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SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

As You Help Churches Prepare for Bible Camps, the Fruit of Last Summer Gives Hope!

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ◆ Snapshots of how Summer Bible Camps can transform lives of children
- ◆ PRAISE REPORT: *Immanuel's Child* numbers are in—and you will rejoice!
- ◆ Bible Camps Transform Former Atheist Camps into Havens of Salvation

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit . . . (MATTHEW 28:19)

Children Trust Christ and Start Attending Church!

Your Support for Summer Bible Camps Transforms Children Now—and Forever

Sergei Tarasov
Senior Pastor for the Orel Region

Yelena Nikonorkina
Co-Coordinator of “The Path” Camp in Orel, Russia



Summers are always a good time, and our last summer camp season was no exception. The Lord blessed us to hold a camp that we called “The Path.” In all, 62 children participated, with **18 being from unbelieving families and 14 were orphans or adopted into foster families.**

There were seven who repented and trusted in Christ, 20 who want to come to our Sunday school, and 10 from the older senior group who want to begin coming to church! We give glory to God for this opportunity to serve Him and to share the Gospel with children.

We received many responses and thank you notes, and here are a few of them . . .

We were together for nine days and together we glorified God! Thank you to our group leaders who exhorted us. If God wills, I will try to come to the camp again! – Elizabeth

I have been to many camps. I remember them still in a way, but this one made me feel many emotions—all positive! . . . I strengthened my relationship with my Father God. I came to know much about Him and could glorify Him.
– Mirra

Friends, thank you so much for the joy, which you gave to the children. All of us want to come back to the camp. Many even cried at home because it was over for the year!
– Natasha

Besides the camps, we had **six children’s outreach playgrounds that were visited by 200-250 children along with many adults.** There was a trampoline and bouncy castle slide, games, relay races, and crafts. **But the most important thing of all was that the children heard the Gospel through the puppet theater and the Bible lessons.** Once again, we are thankful to SGA partners who prayed for us and gave funds. May the Lord bless you abundantly! ♦



PRAISE REPORT!

Immanuel's Child 2019-2020

*You Helped Bring Salvation and Growth to
Thousands of Children*



Please join us in praise and thanksgiving to God for His gracious provision in this year's ***Immanuel's Child Christmas ministries***. Through your prayers and faithful support, the evangelical churches SGA serves were able to reach more children with the Gospel than ever before! Reports are ***continuing to come in***, but we are rejoicing at what the Lord has done! The final numbers include these:

Children Reached	37,349
Adults Reached	14,985
Churches Participating	570
Children from Unsaved Families	19,496
Children Repenting	1,057
Adults Repenting	278
Children Attending Sunday School	1,646
Adults Attending Church	838

Last year, 30,114 children were reached through *Immanuel's Child*, and **your faithfulness helped ensure such a wonderful increase this year**. Please join us in praying for the children and their families. May the Lord strengthen those who believed, and that He will bring to repentance those who heard the Gospel but have not yet trusted in Him. ♦



God Uses Your Help to Reach Disabled Children in Belarus

Physically Challenged Children Learn of God's Love!

Valery Okhrimuk

SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Belarus



Group photo at the summer camp.

Summer camp ministries across Russia and her neighboring countries are found with many variations.

Some are the traditional summer children's camp. Young boys and girls head to an actual campsite for week-long sessions. In other regions, churches must hold the camps discreetly in secret locations or in their church buildings as day camps because of opposition in their countries to evangelical ministries. Still others hold Vacation Bible School-type outreaches in their communities, which are very popular in the summer.

In Belarus, Pastor Valery's church holds a VBS ministry in the Brest region near the Polish border. He wrote to express his thanks to SGA partners for their help in last summer's fruitful ministry to children with physical challenges and other needy families . . .

*Our Vacation Bible School camp took place at a church in Pruzhany. We ministered to **teenagers with physical challenges and neighborhood children** who attend our Sunday school. **They all learned of God's love, and we could see the changes in their behavior.** At first, the children treated each other with no respect, but at the end of the camp they had changed and it was a blessing to see positive changes in their lives!*

Many people cannot afford for their children to go to government camps or other places for recreation.





The reasons vary from poverty to alcoholism. Our camp is free of charge and we are able to take the children from these families and show them the love of Jesus. The children and teenagers enjoyed the camp and received prizes and fruit in the VBS.

*Lord willing, we plan to continue working with children in Pruzhany and nearby areas. God helps us in the ministry not to lose heart and continue to serve Him. **We are faced with oppression in some areas but we don't lose heart—we are in need of your prayers and continued financial help.** May our God bless you for your sacrificial hearts and meet all of your needs.*

Tatyana, director of a local center for handicapped children, sent this message: "With all of my heart, I thank you for the camp for our children. **They wait for the camp in advance and**



always ask about it. The camp is the best place for the children as they feel the love and care of those who run it. We, the staff of the center, are very thankful to you for your help and care of the children."

Please pray for the children at this special camp as they joyously return this summer! ♦

Thank You from Two "Pavels" in the Belarus Camp:

"I enjoy the camp and liked everything. I learned to treat handicapped children in a kind manner. I learned about Jesus and His sympathy to sinners and bad people. And I asked God to help me and teach me to treat handicapped children with respect and be friendly with them."

