

## Proclaiming The Peace of Christ

*And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).*

For most Americans, it is hard to imagine life during wartime as experienced in other places around the world. Not counting the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001—no city on the American mainland has experienced being shelled since the Civil War.

Until last year, it was no different in Ukraine. The brutality of World War II left enormous scars in the memories of the elderly, but those born after 1945 had no memory of what it was like to have their cities under fire. But all that changed when the battles in the east began, shattering thousands of lives. Yet the evangelical churches SGA serves are proclaiming the peace and love of Christ before their people every day. Your prayers and faithful support are having an eternal impact.

Yevgeny Taran labors in Ukraine's Kherson region on the coast of the Black Sea near Crimea. Shortly after the crisis began raging in 2014, he had been helping three refugee families from the Donetsk



Yevgeny Taran and family.

and Lugansk regions. Over time, this number grew to 45 families in 11 villages, including families with children and those with physical challenges. He reports that the conflict has led to numerous ministry opportunities.

*Because of where we are located, we have seen a lot of military equipment and many soldiers. We also have many refugees from Crimea and the eastern regions, and we've been collecting humanitarian aid for them. Earlier, we helped families relocate to safer regions. Then later in the summer, we had a youth conference*

*with 45 in attendance and half were unbelievers. Two girls began attending our services and one of them has come to faith. We also held a festival for youth and children on the theme "There is Hope." After the children's program, we held evangelistic programs for adults.*

As an example of how Yevgeny conducts his outreaches, he wrote to describe how they worked to reach two villages and the town of Novotroitsk . . .

*In the evenings, we held fellowships with unbelieving families on several topics including how to have a personal relationship with the Lord. The atmosphere was open and everyone could ask questions. Some of the unbelievers shared their impressions. "We didn't think that being with believers would be so cheerful and free!"*

Yevgeny estimates about 500 children and 350 adults heard the Gospel during just one week of summer ministry, and there are new families in the church as a result.

### **Ministry in the Pouring Rain**

Piotr Marchenko is an SGA-sponsored missionary pastor near Kiev. They had planned a major children's outreach, and the day arrived. There were

games, competitions, music, gifts, and refreshments including cotton candy. But in the middle of the celebration, the weather changed and heavy rain began pouring down. Piotr said that people began dashing inside the church for shelter . . .

*There were many unbelievers who had come for the celebration but not to come to the church. The rain changed their plans. One 8-year-old boy was worried because he was there without his mother and couldn't remember their phone number. We couldn't call her to tell her that her son was safe. But as the celebration continued inside, we found that his mother was one of the people who had come in from the rain. We thought that the rain had spoiled our celebration, but God was in control and he turned it into good. Thanks to this situation, many who pass by every day were now inside and experienced the love of God on display. We believe that the Holy Spirit will continue His work in their hearts!*

Every day in Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and Central Asia, more than 350 missionary pastors like Piotr and Yevgeny labor for the sake of the Gospel. Your faithful support and prayers undergirds everything they do. And we are deeply thankful to the Lord for His sovereign work in thousands of lives.



SGA-sponsored missionary pastors share God's Word and the love of Christ wherever the Lord opens a door!

## **Determined to Know Christ!**

Pastor Mirshakar  
Central Asia

We thank the Lord for your love and concern for the work of the Lord in spreading the Gospel throughout our republic. I would like to tell you about the progress of our joint ministry with you over the past three months. Most importantly, we would like to thank you again for your continued help.

First, I have a testimony from the family of a brother named Viktor. One week before we were going to hold a baptism service, he fell ill. However, Viktor was determined that he would attend the baptism class. On September 14, 2014, nine souls testified to their faith in the Lord and were baptized, and one of them was Viktor. However, after his baptism, his illness became much worse. At the beginning of October, he went to be with the Lord. Out of sorrow came joy, because during his last two weeks on earth, Viktor made peace with his wife and daughter after 20 years of separation. Today, his wife and daughter and her two children are living in Viktor's apartment, and they have agreed to allow our family to continue visiting them. When we visit, we pray for them and talk about the Bible, and share the Gospel of our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ.

We are also continuing to visit other families in our region. A lot of the neighbors of these families have noticed that we often

visit. They want to know how and why we are helping them. Each time we have the opportunity to tell them about you, and that you are kind followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, obedient to His example . . . *You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good.* (Acts 10:38).



Viktor is now with Christ, but illness could not stop him from following his Lord in baptism.

