



SERVING CHURCHES — REACHING RUSSIAN SPEAKERS November 2016

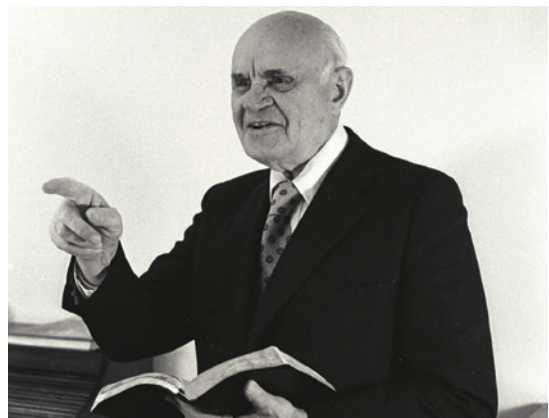
Ministry in Russia Under the New Reality

Time is Running Out!

Dr. Bob Provost
SGA President

The new anti-terrorism measure signed into law by Russian president Vladimir Putin this past summer contains a section referred to as the 'Anti-Missionary Law'. Within it are several components that have chilling restrictions on Christian evangelism and religious freedom. We are, indeed, entering a new reality for ministry in Russia.

SGA has been reaching Russian speakers and serving Russian believers and their churches for 83 years. We were founded by Peter Deyneka, who was born in Belarus and whose life-long passion was to see his beloved people won to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I have had the joyful privilege of serving the Russian church since 1989, when I made my first trip behind the soon-to-fall Iron Curtain. For my wife Louetta and me, it has been 27 years of precious fellowship, encouragement, and watching the Lord



SGA founder Peter Deyneka prayed for the day the door would open for ministry in Russia!

work through His people in advancing the Gospel across Russia's 11 time zones and in Israel.

But the vast progress that God has granted is still just a beginning. There is much, much more to do. Our work is nowhere near complete. 90% of the communities of Russia alone have no Gospel witness. Millions of people across Russia remain unreached by the Good News of Christ's love. And in light of this, we were greatly shocked by this new law.

We were shocked because it is a major violation of the substantial freedom of religion clause in the Russian constitution. We were shocked by the law because it appears that the purpose is to stop evangelical churches from carrying out the Great Commission of our Lord . . . *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy*



Shortwave Gospel radio penetrated the Iron Curtain and many were saved as a result!

Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20).

But despite this law, we are not discouraged because we have the promise of God Himself. The Lord assured His disciples, telling them . . . *I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it* (Matthew 16:18). He promised to build and promised there

would be opposition. Ever since the Lord commanded us to preach the Gospel, human powers have tried to stop the Gospel. The false teachers and religious leaders in Jesus' day tried to silence the Gospel. For centuries in Europe, including Russia, apostate religious and civil authorities tried to silence the Gospel. For more than 70 years, atheistic Soviet communists tried to silence the Gospel. They all failed. Their labors and works have turned to dust, and they have gone on to face a holy, just God who will hold them accountable for all of eternity.

And what God has done since 1934 in Russia, using SGA—a tiny little mission headquartered in North America—has been more than remarkable! The Lord raised up Peter Deyneka and used him to awaken churches throughout the world to the great need. SGA partners made possible extensive shortwave radio ministries to take the Gospel over the impenetrable Iron Curtain. Millions of Russian-language Bibles and Christian books were printed and distributed behind the Iron Curtain. Where distribution was not possible, Russian radio missionaries read God's Word over the air at dictation speed, enabling

Continue on page 6



An old Soviet border gate from the Cold War era. We need to press on reaching Russia for Christ before the gates close again.

Ukraine: The Violence Still Goes On

Crisis Evangelism Fund Update

Believers in Ukraine have the most freedom of any CIS nation for worship and proclaiming the Gospel, but they cannot ignore the constant backdrop of the ongoing military conflict in eastern Ukraine—a tinderbox that repeatedly sparks into renewed violence. This is why your support of SGA's Crisis Evangelism Fund remains vitally important in helping the churches minister to the needs of refugee families fleeing from the fighting.

According to the United Nations, 20 civilians were killed and 122 injured in the course of June and July alone. The human toll is heavy. For Alex and Tanya, it meant fleeing their home in Lugansk and facing the premature births of their twin son and daughter . . .

After we fled to Zaporozhye, our children were born at 26 weeks. That is why our son has problems—he cannot hear and will need surgery to place an implant in his ear. Ivan was 2.4 pounds at birth and Paulina was 2.3 pounds. Thankfully, Paulina is fine. We had to leave everything behind. The factory where I worked closed, but my company has a plant here where I was able to get work, but the salary will not cover Ivan's surgery. Most of our money goes toward our children's health. We live and wait for the war to be over.

Olga has been widowed for 15 years and also had to flee eastern Ukraine. She described the terror she faced and the uncertainty of settling in a strange city . . .

