




SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN



OPERATION WINTER WARMTH is Underway ... and Churches Are Providing the Message of Life!

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Faithful pastors reach elderly war victims in Ukraine!
- ♦ Your gifts help form churches in frozen Far East Russia.
- ♦ 3 great truths that never change!

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)

OPERATION WINTER WARMTH: God Uses Your Gifts to Help Elderly People Shattered by War

In Ukraine—and Other Frigid Lands—Christians Reach Out with Warmth



Above and Top: People stand in line to receive aid.

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

Each January, SGA partners have generously supported **Operation Winter Warmth**, which helps provide warm clothing, blankets, electric heaters, and other critically-needed aid to needy families across the former Soviet Union. In winter, temperatures in some regions such as **Yakutia** and **Siberia** routinely plunge to double-digits below zero. In **Central Asia**, wind chills penetrate into homes that often have rugs for front doors.

The elderly, impoverished, and widows are especially vulnerable to suffering, illness, and death.

In **Ukraine**, where war has raged for almost one full year, bitter winter cold is even more dangerous because so much infrastructure in the country has been destroyed by bombing—fuel lines, roads, pipes, even walls to keep out the freezing temperatures.



Dima is a missionary pastor in Ukraine who has distributed much-needed aid through the SGA-supported *Operation Winter Warmth* ministry. He recalls the ministry in eastern Ukraine and its impact especially among the elderly . . .

We were blessed in a special way and received much positive feedback from the people. We implemented the ministry in one location, the village of Pervomayskoye. It is a suburb of Donetsk and before the war, its population was 2,200 people. Only 800 people live there now, among them children and a majority of elderly people, with almost all the young people leaving for good.

On the outskirts of the village, there is a checkpoint on the road to the village of Peski, where no access is allowed. It is located along a dead-end road and no one gets there. The mood among the people living there is far from joyful. We identified 210 households from among the most needy, but could have done much more if we had the resources. We arrived in the village, where a crowd of people awaited us. They circled around the van. We delivered a Gospel message and prayed for people. Everyone was very grateful for receiving the warm kits, especially the older generation, as they have spare resources, have to sleep on torn bed sheets, and clothe themselves with old blankets. We delivered food and blankets, and people received it as a gift! Moreover, those who received the kits did

not take them only for themselves, but shared some of the items with others in need, and it was exceptional. All the recipient families were very grateful!

In addition to Ukraine, deep needs such as this exist across many regions of the former Soviet Union such as Central Asia—where countries like mountainous Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are located. **As this winter continues, please lift up the faithful pastors and churches as they minister to the needs of their people and share Christ's love.** Also pray for the increased resources needed due to the demands created by the war in Ukraine. We praise and thank the Lord for each of you—our faithful partners—and for all that you help accomplish for the glory of Christ! ♦



Above and Top: People are grateful to receive winter warmth kits.

God Uses Your Gifts to Help Yield a Fruitful Fall in Russia's Far East!

Read how you are reaching across the world...

Grigory A.

SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Far East Russia



Making crafts at the camp.

Greetings, beloved supporters and coworkers of SGA's ministries! This past August with the support of many volunteers, we held a **Bible Camp for children and teenagers**. With great joy we served the children not only from **Khabarovsk**, but from other outlying villages. Altogether, there were 38

children who participated in the camp ministry.

During the week, we studied the prophet Daniel. **The children learned about holiness and God's omniscience, about salvation in Christ and about biblical values, using Daniel and his friends as examples.** The children showed themselves to be very creative in preparation, as well as their participation in worship services. At the end of the camp, three children came to the Lord in a prayer of repentance. When we went home, we continued our fellowship in our church youth meetings at the church on Fridays.

The fall and winter will be very busy. **We have planned an evangelistic trip to a village some 500 miles from Khabarovsk.** We want to **support the small churches there** in these villages, and to help brothers to start a Bible study group. We have been praying for this region for the last several years in order to preach the Gospel. In addition, our youth team plans to visit one village on a Saturday once a month for the purpose of evangelism among young

people, inviting them to the church and telling them about Christ. And beginning this month, I plan to start a new group of preparation of new brothers for ministry in churches, following the program "Fellowship around the Word." **Please pray for this new group of brothers who are preparing for ministry.**



Fellowship at the dedication of the House of Prayer.