We want to thank you again for your prayers and for your support of our ministry. This serves as a good testimony to bring glory to our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless you!

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*Editor's Note: Because of official opposition to evangelical ministry in many places across Central Asia, we are withholding the full names and regions where SGA-sponsored missionary pastors are laboring for the sake of the Gospel.*

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There are so many wonderful reports that we receive through SGA-sponsored missionary pastors, and we are only able to share a few at a time in *InSight*. The following are some glimpses into the fruit of the ministry you help make possible through your prayers and generous support. May you be blessed as you read!

### Anna's Story\*

Greetings from my far away city in Central Asia! I am 16 years old. I went to church for the first time when the mother of my friend took me. I really like it, but it has been difficult. I am my father's favorite and his only daughter. He is not opposed to the fact that I have become a Christian, but my Mom and the rest of my family are opposed. They tease me and call me "Kofir" (unfaithful).

I was saved in 2011. I love to sing and I often take a hymnbook and sing the hymns that talk about God being our Guide, and that Christ died on the cross and rose again for us. That was the very thing that played a huge role in my life. I was saved and my life began to change. I continue to praise God in my native language. I believe the Lord gave me a voice to praise His name. Please pray for my Mom and my family. I really love them and want them to be with me in eternity. Thank you for everything!

\*Name changed for security reasons.



### Victory over Opposition

I am sincerely thankful for your prayers and support. Over last summer, we were blessed to hold three camps for children, with more than 150 in attendance. During the camp in the village of Dubyny, a local priest tried to get the authorities to forbid our event, but with God's help we went forward. Later in August, we held a baptism celebration for three new members of our church—two older women and a 17-year-old young man. They all come from unbelieving families. Thank you very much for all that you do for us!

—Pastor Viktor Kolesnik (Ukraine)



### Answered Prayer for Timur

Timur came to the Lord through much sorrow and difficulty. He grew up without a father, and after his military service he began to drink. His cousin is a deacon in our church and witnessed to Timur often, but Timur would laugh with indifference. But things changed when Timur's kidneys failed and he ended up in the hospital on dialysis. I visited him and this time, he listened intently and asked me if God could heal him. (He had seen others die of his ailment in the hospital including a young girl). I told him about faith in God, and he began to pray for his healing. Two months later, he decided to skip his dialysis and come to the church. Everyone—doctors, family, friends—pleaded with him saying he would kill himself. It has now been a year and the doctors say in 20 years of practice, they had never seen a person stop dialysis and have his kidneys function again! Timur thanks God that sorrow and his circumstances helped him to know his Savior.

—Pastor German Dzheriev (Russia)

### You Can Help Sponsor a Missionary Pastor Today!

SGA's faithful partners help sponsor nearly 350 dedicated, hard-working missionary pastors across Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the nations of Central Asia. Yet there are millions of regions yet unreached with the Gospel. There are faithful men willing to go, yet they lack the needed support.

Partial sponsorships can begin for as little as \$35 per month. Full sponsorships are also available. SGA missionary pastor sponsors receive their missionary's name, family information, ministry location, and a family photo when possible. SGA helps facilitate communication between the missionary and sponsors, to encourage prayer and so that all may rejoice in what God is doing across the former Soviet Union. If you would like to find out more, please contact SGA at 1-800-BIBLE-50.



# A Thankful Widow and Faithful Grandmother

*Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world (James 1:27).*

SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* teams primarily carry out their dedicated ministries at orphanages and children's homes across Russia and her neighboring countries. But the Lord often brings other wonderful ministry opportunities their way beyond the walls of the orphanage.

Such is the case in a Central Asian nation where SGA-sponsored missionary pastors and children's workers must labor discreetly due to opposition. Our *Orphans Reborn* team wrote to tell us the story of Tatiana, an 86-year-old widowed grandmother who faces many challenges,



86-year old Tatiana is thankful for the help rendered to her and Vitya through SGA partners.

yet with a deeply thankful heart for what God has done for her through SGA partners . . .

