



SERVING CHURCHES — REACHING RUSSIA

MAY 2015

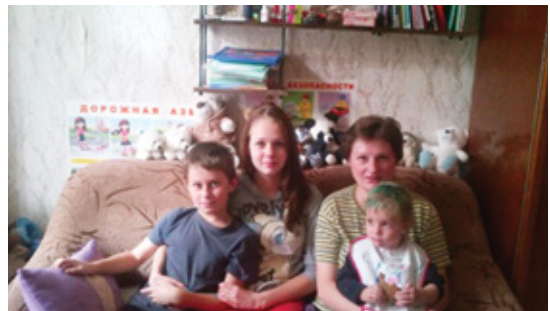
Bringing Christ to Broken Hearts and Families

The Lord protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow, but He thwarts the way of the wicked (Psalm 146:9).

New churches are being planted. Orphan children, the widowed, and the elderly are being reached. Pastors and church workers visit prisons and hospitals. They pray for God to open hearts, then share the Gospel, and men, women, and children are gloriously saved.

Your prayers and faithful support help SGA-sponsored missionary pastors and their congregations carry out their ministries in so many ways. Not long ago, we received a moving report from Piotr Podrez, director of SGA's Regional Ministry Center in Minsk, Belarus. One family in particular has known much heartache, and the church has been helping the young mother in her great time of need . . .

A young couple came to my Bible study group 11 years ago. Their names were Alexander and Oksana. They were living with Oksana's mother in her apartment. Oksana's



Oksana and her family are finding great comfort in the love of Christ.

mother was against our Bible study group and didn't want either Alexander or Oksana to come to the church. Oksana yielded to her mother's opinion and abandoned the church, although Alexander continued on for a while. Yet soon he fell into temptation and abandoned his family. Then Oksana's mother passed away. I continued to reach out to her, inviting her to the church. My wife also visited Oksana at her home.

What a change the Lord has brought about! The "ice has melted" and now

her older children are attending activities at the church and her son attends Sunday school. Oksana has also begun to attend the church with her son. We are doing all that we can to help and support her both financially and spiritually.

Piotr says as Oksana attends worship and occasionally Bible studies, she is constantly praying for her estranged husband Alexander, asking the Lord to save him and bring him to the church—and back to his family.

Reaching the Elderly with Christ's Love and Compassion

SGA-sponsored missionary pastors are reaching out to the widowed, as well as to other elderly women and men who have deep needs. Pastor Alexander is reaching several in the Grodno region, while Pastor Nikolai is reaching others living in the Brest region near the Polish border. We also recently received the report of a 77-year-old widow named Taisiya, who came to the Lord out of much personal heartache . . .

Taisiya was married, but after six

years, her husband not only deserted her but also took their son. While Taisiya herself was not yet a believer she attended church. Her sisters were members of the church, and her husband (with the help of the authorities) used the church as a reason to take her son from her. They were afraid that Taisiya would teach her son religion. At that time under communism, it was easy to take a mother's rights and award custody to the father. All of her efforts to get her son back were in vain. Since then, she has lived alone.

At age 60 Taisiya finally came to faith in Christ. But she is very small, her health is poor, and she requires very expensive medicine. Faithful SGA partners like you are making it possible for Taisiya to obtain the medicine that she needs.

We praise God for His grace and mercy, and may He bless all of you who support missionary pastors across Russia and her neighboring countries. Please continue to pray for these faithful men and their churches, and for those who are hearing the Gospel through their tireless labors.



SGA-sponsored missionary pastors across the CIS minister in hospitals, children's homes, schools, on the street, and any other venue where God has granted them opportunity. The needs are so great!

Light Shines out of Darkness

Valery Ryabkov
SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in
Ukraine

Since late 2013 and carrying over into this year, the political and military conflict in eastern Ukraine has continued to cause much concern. Yet despite the conflict, the faithful missionary pastors sponsored through SGA carry on with their ministries and are bearing much fruit for the glory of the Lord. Their testimony is . . . *For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).*

Valery Ryabkov labors in western Ukraine near Ivankov, and God has richly blessed his outreaches to children and youth. He wrote



The Lord's blessing was evident at the children's camp held by Valery's church.

to share several events, beginning with a children's camp last summer . . .

