

Excited and Thankful to Serve Christ

My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all my good pleasure (Isaiah 46:10).

Very often when hearing the reports and testimonies of SGA-sponsored missionary pastors, they will speak of working in “God’s vineyard” or “God’s harvest field.” The imagery really comes into focus when you get outside large cities like Moscow, Kiev, or Minsk, and see the faithful Gospel ministry taking place in the small villages that dot the landscape. But even with more than 330 faithful men sharing the Gospel and planting new churches, it’s only a drop in the bucket compared to the vast harvest waiting in thousands of unreached towns and villages. That’s what makes the support of SGA partners like you so vitally important.

Pastor Pavel Barsukov serves in the Russian region of Krasnoyarsk. Between small group ministry and summer camps, God is blessing and his church is growing . . .

As we began last year, we had seven small groups but when we started up again in the fall, the number had grown to 11. We blessed the

new leaders for these groups, and organized groups especially for youth. This was of great importance



Youth ministry is having a profound impact on Pavel’s growing church!

because many new people have come to the church as a result of our camp ministry, which reached the youth. It is important not to lose them!

Pavel’s church is not only working hard to evangelize their own area, but they’re also committed to reaching the neighboring nation of Mongolia. In the fall, Pavel and two other pastors traveled there to lead Bible schools. He reports that Mongolian Christians have a real hunger to study God’s Word, and their questions show

their love of God and the Bible. Previously, they had very little Bible training.

In Belarus, Pastor Yuri Romanchik also has a very fruitful children's ministry beginning with Sunday school . . .

We always consider different ways to fill our Sunday school with kids. Since September, there are 32 new children coming. We had organized a



Yuri's church focuses on reaching children with the Gospel, and the Lord is drawing many to Himself.

special thanksgiving day celebration and went to town to gather them. A total of 100 children were there for the event and for the majority, it was their first time in church. And a number of them repented and came to faith in Christ. We restored small Bible study groups with five new people joining, and I personally visited 12 families to share the Gospel and encourage their hearts. I ask you to keep praying that the Lord will continue to use us in His work.

That is how the Lord is building His church—one soul at a time. The harvest is waiting to be gathered and many more workers are needed. Please prayerfully consider how you can help a faithful missionary pastor and his family to reach a Russian village for Christ.



Sunday school singing during worship service at Yuri's church



Foster Care: The Wave of the Future in Belarus?

Pastor Pavel
Orphans Reborn, Grodno Region

It is becoming more difficult to visit orphanages in Belarus because of a recent government decision to move toward foster care. As a result, we can lose our access to the orphanages. With that in mind, we pray for ongoing orphan ministry in our church, and encourage our families to take in orphan children. We are so thankful for the results, as several families stepped forward with their desire to do so. Our family wants to take in orphans as well, and we pray for God's wisdom and provision in building a new home that will accommodate this.

Our greatest joy is to see the children at our Sunday church service and youth meetings. Along with their peers, they listen to sermons, sing songs, and build relationships. Sasha just turned 18, and he is very happy because this means he can attend the church without any hindrance. He was in our summer camp, and after the camp he kept in touch with a Christian family. The family takes care of horses, so now Sasha wants to enter college to learn animal husbandry and help the family take care of their horses. The college is located in the area where Sasha's foster family lives.



Sasha came to Christ through summer camp, which SGA partners helped support.

We are also thankful for the orphan graduates who continue to gather together for Bible study with our church families. They study the Bible verse by verse, and spend quality time with their foster families. They learn good family lessons and can apply them in their lives, sharing their experiences and hearing helpful counsel.

Please continue to pray and support our *Orphans Reborn* ministry. Pray also for the church families who want to begin foster care with orphans. And please pray for Alexandra, one of the orphan youth who lost her biological mother, and is grieving.

Bible Training and Faithful Ministry in the CIS

Keenan Beere
SGA Bible Training Administrator

A key highlight in my recent teaching trip was the opportunity to spend time with Vlad, an SGA missionary pastor in Azerbaijan. He has suffered from cerebral palsy since birth. Because of his disability, he has a lot of difficulty walking and talking. He and his wife had once been in Ukraine's Lugansk region, but they had to flee their home due to the war. It was quite a change for this couple, who had moved from a country that generally accepted Christians to a Muslim country where Christians can face great difficulties. Vlad regularly preaches at the main church in the Azeri capital of Baku, and often leads the service, though Ilya Zenchenko is the senior pastor of the church. Vlad conducts various Bible studies through the week with both believers and unbelievers. He is also discipling two young men who are ministering to university students in Baku.

Vlad and his wife have suffered more than most of us. I asked them what motivates them to keep going, and Vlad quoted John 6:68 . . . *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.* He added that they have seen the Lord's faithfulness and that the Lord is giving them many more ministry opportunities in Baku than they ever had in Lugansk. Life is still difficult for them, but this brother was a true testimony to me of a perseverant faith.



Keenan (left) and
Vlad (right)



Along with the “stan” nations of Central Asia, Azerbaijan has a dominant Muslim population

First Fruits of Summer Camp

Pastor Nikolai in Belarus

Our church prayed in advance of this camp season, and God helped us through you, dear brothers and sisters. This year, 93 percent of the children at the camp were from unbelieving homes, and mainly from large, needy families. We had 148 children in total, and of that number, 46 children prayed to repent and trust in Christ as their Savior!