*Tatiana's husband passed away a long time ago. She lives in a small village outside a larger city nearby. She was in bed for eight months with a spinal deformity, and for the past six months has been walking with crutches. She is raising her 14-year-old grandson, Vitya. Tatiana*

*is amazing! She walks on crutches, lights the stove, cooks and sings songs! When I went to visit her not long ago, I found her singing! Yet Tatiana has a hard life. Her children are gone. Her youngest son (Vitya's father) lost his life in an accident when Vitya was very small. After the funeral, Vitya's mother started drinking and left, taking Vitya's younger sister away with her. They have not heard from her since. Tatiana's two younger sons also fell into tragedy. One of them left to study at a naval academy in St. Petersburg and got involved with bad company. After a few years, his younger brother went to visit him and ended up killing his own brother in a drunken brawl. He was sent to prison and Tatiana has not seen him since—it is said that he died in prison.*

*Despite such sorrow, Tatiana is such a very kind and humble woman! She expects nothing from others, yet we gave her food and a copy of God's Word. When we parted, she said, "God sent you to me and I feel better now." We invited Vitya to our winter camp that we held over the holidays, but he was not able to come as there is no one to help his grandmother—they have to haul firewood and coal from the street and Tatiana is not able. Please pray for her salvation (and Vitya's) as they read and study God's Word.*

## CIS in the News



A recent report by Forum 18 said that religious groups or communities in Russia holding meetings or other activities in public without Russian state permission may find their members facing five-figure ruble fines if they do not inform local authorities in advance. However, the issue is being challenged in the court system. One case involves a Sochi evangelical pastor who was fined for holding prayers and Bible study in a rented café. In addition, a Baptist preacher in Smolensk plans to appeal a conviction for handing out religious literature in a public

park. Another Baptist in Orel was fined for organizing an outdoor hymn sing in a children's playground.

In the Sochi case, the prosecution used a provision in the Criminal Code requiring notification of authorities in advance of religious meetings. Alexander Verkhovsky of the human rights organization SOVA Center said he thinks authorities may in the end use this Code provision to target political activists instead of religious groups. The report notes that Russia's Constitutional Court struck down this provision of the Criminal Code, but the legal wrangling is not over. This situation is a matter for much prayer, as the potential impact on evangelical churches is significant. Please join SGA in lifting this matter before the Lord.

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## How You Can Help

This month concludes yet another fiscal year at SGA. We are so deeply thankful to God for what He has accomplished, and for each of you—our faithful ministry partners. Yet we realize that there is much fruitful labor yet to be done. Millions across Russia and her neighboring countries still need to hear of the Savior's love. Your prayerful support helps SGA continue to provide vital Bible training, church planting, youth outreaches, children's ministries, Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, compassion ministry, and so much more. Please keep praying for us as we help advance the Gospel!



# Canadian Connection

by Allan Vincent

*"And God gave Daniel favour and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs" (Dan. 1:9)*

**For ministry to be fruitful, we need more than hard work and faithful prayer and financial partnerships.**

- We need the moving of the Spirit of God, enabling those who serve.
- We need the Lord to increase the resources entrusted to precious ministry partners like you, so that seeing real ministry needs and opportunities, you are willing to partner in that which the Lord has laid on your heart.
- **BUT we also need the Lord to open the hearts of those to whom we minister.**

**Our Lord still opens hearts.** Brother Ivan, a missionary pastor supported by SGA/Canada ministry partners, testified as to what the Lord did last summer in western Ukraine . . .

*In June, we were invited to hold a children's camp in the local public school. It was an especially blessed ministry because we were able to clearly share the Gospel. **141 children had a chance to hear the truth about God.** It also was a wonderful way to reach parents with the Word of God.*

***This camp and where we held it was a great miracle of the Lord.*** In previous years, we held camps in our church. But every time, the authorities came, forbidding our camp and fining our church for holding camp.

***In 2013, 11 representatives from the county and different departments came to our camp.***

***We were threatened, saying that for such religious activities, the person, responsible for the camp may go to jail. Thank God, it didn't happen. We were only fined. But this year, the Lord granted a miracle. The school principal, who had been against our camps and had been the initiator of the different previous inspections, invited us to hold the Christian camp in the school. So many children attended that we held our meetings in the gym instead of in the classroom. After camp, we agreed that with the beginning of the school year, we would hold Good News meetings in our church once a month."*** (Drobot, Jan. 26, 2015)

**Please pray for the moving of the Spirit of God again this summer. I**



**ask especially with regard to Summer Camp Ministries.**

- May the Lord enable those who serve.
- May the Lord stretch the combined resources of local churches and what you have entrusted to them.
- May the Lord also open doors for ministry and the hearts of those the Gospel to repent.



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#### **AI's Itinerary:**

1-4 FEB Central (Fellowship Baptist) Pastors' Conference

15 SGA/US Board Meeting

16-30 Visiting SGA/Canada supported missionary pastors in Russia & Ukraine