



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

More Orphans are Being Reborn in Christ—and Even Reaching Others!

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Read about the ministry of Sonya, orphan-evangelist in Siberia.
- ♦ A former prisoner and addict spearheads an SGA-sponsored ministry to the homeless.
- ♦ Evangelism village by village in Far East Russia. *God is working!*

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)



God's Providence and Your Support Reach a Grieving Orphan

Who knew a forgotten cell phone would lead to a divine encounter?

Sergei K

SGA-Supported *Orphans Reborn* Ministry in Belarus



The *Orphans Reborn* team regularly visits orphanages to minister to the children.

When I visit an orphanage, I usually bring along my camera and my smartphone. I'm usually always ready to take pictures with the kids. This was not the case on my last visit. I was putting things together in a hurry on my way to the orphanage and believed that my smartphone was in my bag, and took my camera just in case. I loaded my car with fruit and candy, and left for the orphanage.

We had a wonderful time of ministry with the children reading the Bible, and they told me stories of their lives. We laughed together as they told of funny situations and prayed for their parents. In the end, I passed out the treats and set the camera to take pictures. The camera took three automatic snapshots and it seemed everything was fine. I was so disappointed later when I checked and found that no photos had been taken. I had forgotten to put in the SD card—my camera did not have its own

memory, so the pictures were not saved. I decided to use my smartphone instead but didn't find that in my bag either. I asked the Lord, "Why? Why did this happen?" **At that moment, I did not realize that**

"I did not realize that God was working His plan in the life of a girl who was not yet at the shelter."

God was working His plan in the life of a girl who was not yet at the shelter.

Several days later, I picked up my smartphone, bought things for the kids, and left again for the shelter. When I arrived, I noticed a girl who wasn't at the orphanage on my previous visit. She seemed



Polina

familiar. She was gloomy and tried to keep away from us. I decided to get to know her and to have a conversation. The kids told me her name was Polina, and I asked her to join us. She was reluctant to come, but she did and I continued to talk about Easter with the kids. After our conversation, Polina told me, “I know you and I know where you live. Once I even visited you”. It was a nice surprise for me. Then I found out that Polina had visited our Christmas celebration. I invited Polina to go to the hall and have a talk, and she agreed.

I learned that Polina had been with her aunt’s family because her own parents had lost custody of her. Her aunt could not build a relationship with her and Polina was very mean. She did not do things she was asked to do, she came home from school five or six hours later than she should, she did not do classes, always threw fits against her aunt, and said that she hated her. As we talked, I explained that Polina had so much trouble not because her aunt did not love her, but because Polina did not do the right thing. She should change her attitude toward her aunt and learn to love her.



Sergei with Polina and other children in her orphanage.

Polina agreed with me and she wept bitterly. I offered Polina to pray for her and I taught her to ask the Lord to grant her love to her aunt, so that they could fix their relationship. Polina agreed and we prayed together. We asked the Lord that the commandment of Jesus to love one another would work in Polina’s heart. When I was leaving, Polina came to see me off and her face was shining with a smile!

This is what the Lord is sometimes doing when he uses us. A phone I left at home and a camera unable to take pictures worked together for the glory of the Lord and the transformation of a child’s heart! Thanks to everybody who supports our ministry to orphans, and may the Lord bless you! ♦

Evangelism Spreads Village by Village in Far East Russia!

The spiritual war for young souls is especially intense

Rostislav Shtompel

SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Russia

As I write this around Easter, I think of our Lord's words . . . *I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die* (John 11:25-26). The special meaning of our calling and our ministry is the hope of eternal life with Christ. He is risen, and He wants to bring us joy and the hope of resurrection. This is our task: to help people receive Christ and enter into His kingdom!



Sharing a meal together after the church service.

Thanks be to God, in February we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our church. Some who had left our fellowship came to church, and we had a great celebration! **New people have begun to attend—at Easter we had five adult guests and eight children. Three of them came for the first time.** One young man named Khazry came to a home group in May and while there, he **repented and turned to Christ.** We continue to pray that God will save people in our city.

As part of our ministry, we continue to visit and teach people out in the villages. Each Thursday, we have been holding **baptism preparation lessons** with Olesya and Nikolai in the village of Neifeld. They are excited to be expecting a baby, but are also worried as Olesya had a miscarriage six months ago. Please pray for them.

