



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

You Are Bringing *Transformation* to Lonely Orphans in the Former USSR!

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Believers Visit
Apartment—and
Are Stunned
- ♦ Oppression Spreads
... but So Does the
Gospel
- ♦ "Please Pray for Oleg!"

*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)*

You Are Reaching Abandoned Children in the Caucasus Region!

Your gifts open doors in Georgia . . .

In the Caucasus mountain region of Georgia, a man named Demna and his wife Lena approached a dilapidated apartment. They were not prepared for what they would find.

No furniture. Almost no food. Every room in disrepair. And three very cold, hungry children—with a 16-year-old girl acting as “mother” to her

13-year-old sister and 11-year-old brother.

The children’s real mother had left to look for work in Italy. The parents divorced after fleeing Abkhazia during a war in 1993 and settled in the Georgian town of Zugdidi. Now the older sister was forced to quit school to enable her siblings to

survive. They had lived in an old military barracks for a while. And now in this barren, sad apartment.

Demna and Lena were heartbroken. But with

help from SGA’s Compassion Ministry they knew they could respond! Now the children are getting food, clothes, regular visits, loving companionship from the church—and the Gospel of

Jesus Christ! Please pray for these children and the millions in similar misery.

Now the children are getting food, clothes, regular visits, loving companionship from the church—and the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Grandparents Become Parents . . . So Church Steps In

In the same nation of Georgia, SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Levan is a medical doctor by training. For a number of years, he has been devoted to showing the compassion of Christ to needy families and individuals through a medical clinic he operates in his region in addition to his church ministry. **The majority of the people in need of his help are lonely older people who are bringing up grandchildren left in their care.** The parents have differing reasons why they cannot take care of their own children, but a major reason is that they are away in larger towns looking for work.

So Levan plants, sows, and reaps in this mission field where souls are desperate for God’s truth and His love. ♦



SGA’s Compassion Ministry helps support children and families throughout the nations of the former Soviet Union.



Your Support Reaches Orphans in Central Asia

Despite growing oppression, *Orphans Reborn* presents the Gospel

With every day that passes, oppression of evangelical churches is steadily increasing across the former Soviet countries of Central Asia. Because of this, churches and individual believers must often carry out their ministries discreetly, and we rarely mention specific names or locations to protect their security.

But as the Apostle Paul declares . . . *the Word of God is not bound* (2 Timothy 2:9). We recently received a wonderful report from **Oleg, who leads an SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* team in Central Asia.** As he relates, an opportunity to share the meaning of Easter and the resurrection of Jesus Christ with orphans led to an open door with their adult caregivers, who were also full of questions . . .

When we visited this orphanage at Easter, we shared the Gospel story of the Lord Jesus and His

resurrection using a flannelgraph. We taught them new songs about the resurrection and gave each orphan child a small gift at the end of our program. A total of 53

An opportunity to share the meaning of Easter and the resurrection of Jesus Christ led to an open door with adult caregivers!

children heard the Gospel that day. After we bade the children farewell, several of the adults remained behind to ask us questions about our faith and about God. Please pray for Nina, who is a math teacher. She is reading the Bible

but is having a hard time. She has suffered a great deal of grief in her life and is seeking the Lord.

I am very thankful to the Lord for opening the hearts of the director, administration, teachers, caregivers, and the children. Thank you for providing the finances to help make this ministry possible!

Please pray for more opportunities such as this, not only in Central Asia, but across the whole former Soviet Union. The needs are so great, and many are waiting to hear of Christ's love! ♦

Orphan is “Reborn” . . . and Now Shares the New Birth with Other Orphans!

Misha Murekhin

Orphans Reborn Graduate
Ivanovo Region of Russia



Iwould like to share the only real joy that I have in my life—the way I met Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior!

I grew up without parental love as an orphan, like so many children in our country. **I wasn't even a month old when my mother lost her parental rights, and I was given over to the state to be raised.** For the next eight years, I was in the orphanage at Shuya. Only brief memories remain from that time, such as when I got my tongue stuck to a metal door during the winter. I was very afraid that someone would open the door!

When I turned eight, I was sent to a boarding school in the city of Kokhma. **The older boys sometimes picked on us and would take away any gifts we received. Sometimes they forced us to fight with one another** and made us pick up after them in their rooms. Our caregivers did not really care, or else they pretended that they didn't see it or simply didn't believe us. But there were pleasant days also.

Christians Offer Truth and Love

Pavel and Ludmila came to our boarding school with their children. **They told us about God, Jesus, the Bible, and friendship. We sang songs with them and played games. They would always bring us treats, gifts, and prizes. Their children played with us like we were all one family. They truly showed us genuine love.** The school gave us permission to go with Pavel and Ludmila sometimes, or we would find

any excuse we could to go visit them. They were always happy to see us and would generously feed us. We always thanked God before meals. I never wanted to leave!

When I got older, Ludmila wrote to the director of the orphanage for every holiday, and I was allowed to go spend it at their home.



Today, Misha often helps with *Orphans Reborn* outreach.



Misha helps teach other children of God's love.

Eventually, I graduated from the boarding school and went to college. But I didn't want to live by myself, so Ludmila and Pavel took me into their family. From time to time, I would visit other non-believing families and they would offer me alcohol.

If I had not been at the orphanage and had not met Christians, and they had not told me about God and salvation, I don't know where I would be.

Ludmila always said, "Misha, would they give alcohol to their own son to drink?" The Lord showed me how people act in this world and how they treat one another.