At 6:30 one morning, I was drinking my coffee and a missile landed right next to my house. It hit the home of a 24-year-old mother and her young daughter, killing them instantly. They were just leaving for kindergarten. My whole house shook, and the coffee spilled. Thankfully, my children were already out of Lugansk. I managed to get through the military blockade, but I am scared to go back. Half the people from our region are here. I pray and wait for God to answer. Everything is turned around in my soul.

These are only a few stories out of thousands that could be told. Their cry echoes that of the psalmist . . . *Be not far from me, for trouble is near: for there is none to help . . . But You, O Lord, be not far off; O You my help, hasten to my assistance* (Psalm 22). Your faithful support of SGA's Crisis Evangelism Fund and Compassion Ministry is vital. People whose lives have been unimaginably shattered are finding renewed hope for their future through Christ. There are many more with urgent needs waiting. Please help today!

Pray in Advance for Immanuel's Child Outreaches This Christmas!

January 7—Russian Christmas—is still weeks away, but it's never too early to begin praying for the upcoming SGA-sponsored *Immanuel's Child* outreaches. Participating churches across North America help make it possible for evangelical churches across the CIS to invite unchurched children and their families to special Christmas celebrations. During the outreaches, each child receives a signed Star of Bethlehem ornament to special Christmas in your churches here—showing how God's love spans the globe. They also receive a special Christmas gift, purchased with your church's help and lovingly presented by Russian-speaking church workers. Russian-language Christian children's literature is also given, along with other items such as candy, fruit, or other needed items. Most important of all, a clear presentation of the Gospel is made to the children, telling them of the true meaning of Christmas and Jesus' love for them.

SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Alexander Yurovskikh labors in Russia's Kurgan region. His church was able to host a tremendous outreach with the help of SGA partners . . .

Thanks to God's mercy, we had activities in one orphanage, three villages, and two meetings with children from needy families. More than 200 people attended, including 138 children. Two families heard about this by word of mouth and came. We were also able to have a wonderful meeting with the parents, who were very interested in our church and asked questions about God. It was very cold in Kurgan—more than 30 degrees below zero! But we are thankful to God, who helped keep us safe and able to travel anyway. May the Lord reward you for your generous share in His cause!



Thousands of Russian-speaking children will hear of the greatest gift of all—salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ!

On the Radio in Krasnoyarsk

We have previously shared ministry reports from SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Pavel Barsukov in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, and they are always a great blessing to read. He has been very busy for months having conferences in different locations on marriage, as well as for children's church workers and camp workers. In addition to his ministry around Krasnoyarsk, he and church teams make visits to Mongolia when they have opportunity, holding children's camps and other evangelistic meetings. Pavel also has opportunities to share Christ on local radio . . .

I have been invited to record three-minute radio programs where I share the Gospel, and these are broadcast on the State Radio Station in Krasnoyarsk. Three other local pastors join me in this labor. Last Christmas, we decided to invite people to come to our Christmas services and about 30 people responded! This does not seem like a large number, but we were thankful for each one, and that we were able to share the Gospel. Several expressed their desire to learn more about the Lord and wanted to visit our church again!

Please keep praying for our ministry in Mongolia. We have Bible schools going in two cities, with about 20 students in each one. They want to learn God's Word on a deeper level. Pray also for the Mongolian children's workers we are training and discipling. They have grown so much in the Lord, and even prepared their own program to reach children for Christ. We thank the Lord for you and your part in our ministry!

Celebrating Freedom from Drugs!

In Russia's Vladimir region, SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Ivan Petrash has been not only evangelizing in his area, but also overseeing church-based drug rehabilitation ministry. After a very hard, discouraging period, Ivan thought they had no choice but to close the center, but the Lord opened Ivan's heart to another plan . . .

Things were so difficult this past May. It seemed like we could accomplish nothing and we were ready to shut the rehab center down. But in June, we decided to invite all

the people who had remained faithful to the Lord after their rehab for a special five-year anniversary/jubilee celebration. We called all those who had repented and been baptized. To our joy, many men and four families came together. They came forward



Ivan's church is prayerfully thankful for the impact of their drug rehab ministry.

at the end of the service. We prayed and thanked God for these who serve the Lord now. We showed a video that reviewed the past five years, and touched on some who had returned to their old ways of life. Some of them ended up in prison and died. Those whom the Lord rescued watched and remembered, realizing that it could have happened to them. The Lord touched all our hearts as we watched the beginning of the center, the construction work, the ministry trips, and baptisms. God comforted us, and I wanted to ask Him to forgive me for having doubts. I was renewed in my desire to carry on the ministry. The former residents of the

center said that we needed to do this more often, and that they felt like they had come home—meaning our church. We thank the Lord for this, and we thank all of you!



These couples went through Bible-based drug rehab and now follow the Lord!



Continued from page 2

believers who were secretly listening to hand-write Bible verses to feed hungry souls the Bread of Life. Thousands of men and women received Bible training over the air and by correspondence initiatives. With the Lord Jesus as her Champion, His church overcame all the opposition that evil men could throw their way.