We praise God for providing everything that we required to hold the camp. Three local churches came together for it, and more than 70 children attended it! We had Bible lessons, crafts, treats and games—even a trampoline. After

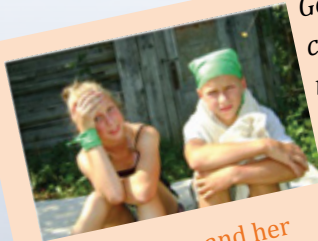
it was over, we had 42 children come to the first children's club in the fall. Praise God! Please join us in praying for the children and the parents, asking the Lord to bring them to faith.

The youth ministry is growing too. For their spiritual growth, I hold a special Bible lesson series called "The Foundations of Faith." In summer, we have more youth participating but in fall and winter, many are busy with their school studies. It is more difficult to work with adults and the parents. They often consider themselves believers and it is very difficult to convince them of their need for repentance and personal trust in Christ as their Savior. We pray and are patiently waiting for God to open their hearts!

Valery's brief report is a great snapshot of the ministry that takes place throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and even in Israel. As do all our missionary pastors, Valery expressed deep concern for his brothers and sisters in the churches of eastern Ukraine where the conflict has raged. Valery has other family members living there, including a brother and sister. He is thankful for your prayers, and for the support of SGA partners who help make his ministry possible.

Please join us in praying for Valery, and for many more supporters to help send additional missionary pastors to regions unreached with the Gospel.

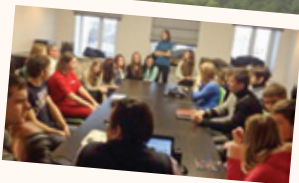
Every week, SGA receives many reports from missionary pastors serving across Russia and her neighboring countries—far more reports than we could ever put into one newsletter! We want you to be blessed and encouraged by the following glimpses into some of their fruitful ministries. As our Lord Jesus proclaimed . . . *My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples* (John 15:8).



Miroslava and her brother

God has blessed us and our first children's camp brought about fruit! A young woman named Miroslava has begun attending our worship services. She is 16 years old, and God touched her heart while she was at our Christian camp. She lives in a village some distance outside of Vitebsk, and she receives much pressure from her peers. We praise God that He has opened her eyes and she can see the difference in our lives. Please pray for Miroslava, , ask the Lord to fill her heart with love for Him. May He be glorified!

—Pastor Boris, Belarus



Studying English and hearing the Gospel.

Throughout the winter and spring, we continued to work with unsaved students in the framework of an English club led by our church in Kaluga. We have weekly meetings on Sunday in a rented cafeteria. New people are always coming and we know many people now. We also come together for Bible study on Fridays (in Russian) and we rent a place for those meetings as well. One young girl has come to faith in the Lord through the English club and will soon be baptized!

—Pastor Sergei, Russia



Immanuel's Child

We praise and thank the Lord for yet another fruitful *Immanuel's Child* Christmas ministry season. Your prayers and generous support helped evangelical churches across the CIS lift high the name of Jesus and His great salvation—the true meaning of Christmas. Rejoice at what He has done in the lives of so many!

- 313 Churches in 10 CIS Countries and in Israel
- 13,941 Children Reached with the Gospel
- 9,307 Children from Unbelieving Families
- 7,859 Adults Reached, 463 Now Attending Church
- 842 Children Began Attending Sunday School
- 559 Children Repented and Trusted in Christ



Ukraine: Crisis Update and Ongoing Ministry

International efforts have been ongoing to settle the Ukraine crisis, but despite what is happening on the political front, the evangelical churches SGA serves are focused on peace and reconciliation through the Gospel of Christ. SGA partners are continuing to help through the Crisis Evangelism Fund, providing Scripture and evangelistic literature in addition to tons of food and other aid for needy and



This family in eastern Ukraine was one of many in the conflict zones receiving food, evangelistic literature, and other aid through SGA's Crisis Evangelism Fund.

refugee families. The following is a brief update from SGA-sponsored missionary pastors there.

We have several evangelistic projects in Ukraine's Turbivka region near Kiev. Not only does our congregation keep visiting unbelieving families once each week, we also have organized special Prayer Walks or Marathons in the villages of the district. These typically last for 2-4 hours, and they are dedicated to praying for peaceful resolution to the

conflict in our country. We pray that the bloodshed and killing will end! We have also been blessed to be able to evangelize in schools and kindergartens, by showing Christian films and giving gifts to children in several villages. The Lord is working in the hearts of the adults as well. In the past year, a single mother named Anya in Turbivka repented and gave her heart to Christ. It is the result of the work of God in her heart through our witness. We are so grateful to you for your prayers and your financial support of our ministry!

