



## *The Challenges of the Next Russian Generation*

*For You are my hope; O Lord God, You are my confidence from my youth (Psalm 71:5)*

One of the greatest challenges of any nation is to ensure that the next generation is ready and able to carry on when the older generation passes the torch. Barring the Lord's return, thousands of young boys and girls in today's Russia are waiting to become tomorrow's leaders. But what kind of leaders will they be? And how many will even survive to take up that mantle of leadership? The challenges facing the next generation are real and serious. And there is only one sure hope — changed hearts and lives through the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

### **A demographic crisis . . .**

For some time, there has been great concern over Russia's demographic crisis. According to the

United Nations, unless Russia's population decline is arrested, there will be only 98 million people by 2050, down from today's 142 million. Every third Russian will be older than 60. There simply aren't enough babies being born. Abortions are still among the highest in the world, and between 10 to 20 percent of Russian women become infertile after undergoing abortions.

### **What's happening to the Russian family?**

Today, 65 percent of Russian families have only one child, and only a third want a second child. Anatoly Antonov of Moscow State University is blunt. "The family lifestyle is disappearing. Russia's families are more like families in Sweden. Only 40

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percent of all couples living together are married. Of course those [kinds of] families cannot have many children.”

## What’s happening to Russian youth?

The number of Russian high school graduates is plunging. This year, there were 1.5 million graduates. Next year, there will be 930,000. In 2010, there will be 808,000 — some ten percent less each year. A 20-year-old Russian youth has only a 46 percent chance of reaching age 65, compared with a 79 percent chance for a 20-year-old American. Crime, drug abuse, growing alcohol consumption and gangs are an ever-present threat to a young Russian. SGA-sponsored church planters encounter many in youth prisons. Even more are encountered in orphanages and children’s homes, while others are encountered on the street. And we praise God for these encounters, because for many, they are the beginning of a new life in Christ.

## The power of the Gospel is changing young Russian lives!

SGA-sponsored church planter Viktor Slobodyan loves children, especially the so-called “street children.” A few months ago, his church and the Christian group, The Source of Light, reached out to them through a special event — The Concert for Street Kids...



*That day, we had children from the city’s Chernikovka district. Kids from that part of Ufa have been visiting our church for a few years, and we had quite a few new street children from the central part of town, and some from a local orphanage. They were especially touched by the testimonies, and wanted to make friends with believers and ‘such a cool band.’ Their parents even were happy to visit. These homeless people, heavy*

*drinkers and filthy children are not welcome at any other concert, they say. Many of them have never been in a real theater. Even if they wanted to be there, they’d be kicked*



*out. For them, this concert meant so much, a special concert organized just for them. The world around them says, ‘You are not welcome! Get out! You are awful! You are an idiot!’ But here, they got the message that they are welcome, they are precious to God, and they are beloved. I trust that it touched their hearts and opened them to the Gospel.*

In Yaroslavl, the Lord is using church planter Yuri Poltavets to reach young people whose lives have been ravaged by drugs.

*I am especially touched by the testimony of one young man who grew up in a good family. But when he became a student, his ‘friends’ gave him drugs. His military doctor mother found out about his addiction, and tried everything she knew to save her son, but everything was useless. She eventually threw him out and he had to live on the streets or in abandoned houses. Finally, his mother found him and told him about our Christian rehab center. She said only God could help him, and He did! Today, this young man worships God and wants to serve Him only.*

There are many more stories like these from SGA-sponsored church planters across Russia’s 11 time zones. They are a wonderful testimony of God’s power to transform even the most hopeless lives. More than that, they are a wonderful testimony of how your faithful partnership with evangelical Russian churches is helping Russian youth rise to meet the challenges of the next generation — all for the glory of God!



# DID YOU KNOW...

Most Russian Baptist churches are located in the European part of Russia, the west, while the largest churches are in Siberia, to the east. During communism, evangelical believers were exiled to Siberia, where they endured tremendous hardships. But instead of crushing the church as the communists intended, the Lord had different plans, resulting in new generations of believers and a strong Gospel witness.

## *Reports from the Harvest Field*



### Finding Favor in Schools

*In March, God allowed our church to work with the Red Cross in Belarus' Pruzhany region to present a seminar for local teachers and student counselors. Representing 40 schools and pre-school establishments, they had come together to discuss the impact of alcohol and related aggression in our society. The response was warm and generated a lot of requests for the material we presented. We put it on CD and gave them to*

*each teacher along with calendars and brochures. The calendars clearly stated the Gospel, and had contact information for the teachers to use if they had questions. I pray that God will work in their hearts and bring them to Himself as a result of this outreach.*

Valery Ohrimuk  
Ruzhany (Brest), Belarus  
*(continue on page 4)*

# Reaching Children at Summer Church Camp

This year, SGA supported church camp ministries across Russia and several neighboring countries — Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In Russia alone, 18 SGA-sponsored *Antioch Initiative* churches planned and held summer camp outreaches. SGA partners helped provide the camps with funds for transportation, facility rental, food and other general support.

