



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

# Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

## Compassion Ministry Opens Hearts as 2022 Begins!

### INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ◆ Addiction is no match for the Word of God and the love of Christians . . .
- ◆ An old apartment becomes a center of life-change in the hands of Christ.
- ◆ Your gifts allow SGA-sponsored ministers to reach young moms in crisis.

*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)*



# Jesus Uses Your Support to Give Freedom from Addiction

*Bible college is one path for former addicts as ministry expands!*

Max G.

SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in the Republic of Georgia

**W**e salute you, our dear friends. Thank you very much for your support and prayers. We continue to serve God as missionaries in the **Republic of Georgia**. We are carrying out rehabilitation ministry and have been **bringing God's Word to those addicted to drugs, alcohol, and gambling, as well as ministry to the homeless** for almost two years.

From the very beginning of our arrival in Georgia in 2019 until September 2021, we have ministered to people at the Rehab Center in a small town of our region. We helped an already functioning Rehab Center with our expertise—our whole family has lived in the Rehab Center. We have worked with people through local churches. A lot of people have received treatment in the Rehab Center. **Everywhere and always, we have seen God's hand helping us and leading us.** During this time we had a daughter and we have made many friends. We have gained an invaluable experience in learning the culture and thinking of the Georgian people.

Today we are seeing much fruit of this hard work—more and more people are learning about God and about the help we provide free of charge for addicts. During this time, we have helped many people get legal documents, find apartments, and helped others find jobs.

## From Addiction to Ministry

Some of the men who have gone through rehabilitation are **already enrolled in the Bible college**. We keep in touch with people even after their stay in the Rehab Center. We are very happy about this, and God gives us the strength and desire to continue to serve Him here, especially since there is a great need and we have the support of the locals. We are not willing to stand still, and we believe we



Bible study with recovering addicts.

need to move forward and advance the ministry. There are not more than five Christian rehabilitation centers in Georgia, and the population is almost four million people.

**Our team has the goal of building our own rehabilitation center near the city of Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia.** At the current stage, we are looking for a plot of land to buy to build our new rehabilitation center there. Once a week we help in another ministry—feeding homeless people and teaching the Bible to them.

My wife and I are very grateful to the Lord God for His priceless gift, and for the people He encourages to be concerned about our common cause. We have dedicated our lives to serving Him. **Please pray for the advance of this ministry and for God always to give us wisdom.** We also have a need to move closer to the capital of Tbilisi to lead the ministry and communicate effectively with people there. But renting an apartment there is a little more expensive and we do not have enough money to live there. Please also pray that the Lord will provide finances for this as well. May the Lord bless you! ♦



# ORPHANS REBORN: In an Old Apartment, God's Love Reaches Boys with no Earthly Family

*The Gospel of John and warm fellowship draw young people to Jesus*

Pastor Pavel

SGA-Sponsored Orphans Reborn Team in Belarus

There is a woman we know named **Galina** who oversees a **family-type children's home** in a small old apartment. Sometimes it is very difficult especially in the heat of summer, but when we visit this home, a lot of fruitful ministry takes place when school is over and the children have a lot of free time.



Studying God's Word.

On Fridays we are all glad to have our meetings and communication. We have been slowly reading through the Gospel of John. At our last meeting, we finished reading Chapter 8, and talked about the nature of Jesus and about His Father who sent Him. We discussed the great mission for which the Father sent His Son to earth. It's great that the guys are learning key verses, trying to explain what they read and can remember. We pray that these seeds of the Word of God will be kept in their hearts.

This year Ian and Kirill are admitted. They ask us to pray, and also pray themselves, that God will arrange everything so that they can go to college. We ask God to keep them in His loving and strong hand, so that these guys do not get lost and will remember everything that we read about every week in the Bible.

At the end of another long school year, we decided to celebrate in the other way: we brought them KFC baskets, cold juices, and desserts, which made everyone very happy! **In addition to the food, we read the Word of God together and prayed.**

Thank you for your support, and we ask you to pray for each child individually. Let us also support Ian and Kirill in prayer so that they can **enter and graduate from college, enter a profession, and get on their feet in the future.** But the most important thing is for each of them to find **the Savior** in their hearts! ♦



Enjoying KFC together at the end of the school year.

# Even in Winter, the Fruit of Summer Bible Camp Grows!

*Children and families continue to attend church and flourish in Christ*

Eric Mock  
SGA Vice President of Ministry Operations



Children playing during the camp.

