repent and receive the Lord in their hearts.

We are grateful to you for your work, through which we can serve people like these! May the Lord give us strength and courage to serve for the expansion of His Kingdom! ♦



Natalia with bags of aid.

God Used You to Train Biblically Sound Pastors!

Seminaries, Bible Institutes, and Lay Leader Programs Prepare Thousands of Leaders to Keep Doctrine Pure and Powerful

Looking back to the end of 2020, remember how often remarks were heard or read about what a challenging year that was? It was the year the COVID-19 pandemic kicked in, and for the next two years, that dominated the news. Now the year 2022 is coming to a close, and it has had enough of its own monumental challenges surface, beginning with the outbreak of war between Russia and Ukraine. **Yet amid the heartbreak and loss, there is a story that deserves telling along with much praise and thanksgiving to God.** And that is how the Lord sustained SGA-supported Bible training not just in heavily damaged Ukraine, but in the other former Soviet countries where training is being held.

God's power was fully on display as the SGA-supported **Irpen Biblical Seminary**—which had sustained heavy damage from bombardment—not only opened classes in the fall but also graduated 169 students. Eric Mock, our vice president for ministry operations, said it truly was a celebration for all . . .

The graduating students were from across eight different disciplines. The ceremonies had been delayed from the spring given the level of destruction with the building. Yet academic dean Benjamin Brinza and many local volunteers never stopped securing the building and moving forward. So it was with extra joy that they were able to hold the graduation in the seminary's worship center, which was undamaged. Ruslan Muratayev, director of SGA's Regional Ministry Center in Irpen, was able to represent us there and lead in prayer for the graduates.

In addition to the worship center, the kitchen and library sustained relatively minor damage compared to the upper floors of the school, and the students are meeting for classes on the first level, with 50 students attending each session. We praise and thank our God for His protection and provision, and you—our faithful partners—for your prayers and support.



Irpen Biblical Seminary has reopened and students are attending classes.

Training also continued at the SGA-sponsored **Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary** in Russia, **Minsk Theological Seminary** in Belarus, **Almaty Bible Institute** in Kazakhstan, and in Israel via **Israel College of the Bible**. A key development was the opening of a **strategic extension center in Khabarovsk**, which is located in Russia's Far East. And beyond that, Bible and theological training through the **Antioch Initiative** also overcame many obstacles with eight of the ten locations holding classes with 546 students. Two locations in Central Asia were unable to hold classes in the spring, but are beginning once again this fall. In the Russian region of Yakutsk, the final classes were held with 21 students graduating. **In all, a total of 2,227 students received training with your support! Think of the lives God will transform through them!** Please join us in praising God for this wonderful fruit, and in prayer for the students as they carry on with their ministries across the former Soviet Union. ♦

Remembering Rev. David Kimpton (1937-2022) —a Fellow Worker for Christ through SGA

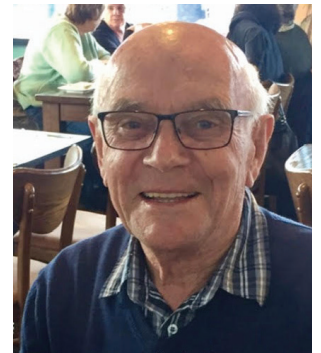
The SGA family was saddened to learn of the passing of Rev. David Kimpton on May 23 of this year. David served SGA/New Zealand as director from 1993 to 2003, and before that served as secretary to the New Zealand Council. He had been suffering from cancer and had undergone surgery in late 2021.

Rick Hemmingsen, who succeeded David as director and only recently retired, shared warm memories of David and their travels representing SGA . . .

David, like Ken Hunt before him, was able to build up interest in our mission. He and I traveled several times to SGA International Director's Conferences and to the former Soviet Union, and we enjoyed each other's company as we went to various churches and met SGA-supported missionary pastors. God kept us safe and healthy on all our trips, and He did some wonderful things for us as we traveled.