As of this writing, participating churches in all countries anticipated that about 9,820 children would be reached this summer, if not more. SGA's Piotr Podrez says that the seeds planted at camp are increasingly turning into lasting fruit. A baptism service was held in Minsk this summer to celebrate . . .

*There were 13 young people baptized, including nine who were saved while at camp last summer, plus one other who took part in the youth camp's hike. Camps hold a special meaning for us now because they bring in such great results. We hold our camps in August, praying in faith for the Lord to provide funds. The churches need help because they are small in size. By August, there is also produce available from our gardens to help with food expenses. The number of participating churches has grown and we are seeing results. This makes us rejoice!*

In Ukraine, several children from the Dobromil orphanage who have attended camp were eager to tell their stories. The Lord is truly at work in their lives.

*I was brought to the orphanage by police officers who found me at a railway station in Drogobichy. I don't know who my parents are because I have never seen them. I like to sing, especially the songs that Christians from Sambor and Borislav sing when they visit us. I met many good friends among the Christians. One of them is Rostik from Borislav. He told me a lot about his life and over Easter I even spent three days with his family. He told me that I needed to repent of my sins, but I wasn't sure. Then he explained it and we prayed together. Now I attend each fellowship our friends organize, and I have great peace in my heart.*

Nikolai, age 13



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*After a chemical disaster, all the children near my village went to their relatives in other parts of our country. I went to my aunt in Borislav. She brought me to the Christian summer camp. Every day, we began at 10 in the morning with prayer, and then a Bible lesson. I heard a lot about Jesus Christ and what He has done for all of us on the cross. We sang songs, played interesting games, and even hiked in the mountains. I am glad I could take part.*

Oksana, age 12

We are thankful to the Lord for all the children who came to saving faith in Christ while at an SGA-sponsored camp this summer. Pray with us that the Lord will continue to work in children's hearts and draw them to Himself now that they have heard . . . *the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel* (Ephesians 3:6).

## The Impact of Youth Leader Training

*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it* (Proverbs 22:6).

Earlier this year, SGA helped sponsor a special Conference on Teenage Service in Moscow. Bringing together 40 youth leaders from 20 Russian cities, the conference was an opportunity for them to learn more about how to reach other young people like themselves, and how to develop new youth leaders within their youth groups. The young leaders by all accounts were thankful for the opportunity.

*The conference was a blessing. Now I know where to start, helped by experienced brothers with extensive knowledge in teen ministry. It is a pity that the conference was so short.*

Vyacheslav Andreev, age 18  
Muravlenko, Russia

*There was a lot of useful information that will help change our ministry for the better. Teachers are aware of the social changes in youth, and it is important that they have a long history in adolescent service, and are well organized to communicate.*

Alexander Karatun, age 23  
Tyulgan, Russia





# A Camp for Troubled Teens

*By Dima Nachina  
Orphans Reborn Coordinator in Belarus*

I have had a dream that children in orphanages, unable to go anywhere for the summer, could come to one of our Christian camps. When children have nothing to do, they often end up getting in trouble. This July, the Lord fulfilled my dream in a special way when a group of troubled teenagers from a local orphanage came to the camp we held in Yshachi.

The theme of the camp was “True Heroes,” and our logo proclaimed, “You are special!” We wanted to show them that being a true hero was not whoever could drink the most, or who could get into the most trouble, but in standing firm even when hurt. The youth from the orphanage were largely from the “high risk” group, and the headmaster of the orphanage was with us the whole time to help with discipline.

On the first day, we gathered for the evening fellowship and found that someone had cut the strings to the guitar before the service started. We knew immediately that the enemy was trying to hinder our ministry. The children and youths began shouting abuse at each other. It was very hard to stop them. But our team got together and agreed to fast and pray during the camp, especially for the “ringleaders” among the children. God heard our prayers! By the third day of camp, we had begun building bridges and finding keys to the hearts of the children. We sang and worshiped the Lord, then played games with the children. They began to feel better and safer, and that helped open the door for us to talk about the Lord Jesus.

Every day, we told them about the Lord and what He has done for us — and them. I told the children about the Bible and how it applies to our

everyday lives. On the last day of camp, we held an evangelistic fellowship and five of the teenagers came forward to repent and trust in Christ! For many, this camp was their first experience of His love.