One other joy to share that happened late last summer—the dedication of the House of Prayer for the Lord's ministry in Troitskoe (Khabarovsk region). **The brothers prayed for several years about planting new churches like this.** The reconstruction project of the House of Prayer in the village of Troitskoe continued for almost two years, with many brothers and sisters involved in helping from throughout the region. **Praise the Lord that He allowed us to put in practice these plans, and to complete the work of refurbishment to the end!**

Thank you all for your prayerful support and financial participation in spreading the Gospel across Far East Russia! ♦

Your Gifts Help a Former Prisoner Preach The Gospel To Other Prisoners

“everything changed when I started studying God’s Word”

Not long ago, SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Alexander in Siberia shared the following wonderful testimony with us from former inmate Vasily. We praise and thank the Lord He is using your prayers and support to reach people with the Gospel even behind prison walls!

*Brothers and sisters, I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I recently finished serving my fifth prison sentence in a facility near the Russian city of Novosibirsk. **I wanted to give my testimony and share with you what God has done in my life.** I just pray that my story will be useful for the newly saved, as well as for those who have not repented before God yet.*



Prison Bible study group.

*While I was in prison, I attended a Bible study group for about two years and even prayed a prayer of repentance. However, I wasn’t truly reconciled to the Lord. I had no spiritual fruit in my life, and even though I attended the group regularly, my life did not change much. **However, everything changed when I began studying God’s Word anew.** After three months went by, I obtained true salvation! Glory be to our Lord Jesus Christ!*

*I don’t know why I continued to put off my repentance before God. **The local brothers from the church who were laboring in the prison ministry convinced me that the Bible study course helps new believers to better understand the Scripture—all that God says to us in His Word.** The excellent practice of memorizing Bible verses by heart has also*

helped and is helping me now. For me, my experience helped me to realize that I had put off my repentance for nothing. I do not regret having had that experience. My only regret is that I did not repent before God sooner.

*I myself—as well as everyone around me—**began to notice the positive changes the Lord was making with me,** and most importantly, **inside** of me! My prison term expired last December, now I am standing firm on the path the Lord Jesus has shown me! Upon my release from prison, I wanted to join the church and be baptized, and **I have begun participating in evangelism.** And I also have **a dream to do something to start a ministry** in my home village of Kolyvan, since there is **no Bible-preaching church there.** Thank you to everyone who cares for prisoners, and especially imprisoned Christians! I thank you for your prayers and material support because it helps us to feel the presence of God in our lives! Glory be to God for everything!*



Vasily sharing the Gospel and distributing New Testaments.

The writer of Hebrews admonishes us to . . . *Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them* (Hebrews 13:3). The immediate context is for believers who were jailed and under oppression, and it certainly applies to men like Vasily who have come to faith in Christ while behind bars. We are thankful for his changed life, and dedication to reaching the lost with the life-changing Gospel! ♦

SGA-Supported Missionaries Share the Gospel in Samara, Russia

Vyacheslav T.

SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Russia's Samara Region

Glory be to Jesus Christ for each of you! The shed blood of Christ unites us. When we think about it, our hearts become filled with great joy that our Mighty God saved us through the sacrifice of Jesus, that we be holy and blameless before Him in love. I thank the Lord for you, for your constant prayers for us and for your support in this uneasy time.