Arriving at a very crowded Kiev Airport in Ukraine, we joined a long line. I remarked to David

*that the man in front of us had the most amazing set of suitcases. The man overheard us and turned around, saying, "You are from SGA/New Zealand and I knew you were in Kiev, and I was hoping to find you!" **Only God could have directed us to join that line at that exact time!** He turned out to be a pastor from the USA who was flying to Almaty, Kazakhstan, to speak at an SGA-sponsored Almaty Bible Institute. We were able to spend time with him before we flew out. David was a great companion, friend, and encourager, and I will truly miss him.*



Rev. David Kimpton

Please join us in praying for David's wife Margaret and their family, and the wider SGA/New Zealand family in remembering him and all God did through his life. We praise and thank the Lord for David Kimpton's decades of service to Christ. ♦

Pray for Immanuel's Child Christmas Outreach!

In only a few short weeks, this year's **Immanuel's Child** Christmas outreaches will begin across the former Soviet Union. Our goal is to reach 60,000 children as well as unsaved parents!

These church outreaches are supported by SGA friends like you.

But in addition to financial support, *prayer* is just as important. So as we celebrate the 20th



Children at an Immanuel's Child Christmas outreach.

anniversary of this wonderful outreach to needy children and their families, please join us in intercessory prayer for the children who will attend. Please also remember to pray for the churches and their teams who will lead the outreaches.

Especially pray for believers and their congregations across **Ukraine**, where war has raged since late February. Thousands of individuals and families have been displaced by the fighting, and the churches SGA serves are making every effort to help them through providing food and other aid as God provides.

We pray that the **Immanuel's Child** outreaches that will be held in Ukraine and other nations will bring a moment of joy and comfort to the afflicted, and point them to the Lord Jesus Christ—the only true hope for lasting peace. ♦

“Summer Bible Camp from the Sky” Reaches Remote Children!

God Rearranges Schedules for His Perfect Timing

Mikhail T.

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Far East Russia

His ways are so much greater than ours! We can often feel so frustrated and so very small when our earthly plans are thwarted, but in that frustration, God can show Himself to be very big! He intends the greater blessing and works all things out for His good purposes and His glory! He brings people together in His ways and His timing. Join me in praising God for His sovereignty in the testimony I’m about to share.

God-Ordained Change of Plans

A door opened to organize a children’s summer program in a remote village, *accessible only by aircraft*. In making plans on where to host the program, we contacted the director of the local school in the village and asked for permission to use the school building. The director agreed, but on one condition: she had to be present and oversee the event in person. Unfortunately, the director had already made vacation plans and was scheduled to leave the village before the date of the program. Slightly disappointed, we made arrangements to hold the program at another location in a rundown club house.

Unknown to us at the time, God had other plans for us and for the director of the school. Upon our arrival at the village, which was delayed by a couple of days due to weather, we came to the place of our lodging. To our great surprise, the director of the school met us at the lodge as we drove up. She explained that because of poor weather conditions the scheduled helicopter (the only means of transportation in and out of the village) had not come for the last two weeks, and she was not able to leave as planned. She invited us to hold the outreach at the school, and after seeing the condition of the club house, we gladly agreed!



The program was attended by many children and adults.

God is Sovereign Over Schedules

The three-day ministry was **attended by most of the children in this difficult-to-reach village on Russia’s Far East shores**. Besides the children, some of the adults in the villages also attended the event along with the director of the school (who brought her daughter and granddaughter). The members of our team had many good conversations with the director, explaining who we are, why we do what we do, and **she joyfully received a Bible as a gift**. Many of the kids and adults whom we met asked when we would return, and asked us to come back.