Brothers and sisters, please pray for these children and the seeds of the Gospel planted in their hearts. Pray also for the orphanage administrators, especially that they would see the fruit of our ministry. Thank you for your part in it all!

*For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the Gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all (2 Corinthians 9:12-13).*





# Canadian Connection



*Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever (Psalm 136:1).*

Thanksgiving is not as much a date on the calendar as it is the expression of a grateful heart and the realization of how blessed we are.

A question from a man in rural Ukraine clearly reminded me of what most of us take for granted. To make conversation and to understand how Canadians live, this man inquired if any of us had a cow, a pig, or other animals. Amazed that we had none, he asked what we grew in our gardens. When we explained that our gardens were small or non-existent, his bewildered comment was unforgettable. "Well then, how do you eat?" For him, buying or having money to buy most food was incomprehensible.

Large gardens (dachas) and keeping some animals are still part of life for many in the CIS. Because believers are careful to thank God for His generous provision, in the fall one Sunday is devoted to a Harvest Festival celebration. Some churches have a meal similar to harvest home suppers that were once common in rural Canada.

Although Thanksgiving and Christmas are several weeks apart, an increasing number of Canadian churches are thanking the Lord by encouraging their people to become involved in *Immanuel's Child*. This was developed by SGA when pastors told us that Christmas is a very fruitful time for church evangelism, but they lack adequate resources for effective outreach. We thank God for *Immanuel's Child* partnerships. Many children will hear the message of Christ, receive a children's Bible, a special gift packet lovingly prepared by the local congregation, an invitation to Sunday school, and a star with the name of the donor who prayerfully partners with their own home church and a local church so that a child in the CIS will

hear of God's love.

With an influx of children and new believers, many congregations that were once mainly grandmothers and women now include families and youth. Because church youth leaders need to be strengthened to disciple others, we are grateful for SGA/Canada ministry partners who invest in youth ministry in Russia. Eugene Bakhmutsky directs that ministry. After University, Eugene turned down a full doctoral scholarship to study at an SBI and Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary. During his studies, he served as a youth leader in Novosibirsk and developed an extremely popular, fruitful youth outreach on secular radio.

After Eugene graduated, the Baptist Union president asked him to lead the development of youth ministries in Baptist churches across Russia. Within a few years, more than 20,000 young men and women are blessing their churches and impacting their communities for Christ all across Russia. We thank God that Eugene will be with us in Ontario this month and in Alberta in February/09.



**Rev. Allan W. Vincent**  
*Director, SGA Canada*

## *Ministry itinerary:*

- Oct. 5 – Benton Street Baptist Church  
Missions' Conference – Kitchener ON
- Oct. 17-19 – Cornerstone Ministries Missions' Conference – Crystal City MB
- Oct. 26 – Longbranch Baptist Church  
Missions' Conference – Toronto ON
- Oct. 31 – Pastors' Luncheon with Eugene  
Benton Street Baptist – Kitchener ON
- Oct. 31 – SGA Banquet – Eugene  
Temple Baptist – Cambridge ON
- Nov. 1 – Gladstone Church Rallies  
Eugene – Toronto ON
- Nov. 2 – Fellowship Baptist Church  
Eugene – Cobourg ON
- Nov. 2 – Bay Park Baptist Church Rally  
Eugene – Kingston ON

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# How You Can Help



*You can make a difference... today!*

## Help reach Russian children and youth with the Gospel

Children and young people across Russia and her neighboring countries face such daunting challenges today. Thousands upon thousands have little hope for tomorrow. They face, drugs, alcohol, crime, poverty, and worst of all, no eternal hope because they don't know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. Only a tiny percentage attend church, almost half have never had an opportunity to read the Bible, and a large number do not believe in God at all.

**The next generation is Russia's future — let's help win them to Christ**

Your gifts can help Bible-preaching evangelical churches win young people to Christ across the lands of Russia. Whether it's sponsoring a church planter who has a significant youth focus, helping summer camps or ministry to orphans, our brothers and sisters are dedicated to reaching the next generation of leaders — leaders who have the potential to guide their nations toward either a greater recognition of our Sovereign Lord — or toward rejection of His grace and redemption.



**Thank you!**  
**Please return the enclosed reply form with your gift.**



☐ Here's my gift to express my partnership with SGA to help reach the lost children and youth in the lands of Russia. I'm enclosing \$\_\_\_\_\_. (11150)

☐ I would like to stay better connected! Please e-mail me with periodic ministry updates, key prayer requests and needs. (4401)

☐ Sign me up to be part of SGA's special e-mail Prayer Team. (4403)

My e-mail address is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Today you can help reach children and youth in the lands of Russia!**

To make your gift by credit card, see reverse side. >