—Pastor Vasily

We held three summer camps in Lypki and Kropyvna attended by nearly 90 children and teenagers. The camps were a success and the parents were thankful. But most importantly, four churches in our region come together every Sunday to pray for peace and calm in our country. Attendance ranges from 48 to 220 people. And we do more than pray—through our church we collect food and distribute it in the conflict zones.

Our congregation is also hosting 19 refugee families from Lugansk. May the Lord shed His abundant blessings upon you for making it possible!

—Pastor Vladimir



The Impact of the Ruble's Collapse in Russia

As 2014 came to a close, the Russian people were stunned by the sudden decline of the ruble, which lost about half of its value. It was the worst financial crisis since the country defaulted on its domestic debt in 1998. There were numerous factors that experts said factored into the crash, including Western sanctions imposed over Russia's annexation of Crimea and support for separatists in eastern Ukraine. Despite the crisis, a series of Associated Press polls showed that a large

majority of the Russian people continue to back President Vladimir Putin—as high as 84 percent in some cases.

The Russian people have a history of enduring significant hardship and displaying great unity when they perceive their country is threatened. Financial media also noted that such crises have domino effects that impact other nations with financial interests in Europe. There are also negative impacts on ministry, as our brothers and sisters in the evangelical churches we serve share in the impacts of economic downturns. Please pray with us for the situation to stabilize, and that God will provide the ongoing resources needed for fruitful advance of the Gospel.

How You Can Help

We are so thankful to God for the amazing opportunity to serve Bible-preaching churches across Russia and her neighboring countries—especially the faithful, dedicated missionary pastors laboring in unreached regions. They have joyfully committed their lives for the sake of the Gospel, but they lack resources. SGA wants to encourage their hearts and provide what they need to reach their people for Christ.

Your prayers and faithful giving accomplish this and so much more. You help provide Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, Bible training, compassion ministry, orphan outreach, summer camps, and other children's ministries. Please consider how you can help advance the kingdom of the Lord Jesus across the CIS.



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Canadian Connection

by Allan Vincent

... what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).

We thank God both for faithful missionary pastors and dedicated ministry partners like you. The Lord is wonderfully using your combined efforts for the extension of His kingdom and the building of His Church.

The Apostle Paul reminded Timothy, his son in the faith, that **faithfulness involves teaching those who were able to teach others also.** Like Paul, Timothy's limited time, resources, and energy needed to be invested in those would wisely reinvest ministry resources.

While our missionary pastors are very faithful and fruitful in the ways that they reproduce themselves in those who also reproduce, there are a couple of brothers who excel at this. One is **Vasily Kozorezov,**



the regional pastor of the Nizhny Novgorod region, who leads the growing mother church in the city of Nizhny Novgorod, 500 km east of Moscow. Among Vasily's and Sveta's 11 children, who are all effectively serving the Lord, three of his sons are planting churches.

Thousands of kilometers to southwest, **in the Volyn region of northwestern Ukraine, Pastor Vladimir Savich also not only ministers effectively,** but also tirelessly prepares another generation of pastors and church leaders. Those future pastors/leaders include Vladimir's and Nadya's three sons, Sasha, Slavik, and Andrei, who was recently ordained.

Beyond their primary pastoral ministries, Vladimir and his sons each have other fruitful ministries where they are reproducing themselves. Vladimir teaches at the Volyn Regional Bible College. Sasha heads up the pastoral department at Ukraine Baptist Theological Seminary in Lviv, Ukraine. Slavik took some brothers on a ministry trip to Turkey where they distributed the Word of God and witnessed to Muslim people about Jesus Christ. Interestingly enough, **Russian and Ukrainian believers can usually freely travel without visas and do missionary work in Central Asia, as well as in countries such as North Korea and China.** Our Lord continues to do exceedingly abundantly more than we can ask or think.

Vasily's and Vladimir's fruitful ministries are only possible because of faithful prayer and financial partners like you. Those whom Vasily and Vladimir are training are also worthy of your support. Please consider praying for and supporting a national pastor. **Is there a place in your heart and your fridge for national pastor?**



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