If there is one thing that I can say after many visits to the former Soviet Union, it is this. Believers there truly live the faith that they profess. Because of seven decades of atheistic communist rule that oppressed the church and the suffering that endured, their faith is precious to them like fine gold. **In the overwhelming spiritual darkness that surrounds them, the light cast by believers is quite noticeable.** Their joy and their peace are unmistakable against a dark background. A single candle in darkness casts a profound light. Therefore, when people distant from God encounter believers living out their faith, they are drawn towards that same faith. And we saw this during a summer camp in Ukraine.

One family that had suffered greatly was overwhelmed by what they saw this past summer, first with aid through SGA-supported **Compassion Ministry** and then through a **Summer Bible Camp**. One young mother wrote,

*“My name is Lera and I have **three daughters**. Due to the situation in the country, my husband lost his job, and we have a very difficult situation in the*

*family. Fortunately, we got acquainted with some people who were Christians and we could see that people may live as one happy family and help each other. One day they came to us and offered food packages. They told us about a God who loves all people and loves us, too, and they invited our girls to the Christian camp. Every evening, the girls would come back home in a joyful, cheerful mood, and told us with enthusiasm about everything they saw, heard, and experienced in the camp. The girls would go to other camps, but they liked the Christian camp the most. They said that it was so interesting and fun, and different than other camps they attended. And now they are waiting for the Sunday school to begin. Thank you all very much!”*



Lera's three daughters.





Yura listens during a Bible lesson.

Through the faithful ministry and witness of the local church, Lera and her daughters not only heard the Gospel, but also saw it in action.

And not only did parents see the witness of the believers, but also the children, and that had great impact on the parents. I loved to read the testimony of one young boy that attended.

*“My name is Yura and I am 8 years old. I live with my mom and two older sisters; our dad left us.*

*My sister Angelina, who is 17, was invited by a classmate to a youth group in the church. She went and really liked it there. Angelina told me that the church has a Sunday school for children, and that there would also be a Christian camp. I was also invited. But our mom didn't like it. She also did not let Angelina go to the church at first. **Then my mother decided to go to church and see herself. She went there, she saw it with her own eyes and after considering, she let me go to the camp.** I really liked being in the camp. And I like Sunday school, too. I learned that God loves everyone, and also that Jesus is the best friend!”*

This is wonderful account of what God is doing through your prayers and support, as well as the tireless labors of the churches we serve across Russia and her neighboring countries! **As followers of Christ, we are to show the world what God is like, that our words and lives testify to the fullness of His majesty and grace in Jesus Christ.** May we too be so transformed by Christ that we stand out in our world as a beautiful witness for all to see, even when society around us seeks to compromise the message. As the Apostle Paul admonished us, we are *“ambassadors for Christ, as though were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God”* (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Please continue to pray for the children and these families, that they would be drawn to saving faith in the Lord. Also pray for those who have come to faith, that they would be strengthened daily as new disciples of Christ. ♦



Children and leaders at the summer Bible camp.



# Christ's Compassion at Work in Russia's Far East

## *Your Gifts and Prayers Make a Difference for Young Mothers in Crisis*

SGA's Orphans Reborn Team in Far East Russia



Helping a young mother and her daughter.

**W**e greet you in the love of the Lord! Our work with mothers in crisis in the large Khabarovsk region continues and is starting to pick up steam.

At present, we have **a young mother and her daughter** living in our **Crisis Center**. She came to us in a rather severe physical and emotional condition. She grew up in an orphanage. Now her condition has improved, and her child's development has improved too. She had come to us with problems with her documents, which are necessary for life in Russia. Those issues are being addressed, and she will probably live independently soon. She came to us by referral from the city's Social Support Center. Of course, we shall not leave her and shall help her in every way possible.

We are planning to take in **one more family before this month is out**. A mother with her baby is leaving a rehab center very soon, and she has no place to go. **City agencies are also referring her to us**. They have a whole list of mothers who need help, but they approach it selectively, based on the degree of hardship experienced by such mothers.

### Growth to Help More in Jesus' Name

Some time ago we changed our apartment to a three-bedroom apartment, and now we can take in more than one family. We are also planning to add more space for three or four families. Right now, we can take in two. The apartment is being transformed—people helped us and bought us some home appliances, beds, blankets, pillows, closets, changing tables, and they continue to provide their help to us.