– Pavel, age 9



Pavel (Right Testimony)

"I like the camp. I like to be in the camp and pray with pastor for my family, and especially about my father who abused my mother physically and was addicted to alcohol. My father and mother are divorced."

– Pavel, a boy with Down's Syndrome

A City Prayer Breakfast—and Fruitful Bible Camps!

War-Torn Ukrainian Town Responds to Christian Camps for Children and Families

Sergei Yakimenko

SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Kanev, Ukraine

Greetings from the Second Kanev Church and the congregation in Bobritsa! I am happy to share with you some of the events in the life of our church over the past few months. Your sacrifice and prayers for our ministry have supported us in it all!

Last summer in Kanev, I participated in the first-ever prayer breakfast, which **brought together politicians, educators, cultural representatives, and clergy** from various denominations. The theme was “Church and Society,” and we discussed **the importance of spiritual matters and their impact in all areas of life**. Natalya Matinova, the deputy mayor of Kanev, called for churches to create an



advisory body made up of representatives of religious communities, which will coordinate cooperation and future prayer breakfasts.

It was a busy summer for ministry. We conducted **children's**



Children's camp.

camps throughout July. These are traditionally held in conjunction with local public schools in Bobritsa, Gryshchensy, and Potaptsy. A total of **200 children participated** with one camp session in the morning, and another in the afternoon.

Then at the end of the month and into August, our church held a **family camp in the forest**. I was responsible for preparing the theme and **seminars on resolving family conflicts, parenting, financial discipline**, and other areas. There are unhealthy trends in Ukraine that make this kind of event necessary. **So many are living together out of wedlock, getting divorces, gender politics, and so many things that destroy the traditional family**. We wanted to gather people together and provide them with a biblical view of the family. Youth and children had their own programs as well, including contests and games.

Finally, we were able to hold **monthly Coffee House ministry for the youth of our region, including teenagers from our church**. God is extending His grace in Ukraine, and we give Him glory and thanks for this. We are also thankful to you for your support in God's harvest field! ♦



(Top) Prayer breakfast. (Above) Family camp in the forest.

CIS IN THE NEWS

U.S. Secretary of State Launches *International Freedom Alliance*

In early February, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the launch of the *International Freedom Alliance* at an inaugural dinner in Washington D.C. **The Alliance's stated purpose is to reduce religious persecution across the globe.** To date, 27 countries have joined the *Alliance*. In his remarks, Mr. Pompeo hailed "like-minded partners who treasure, and fight for, international religious freedom for every human being. Together, we say that freedom of religion or belief is not a Western ideal, but truly the bedrock of societies."

Besides the U.S. and Poland, the other

founding members are: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Gambia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Togo, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. **It is notable how many former Soviet nations are founder members, as well as several Eastern European countries that were part of the communist Warsaw Pact.** Pray with us that this Alliance will indeed be able to advance freedom of religion around the world. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

For the evangelical churches SGA serves across Russia and her neighboring countries, ministry to children is one of their most vitally important outreaches. **Should the Lord tarry in His coming, the children won to saving faith in**



Christ today are the building blocks of tomorrow's church. Our Lord commanded . . . do not hinder them from coming to Me

(Matthew 19:14). And as we have seen repeatedly in **summer camp outreaches, Orphans Reborn, and Immanuel's Child**, children **eagerly come** to hear of the One who loves them so. Your faithful, ongoing prayers and support help us do this, along with Bible training, Compassion Ministry, Sunday school outreach, provision of Russian-language Bibles and Christian books—and so much more. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Canadian Connection

While doing a quick search for Canadian summer camps, I discovered that there were 16,200,000 sites about camps on the web. We have an endless variety of camp experiences including a camp for grandparents and grandchildren to attend together – no parents allowed!

A Christian camp experience changed my entire life trajectory. I was a city boy always looking for outdoor adventure away from a concrete jungle. Not only did I receive what I longed for, but God also found me and captured my heart for eternity. My commitment to camp ministry is 100%.



As you read through this Good News Report with a camp focus, please consider how many lives can be changed forever. This one avenue of ministry has the potential to change an entire generation for Christ and the Gospel.

In most locations, children and teens are transplanted from a bleak existence to a different environment filled with fun, safety, security, hope, great memories, and so much more. The message of salvation through a loving God is presented, providing a purpose for living, the meaning of life itself, and instilling the desire to live life to its fullest.

For a fraction of the cost we must pay in Canada, children all across the former Soviet Union have the time of their lives with your donation. On average we can send a child to camp for approximately \$50.00 a week. Will you invest in a child's life this summer? It may be the only time they will hear that God loves them and has a wonderful plan for their life. Camp is much simpler than most Canadian experiences, however, the outward components are not as important as lives that are changed on the inside through the Holy Spirit.

One of my 'bucket list' items is to travel one summer and participate in camp with our brothers overseas. In particular, one missionary pastor does river rafting for several weeks traveling down a river, even sleeping on a large craft. Anyone else interested in such an experience?



Bill Ball
Executive Director, SGA/Canada

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