We praise God for what He is doing as we reach out to needy, large families with spiritual and material help. Together with our brother Gennady, we visited a farm during harvest time where we picked potatoes and onions together with other people. We worked in the field picking these crops for large families, and some for our own families. Then we went to the vegetable warehouse to buy more potatoes and onions, as well as other necessary food and visited several large families. The people were happy as this food was so needed in their families. **As the food prices have gone up, it would be too hard for them to survive without it. That is why assistance from us glorifies Him and**

brings such help to the families. Later at Christmas, we also provided gifts for the children and copies of the Scriptures. **Please pray for their hearts to be open to the Gospel!**

Gennady and I continue to travel each week for **outreach in towns, villages, and regional centers.** We visited three districts and gave out Christian literature to people of various ethnicities—our prayer is that they will come to know the Lord Jesus through the Word of God. **Even Muslims expressed their interest in the Word as we shared that the Lord Jesus is Savior and Judge.** We told them that they needed the Gospel to get acquainted with the Savior personally. Praise God that many people accepted the Scriptures readily and with interest, and thanked us for such an important gift! We got to talk to people who came from Kazakhstan to work and reside here. When I told them my wife was from Kazakhstan, they readily began to talk to us, listened to the Gospel, and accepted copies of the Scriptures. We ask you to keep praying for this ministry! ♦



Above: Vyacheslav and Gennady travel throughout the Samara region sharing the Gospel and distributing Christian literature.

CIS IN THE NEWS

Renewed Military Clashes Between Azerbaijan and Armenia

Early in the fall, fighting between Azerbaijan and Armenia flared up again over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh territory after a cease fire had been in effect for some time. Both sides blamed each other for the initial provocations according to published media reports. Azerbaijan shelled Armenian troops at three locations along the border, claiming they were responding to a buildup of Armenian landmines and weapons near the border. U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said that direct dialogue between the parties is key to resolving the issues and achieving a lasting peace.

Talks took place in November between the foreign ministers of both countries, something Mr. Price said was a good sign.

This long-simmering dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh broke into open warfare in the early 1990s, and again in 2020. Thousands of people have lost their lives in the fighting. **SGA partners have helped evangelical churches on both sides of the border to help refugee and needy families, and will continue to do so as God provides.**

The Gospel is truly the only way to bring lasting peace. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Above: Families gratefully receive warmth packages during the cold winter.

As winter deepens across the former Soviet Union, SGA partners faithfully help provide the resources needed for evangelical churches to reach needy individuals and families with warm clothing and other aid. Most importantly, God uses these timely gifts to open the door to lovingly sharing the hope of the Gospel. Your ongoing prayers and support do this and so much more, including provision of vitally important Bible training, Russian-language Bibles and evangelistic Christian literature, support of children's ministries, and youth ministry. And lives are being changed as a result for the glory of Christ. Please pray about how you can help today. ♦



Believers share the Gospel and distribute New Testaments and Christian literature.

Canadian Connection



The UN says there have been more than 13.3 million border crossings out of Ukraine since Russia invaded the country on February 24. About half that number have crossed into Poland, and the second largest group have gone into Russia. This movement of Ukrainians has created a massive challenge in reaching people with their most critical needs.

With winter and cold having set in, the need for Winter Warmth is at a heightened state right now. We are asking you to consider how you might assist in meeting necessities for families to survive these months. Life without power, heat,

and running water is extremely taxing. While millions have left Ukraine, there are more who have remained with no place or means to go.

As you read this article, we at SGA/Canada are ramping up efforts to respond to requests from local pastors and churches whom we support. They appreciate the extra funds to purchase clothing, food, fuel, and even generators to make life bearable during the cold, damp months. The weather overseas is very similar to ours here in Canada.

The Pallet Program from Poland continues each week, for which we are grateful. Thousands of families have received care through your generous gifts to fund this massive project. Over 1,000 tons of goods have now been shipped all over Ukraine. Winter Warmth will provide the extras such as clothing, which is not part of the Pallet Program.

Many thanks to people all across our nation who have welcomed Ukrainian families to our country and communities. We continue to hear amazing stories of those settling into our provinces. What a blessing that Christians have stepped up to meet people in their time of need.

Ministry continues in each of the other countries where we support local church planters. There are special programs to care for people in towns and villages where our partners serve, and we try to fulfill their requests after evaluating each request. Thank you for sharing out of the abundance God has given to us.



Serving together,

Bill Ball
Executive Director, SGA/Canada

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