The city is slowly beginning to trust us, and we want to provide even more care for those in need. The number of volunteers is growing, and more than once we have quickly collected food and clothes for people in need. **We have distributed available kits for pregnant women and continue to provide targeted support to families that are in difficult life situations.** Recently, some families who lost everything in a fire asked us for help, and we collected some clothes and food for them. We are planning to visit other Human Services offices in the villages and nearby settlements, since there are many people in need there.

Recently we registered our ministry, ***Far East Without Orphans***, as a Non-Governmental Organization. Right now, we're doing different paperwork and are doing everything to meet all the technical requirements. **A registered organization gives you greater opportunities to reach those in need. As always, our desire is to spread the Gospel, to give people hope, and to see lives changed.** We thank you for your support, for without it we wouldn't be able to reach those in need.

**We thank God for you, for we are sure that He will reward you for your sacrificial and open hearts—following the example set by our Lord Jesus Christ! ♦**

## CIS IN THE NEWS

### Virtual Conference Held Between Presidents Biden and Putin

Late in November, U.S. president Joe Biden and Russian president Vladimir Putin held a video conference to discuss rising tensions over Ukraine. In the preceding months, Western nations and Ukrainian officials said that Russian troops were massing on the Ukrainian border. According to Radio Free Europe, Russia countered by charging NATO with bolstering its military capabilities near Russia's borders and "making dangerous attempts to conquer Ukrainian territory." In the conference, Mr. Biden warned Mr. Putin that Russia would be hit with "strong economic and other measures" in the event of an offensive against Ukraine, while

Mr. Putin said that Ukraine joining NATO was a "red line" for Russia. Further talks are expected down the road.

Times of heightened tensions and conflict between former Soviet nations and the West are always a deep concern, not only because of the potential human toll, but also due to impacts on the churches we serve as they seek to carry out their ministries and share the hope of the Gospel. Pray with us for a de-escalation of these tensions, for peace to come in the conflict zones, and for the protection of our brothers and sisters as they minister the love of Christ. ♦

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

One of the many wonderful Bible verses about God's compassion comes from the Prophet Isaiah: *"Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; how blessed are all those who long for Him"* (Isaiah 30:18). The faithful missionary pastors and the churches we serve across Russia and her neighboring countries are deeply engaged in ministries of compassion—**all the more remarkable as they have so little themselves.**

Your faithfulness in giving helps supply them for these outreaches and so much more—provision of Bibles and Christian literature, children's ministry, evangelism, Bible training, and other vital areas. They are thankful to you, and so are we! Please pray about how you can help today. ♦



Helping a single mom and her three children with groceries.



# Canadian Connection

As we begin another new year, we pause and reflect upon the year that has passed. What have we done for Christ that will last for eternity is the question I always ask myself. Here at SGA/Canada, this look back is one of rejoicing for both new and existing ministries that have surged ahead in reaching people for Christ.

One thing that has been noted by fresh eyes on our materials is that it is hard to find smiling faces on those with whom we share in Compassion Ministry. This is an accurate assessment since many are in such grievous circumstances. When the Gospel is shared and hope is explained, smiles begin to appear and life changes. Look at the pictures in these articles and see for yourself. Oppression is lifted and new life changes both young and old from the inside out.



Being part of our SGA/Canada family across our nation is a unique privilege we have serving together. Many of you will never meet each other until we get to heaven, but I can tell you it truly is an amazing family we have! While not traveling overseas yet due to the pandemic, we have spent more time on home soil visiting our donors and saying thank you. I cannot express adequately the joy there is in seeing the excitement you bring to this work of God.

We have concluded another banner calendar year with *Immanuel's Child* Christmas Star donations exceeding our goals. The numbers are still being finalized between SGA/Canada and SGA/US, but this Christmas in the former Soviet Union will see more children reached with the Gospel than ever before.



Compassion Ministry that is being highlighted this month takes in a broad spectrum of opportunities. Wherever there is a need, our nationals find ways to share the love of God in each of their communities. They truly have become the hands of Jesus and we provide them the resources to give in the name of Christ. I cannot but help appreciate their creativity and willingness to go above and beyond caring for those all around them.

Life is difficult in many of the places we go, but to see frowns turn to smiles is more than money can buy. Your gifts are making a huge difference right now, even today! During these cold, dark days of winter, may we encourage you to consider assisting our brothers and sisters as God should lead you. I know they are so grateful because we receive their notes every week at our office expressing gratitude. Through our daily Prayer Team updates, you hear some of those sentiments. Sign up today if you are not already receiving these emails.

Serving together,

Bill Ball  
Executive Director, SGA/Canada

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