A Ripple Effect of the Gospel

One day, I confessed that I was a sinner and asked Jesus Christ for His forgiveness in my lack of faith and for my behavior. In 2013, I was baptized. **Today, I am helping out in the children's ministry, including summer camps and children's outings. I want these children to know about God's love in the way I came to know Him.** If I had not been at the orphanage and had not met Christians, and they had not told me about God and salvation, I don't know where I would be. I thank God that He revealed Himself to me, and I want to praise Him!

Editor's Note: Misha is a very active member of our *Orphans Reborn* team in Ivanovo. ♦

Your support of *Orphans Reborn* helps bring God's truth and His love to these children and more!

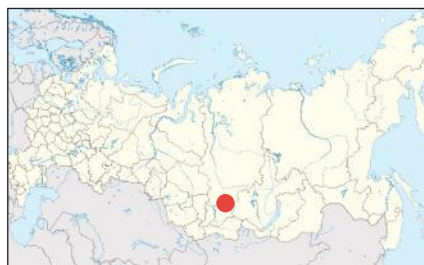


“Please pray for Oleg!”

Orphans Reborn reaches out to bitter, lonely young man.

Mikhail Vladimirov

SGA-Sponsored *Orphans Reborn* Team
in Krasnoyarsk



In the Russian city of **Krasnoyarsk**, I have been witnessing to a young orphan boy named Oleg for

quite some time. Not long ago, he turned 18 and he was saddened when nobody acknowledged his birthday. I was the only one who wrote him and

Through our ministry and your support for Orphans Reborn, I think God is showing Oleg that there is a place where he is welcome.

told him how precious he is to me and in the sight of God! Frankly, I can understand why nobody congratulated Oleg because he has always been rude and disrespectful with others, and he is not an easy person for friendship!

Two months ago, Oleg ran away from a rehabilitation center after all of our ministry and after receiving mercy from a judge who had spared him from going to jail. After this incident, I thought that our time of ministering to Oleg was over and that he had deceived us. Yet as I found out later, that wasn't exactly the case.

It turned out that Oleg had been hired at a car wash.

Each morning he comes to church for prayer and Bible study at 8 a.m. We stay in regular contact with him over social media.

While Oleg has not yet come to repentance, I see the internal struggle in him.

We went with him to church the next Sunday for regular and youth services, and that evening in our home, we celebrated his recent birthday. In the car, I told him that I would not leave him, just as God will never leave me. Oleg understands everything, but he gets dragged down into sin, anger, and animosity. When we are together everything goes well, but whenever Oleg is alone, he becomes weak and easily gives up.

He called me afterward, and just like a little child, he thanked me for being the only one who greeted him on his birthday. Through our ministry and your support for *Orphans Reborn*, I think God is showing Oleg that there is a place where he is welcome. Please pray with us that he will finally come to repentance and faith in Christ. ♦



We pray that one day Oleg (right) will come to Christ.

CIS IN THE NEWS

Ukraine Elects New President

In a surprising development that captured headlines this past spring, Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko lost his reelection bid to Volodymyr Zelensky, a well-known Ukrainian television comedian with no prior political experience. Mr. Zelensky took 73 percent of the vote, while Mr. Poroshenko took 24 percent.

Mr. Zelensky is best known in Ukraine for starring in a satirical television series called *Servant of the People*, in which his character accidentally becomes the president of Ukraine. Media analysts say the vote reflected the weariness of Ukrainians with both the war in the eastern part of the country, and with Mr. Poroshenko's failure to root out corruption. As always, our prayer is for peace to come to eastern Ukraine, and that the open doors

for the Gospel would continue for evangelical churches regardless of changes in government. ♦



Volodymyr Zelensky, who once played the role of president on television, will now take the office in real life.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

With your support, the SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* ministry has been used by the Lord to change the lives of thousands of children across Russia and her neighboring countries. **It is staggering to contemplate how many young boys and girls end up in orphanages or children's homes each year.**

Sometimes the children's parents have died, but often it is because of abuse and neglect, or the parents are no longer able to care for their children due to severe poverty. But **you are truly**

making a difference for many, and we are pleased to share the stories with you.

Your faithful partnership helps accomplish so much more, through **Bible training, Compassion Ministry, missionary pastor support, and other children's ministries.** We are thankful to the Lord for all that you do.

Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Canadian Connection

How many of us know families directly or indirectly that either foster or have adopted children? There are adjustments in every respect but the end result is so beneficial.

From a spiritual perspective, we as followers of Christ have been . . . *adopted as His sons* (Ephesians 1:5). The benefits are truly “out of this world.” Our lives will never be the same. We want many others to experience the same joy and excitement.

In the same way we are seeking to afford this privilege to many children in the former Soviet Union countries. We at SGA/Canada support 12 orphanages (6 in Russia, 2 in Ukraine, 1 in Tajikistan, 1 in Armenia and 2 Transitional Homes). This orphan work is reaching children who otherwise would have little to no hope. Your gifts each month help make this vital ministry possible.

On our last visit in March to Ukraine, we stopped at a large grocery store in Kiev before driving out of the city. We purchased food and special treats for an orphanage. To see the faces of the young children light up is more than money can buy. We have volunteers that do this every week as we assist them. The Gospel is shared and numbers of children repent, trusting Christ for the future.



We also saw the Transitional Home children that are 18-20 years of age. At 18 they age out of the orphanage, and we provide some housing, discipleship, meal preparation and budget training. They get connected to a local church

and we try to assist with employment opportunities or further schooling. Now that summer is here, many will go to camp for a week because of your gifts. It usually is the only break they get from a very institutional lifestyle. Thank you for providing a light of hope to these precious souls who are loved by God.

May you be blessed for bringing children to the Lord Jesus! Reports will follow this fall of how God worked throughout these summer months. Check out our website and see smiling faces.

Partners Together,

Bill Ball
Executive Director, SGA/Canada



A Bridge of Hope

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