Beginning in 1989, the Lord dramatically opened up a season of freedom in Russia and her neighboring countries. SGA partners made a huge difference. Seminaries and Bible institutes were established and extensive church-based training has been conducted.

Hundreds of Russian-speaking missionary pastors are being sponsored and establishing churches to reach their regions with the Gospel. Bibles and doctrinally sound Christian books are being distributed. Fruitful children's ministries such as summer camps, *Orphans Reborn*, and *Immanuel's Child* at



Evangelical churches across Russia may be facing renewed opposition soon. Please keep them in prayer!



Reaching the next generation for Christ is a vitally important priority for the churches SGA serves across the CIS.

Christmas are taking place.

And now, there is again growing opposition. This new law in Russia is just the beginning. But it is not the end.

The Gospel is simply the most wonderful Good News ever heard. As the Apostle Paul describes it . . . *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures* (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). All members of Christ's Church are commanded by Him to preach the Gospel and make disciples everywhere until He returns. His command has not been rescinded. For the sake of obedience to our Savior, Lord, and King, and for the sake of the eternal destiny of the people of Russia, **we can never stop preaching the Gospel!**

Will you—our partners in ministry—keep standing with us in these days of challenge? Please help us do all that we can before it is too late. Time for Russia is clearly running out.

CIS in the News

Celebrating the Reformation in Ukraine

This past spring, Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko made an announcement that in other times would have been headline news around the world. Yet for the most part, it garnered little attention. Speaking at a meeting with heads of churches and religious organizations in Ukraine, Mr. Poroshenko said that in 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation would be observed in the country, and with significant visibility. *"Protestant communities in Ukraine have a long and rich history. Your activity deserves*

respect. I hope we will organize celebrations of this date at the highest level. Of course, it should be celebrated at the state level in the European context as well.

This marvelous news is a continuation of the remarkable advance of the Gospel through evangelical churches in Ukraine and to the dismay of the Orthodox Church leaders. And it is another hallmark of how Bible-believing Christians have been increasingly involved in leading a nation that until 1991 was still part of the atheistic communist Soviet Union.

How You Can Help

One of our God and Father's eternal, divine attributes is omniscience. Absolutely nothing can—or ever will—take Him by surprise. He assures us through the Prophet Isaiah that His purpose will be accomplished (Isaiah 46:10), and it cannot be thwarted by any scheme of man, no matter how things might look on the surface. Despite these challenging days, we keep on working His works and spreading the Gospel. Through your partnership, you are helping the Bible-preaching churches we serve with the resources they need for evangelism, church-planting, training, provision of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, and so much more. Together, we are . . . *equipping the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ* (Ephesians 4:12). Please keep praying for us, and thank you so much!



**Subscribe to
SGA's New
Electronic
Publications!**

**Just go to our
website
www.sga.org**

Canadian Connection

By Bill Ball

In our Bibles, we have a book with 42 chapters dedicated to a man named Job. He lives a life of tragedy to triumph, teaching us that God is supreme. Every one of us can relate to many of life's challenges which he faced. Job's conclusion to God reads as follows:

I know that you can do all things, no plan of Yours will be thwarted . . . Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know (Job 42:2,3).

While we may not understand why God allows certain events to transpire, or leaders to exercise certain power that harms humanity, we must trust Him. He knows best and desires a love relationship through His Son, Jesus Christ. Our task is to commit our journey called life to His care and keeping.

We do life together with fellow believers, as our partners in the CIS. They depend on us to support them in the challenges and "cherished moments". Many use the upcoming Christmas season as times of amazing outreach. A typical

missionary pastor will be found in orphanages, seniors' homes, markets, schools or hospitals, and wherever God would open a door.



A Seniors' Home being built by a church with a burden.

Your part is critical—to pray and provide—for which we are thankful. Every missionary pastor is asked to send a quarterly report and when they do so, it is always expressing thanks for faithful partners. Let's carry the load together even when we don't understand how God is at work.



InSight is published to report religious news about Russia, the rest of the CIS and the ministries of:

Slavic Gospel Association
— Canada
55 Fleming Drive, Suite 26
Cambridge, ON N1T 2A9
www.sgacanada.ca
E-mail: info@sgacanada.ca
Phone: 519-621-3553
Fax: 519-621-7571

To start, cancel or change the mailing address on your subscription to *InSight*, please send your name, your old address, and your new address to the address listed above. Please allow six to eight weeks for the fulfillment of your request.

International Offices

Loves Park, USA
Noble Park, Australia
Eastbourne, England
North Shore, New Zealand

Canadian Board of Directors

Dr. Stephen Code, Chairman
Ivan Barber, Vice Chairman
Andrew Hall, Secretary/
Treasurer
Dan Ciona
John C. Goetze
Slavik Kutsiuruba
Rod Wilkinson
Dr. Robert W. Provost

SGA is a member of:



Evangelical Council for
Financial Accountability