The day after the outreach concluded, we were packing up to fly home. In God’s providence and joy of many in the village, the helicopter finally arrived, and the school director along with her family departed for her long-awaited vacation. God not only opened the door for ministry in this village, but He also orchestrated the details of the summer outreach, and allowed us to meet the school director and her family. We didn’t say this to the director, but we suspect that we were the reason the scheduled helicopter didn’t come for several weeks! ♦

CIS IN THE NEWS

Last Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev Passes, Spurring Debate on Legacy

Russian media reported the passing of Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the former Soviet Union, on August 30 after a long illness. He was 91 years old. It was Mr. Gorbachev and his policies of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) that set the stage for the end of Soviet communism, and for a period of relative freedom to come to the 15 nations that made up the Soviet Union.

Reaction to Mr. Gorbachev's death was mixed in Russia, where he was widely blamed for the economic collapse that followed the Soviet breakup, and for the breakup itself. However, in Eastern Europe and in Western nations, he was celebrated by political leaders and the public for bringing the Cold War to an end with U.S.

presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, and for bringing political freedoms to former Soviet nations.

At SGA, we can certainly remember the amazing days that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of atheistic communism. In this month's **Insight from Michael** column, SGA president Michael Johnson reflects on those days, and how God opened the door for miraculous, fruitful years of ministry that followed. Please pray with us that the Lord will use people's reflections on Mr. Gorbachev's passing to remind us all that our times are in His hands, and that His people are to always be ready for action to advance the Gospel as world events unfold. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

As we approach the end of 2022—a truly momentous year in SGA's ministries and for the world—we continue to help evangelical churches minister to refugees from the war in Ukraine. Yet even as that tragic conflict rages on, the ministries of the churches we serve across the former Soviet Union do not cease, and their focus is on the upcoming Christmas season and the SGA-supported **Immanuel's Child** outreach. This year is the 20th anniversary of **Immanuel's Child**. We ask that you please intercede regularly for the churches as they carry out the ministry, and above all for the needy children and their families who will attend.

We're expecting a record number—at least 60,000 children! Your faithful support makes so much more possible—distribution of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, doctrinally sound Bible training, Compassion Ministry, children's ministries, and missionary pastor support. Please prayerfully consider how you can help today! ♦



Children attend an *Immanuel's Child* Christmas outreach.

Canadian Connection

As I travel to various parts of our great nation visiting churches and individuals, it is motivating to discover people ready to assist in this work. Not only are you willing to pray and give, but more are also asking when we can go. The reality of a continued war in Ukraine with indiscriminate bombings threaten the safety of any who would travel.

There have been several shifts in strategy due to increased movement of people in the Eurasian countries. At present we have millions of Ukrainians now spread across Europe, and even into many communities in North America. Our partners we support are asking how we can reach these groups of refugees seeking help adjusting to new realities.

This **Good News Report** will tell you of the ongoing work through war and cold this winter in those ministries which are well established, but new doors have opened to share Jesus Christ with those who have lost all hope. They find themselves in a new country with a new language, new culture, and new community. The churches are attempting to integrate these hurting souls into the church and introduce them to Christ. Many others are already believers and seeking to develop ministry where they now call home. We are excited to see many churches in Canada that have welcomed Ukrainians warmly!

Various countries overseas have seen an increase of men fleeing Russia to avoid a war draft, and that also causes certain challenges. Since February 24, the Slavic world has changed dramatically, but SGA has stood by our churches and extension ministries, which have remained strong for those in greatest need. The resolve to BE the church is beyond anything we could put in words or pictures. Repentances and baptisms seem to be happening everywhere at an incredible rate. God is at work through His servants.

The *Immanuel's Child* Christmas outreaches will be held in each region despite the difficulties, and we are asking God to do something beyond what we could manufacture in our own strength. These are days of searching by thousands of families, and only God can fully meet that need in longing hearts.

As we close off this year, we ask you to assist us in finishing strong. The winter is already becoming a cold and troubling time for those who have so little. Providing wood for heat and cooking has become a large ask by pastors. They desire to meet a basic need in bombed-out communities in Ukraine now. Others are searching for warmer clothing. Thank you for responding as God would touch your heart during these winter months.



Serving together,

Bill Ball

Executive Director, SGA/Canada

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