Our town is small and I have been getting many good reports about our church and the camp. Parents are telling us they notice the changes in their children, including 12-year-old Oleg who stopped smoking and began to attend the Sunday school. Oleg's mother is now also coming to the church. Here are some other testimonies:

My parents don't believe in God. When I came to the camp, it was all new to me and interesting. The children stood up for prayer and I didn't want to stand up, but out of respect for the church, I did. At the last day of the camp, my friend Vasya and I prayed the prayer of repentance. During this camp, I began to rethink my life and I am happy to find Jesus Christ! (Nikolai —age 12)

Thank you for the camp! I am a mother of six children and we lack money for food. My two children, Sveta and Maksim, were in the camp. The food was very delicious and my children learned about God. And they have obviously changed. Sveta received the book called Faith to Grow On and Maksim received The Bible Explorer. My children have begun to help me after the camp. They have begun to pray to God and ask me to attend the church with them and I cannot say no! We decided to attend worship on Sunday. Thank you for taking my children to the camp! (Name withheld)

On behalf of my church, let me express to you our heartfelt gratitude for your help to hold the summer camp. May God bless you and reward you abundantly!





Laboring as One for the Gospel

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ . . . standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel (Philippians 1:27).

Pastor Mikhail
Donetsk Region

In eastern Ukraine, fighting between separatists and government forces continues despite several attempts at peace negotiations. The danger to thousands of families is very real and heartbreaking. Those who have not fled the area have a very difficult time putting food on the table. And worse—they live in constant fear of mortar shells or bullets ripping into their homes.

It is into this dangerous mission field that SGA-sponsored missionary pastors are stepping, and distributing the humanitarian aid our partners help provide through the Crisis Evangelism Fund. As Pastor Mikhail writes from the Donetsk region, the churches are coming together to make a difference for Christ by reaching out to as many families as possible . . .

People are getting saved and receiving the Lord. More and more people are now in

situations where they are willing to accept financial help and to hear the Word of God. For the brothers and sisters in our churches, it's the best way for one-on-one witnessing.

In Yenakievo, members from two local churches are visiting several families.

“This ministry is bringing forth fruit. People receive the Lord and are being saved.”

The Baburin family has especially suffered tremendously from the war, and this has made them open to hearing the Word of God—they had actually been coming to listen before we began aid distribution, but now are thankful to receive the help. In yet another family being visited, the children attend Sunday school and the Christian Club for children. Their mother has already attended the worship service and is already more open to believers and ready to listen to the Word.

Please pray for the safety of the church teams as they visit and minister to those whose lives have been shattered by the war, and for God's continued provision.

CIS in the News



Photo by Roberta Sorge on Unsplash

Stunning Number of Alcohol Deaths in Irkutsk

Within the past year, at least 33 residents of Russia's Irkutsk region were reported to have died after drinking scented bath oil despite warnings against swallowing it. Another 16 people were hospitalized. Russian investigators said that this is one of the deadliest cases of its kind in years. The victims were apparently in a desperate search for an alcoholic high. Use of counterfeit alcohol is rampant in some

parts of Russia, with ongoing economic struggles putting more people below the poverty line. All the victims were poor residents of Irkutsk.

Our hearts break over tragedies like this, and we are thankful to the Lord for the opportunity to support evangelical churches that operate Bible-based drug and alcohol rehab centers as part of their ministries. Please pray with us for additional resources to reach substance abuse victims for Christ.

How You Can Help

. . . useful to the Master, prepared for every good work (2 Timothy 2:21).

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We never cease to be amazed and thankful for what SGA-sponsored missionary pastors accomplish despite their meager resources. It is a blessing and privilege to serve them in the cause of Christ. In addition to sponsoring missionary pastors, your gifts help so much more. Through SGA, you support Bible training, missionary pastors, provision of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, and many other resources to advance the Gospel. Please pray about how you can help today!



Canadian Connection

By Bill Ball

In our 70th anniversary as a mission here in Canada, we celebrate God's sustaining grace in an ever-changing world. We continue to partner with fellow believers in the Russian-speaking world of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Many wonderful relationships have developed across the ocean allowing God's people the experience of serving together.

Yes, we are involved in Bible translation, distribution, and training. Yes, we deal with Crisis Evangelism, Compassion Ministry, *Immanuel's Child* at Christmas, camp ministry in the summer, transitional homes, *Orphans Reborn*, and various rehabilitation programs. However, almost all of this takes place through the local church, which is led by a missionary pastor.

The support of these special men

is key to much of what we find ourselves involved with. We are so appreciative for your gifts that allow these men and their families to serve the Lord. Most sacrifice tremendously and trust God for their daily needs. Some have small part time jobs but their desire is to do the work of the ministry.

We connect people here in Canada with these chosen families in the CIS countries. Reports are provided quarterly, expressing both the progress and challenges. Prayer requests are shared with expectation of intercessory prayer being brought to the presence of God.

These lifelines are reaching thousands with the Gospel each and every month. Your link in this chain is vital so that the church may be built up and strengthened for the glory of God.



Pastor Mikhail Pimonenko, Ukraine



Pastor Vlad Treskin (middle right),
Russia's youth ministry leader.



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