In Kazanka, we have been **working with three young people** named Tatiana, Rita, and Yuri and showing them the consequences of bad conduct. The Lord has begun to challenge them a lot. Yuri has been sent to prison for three months for a past crime. Rita had been coming to our youth services but stopped coming, then she fell ill. Each of them are dealing with various consequences. **Please pray for them to turn to Christ fully.**

Together with Anatoly, my ministry partner, we make **quarterly trips to remote villages in the region—Radde and Amurzet.** On our April trip to Radde, we met with people in their homes and on the street, making contacts and handing out Scriptures. The Lord gave us several good conversations, and some of the people were willing to come to meetings later. We praise the Lord for the work He is doing in seeking and serving people. **Thank you for helping us in our ministry in the Far East of Russia! ♦**



Handing out New Testaments in Radde.

A Teen Orphan, Sonya, and Her Orphans Reborn Mentor Elena Partner in Ministry . . .

With your prayers and support, they reach out to two orphans named Katya

Not long ago, we shared the wonderful story of Sonya—a young girl at an orphanage in Far East Russia—who despite her tragic background has found hope and joy in Christ. We recently received a short update from **Elena**, leader of the SGA-sponsored **Orphans Reborn** team in the region, and it is sure to encourage your hearts . . .

I'd like to untroduce to you two orphaned girls. Sonya sent me their stories. While visiting Sonya at school to provide her with supplies and things that she needed, I saw the two girls accompanying her and had the opportunity to talk with them both. Both are named Katya.

The first Katya is 12. Her mother abandoned her when she was two years old, and she was raised by her father. However, having a young daughter became too much a commitment for him. He would take out his resentment on the girl through a physical assault.



Katya was abandoned by her mother and abused by her father.

Children's Services intervened and Katya was sent to an orphanage. A court will later decide on her destiny—she will either be taken back by her father or end up in the orphanage. **Katya asked to be given Bible lessons. She is interested in studying God's Word, as Sonya shared Jesus with her and the**

importance of having faith in Him. Pray with us for this young girl and her relationship with God, and for the court's decision regarding Katya's future.

The second Katya is also 12 years old. She is really angry and offended with her parents, who both abuse alcohol. She is also upset with God. Apparently, she had prayed for her parents to be freed of alcohol addiction, but nothing had happened. I spent time talking to Katya and told her that God really loves her; that He came on earth to die for her, was raised from the dead, and is now in Heaven; that He sent the Holy Spirit for us and wants to lavish His gift on her. **I saw tears on Katya's eyes.** I promised to pray for her, but when I asked her permission to hug her, she refused. Please pray for Katya, especially for salvation and the healing of her broken heart.

Afterward, I sent Sonya a video lesson, so that she could show it to the girls. Sonya will be leaving the orphanage at the end of the school year. We pray that she will be able to attend church and have fellowship with us. We thank the Lord for you, for being a part of our team in serving the Lord! ♦



Katya's parents are addicted to alcohol.

How Your Prayers and Support Help Reach the Homeless for Christ in Siberia

Yevgeny Kulebyakin
Krasnoyarsk, Russia

Greetings to you, beloved friends! My name is Yevgeny (Eugene in English). I am 48 years old. When I was 12, my mother died and my father took me to his new family in Krasnoyarsk. I now lived with a stepmother and stepbrother. He loved to spend time in the streets and taught me the same lifestyle. Together with him, I began to steal things and had become addicted to drugs by the time I was 17. At age 20, I was put in prison to serve a seven-year sentence. On my release, I tried to find a job but was not able. They told me that those who were in prison are not needed anywhere.

I heard about a church-based rehabilitation center when one of my friends was sent there. At the time, I couldn't understand what it was or why anyone would need it. Later, she asked me to bring her some clothes and I went there drunk and under the influence of drugs. The leader of the rehab center invited me to stay there as well, and somehow I understood my whole destiny was at stake. I agreed and went to the center in Dubinino. There I came to know God and two years later, I was baptized.

At 31, I got married to Lena. We now have three children—two sons and a five-year-old daughter named Snezhana. My oldest son Sasha is 14 and



Yevgeny and his children.

younger brother Yura is eight. The boys love sports, and on Saturdays they attend a youth group. In the evenings, we pray together. My wife is unable to hear—please pray for Lena, as she often has headaches.

As noted earlier, I had a hard time finding

work and eventually worked as a loader, but the income was so small our family could not survive. But God provided with a much better employment! **We began working with homeless people, and built a team to help feed them. Now 30 people are engaged in this.** We do not feed the homeless with only physical food, but we also feed them with the Gospel. We help them get their necessary documents restored and when needed, take them to rehabilitation. Several have repented and trusted in Christ as their Savior. We also recently had a young lady who is a doctor offer to volunteer her services. She believes in the Lord and our ministry. Please pray for her—her name is Nellie. Blessings to you! ♦



Yevgeny and Lena



Yevgeny passes out food and shares the Gospel.

CIS IN THE NEWS

War Flares Up in Ukraine: SGA-sponsored churches continue to respond with help and the Gospel

A recent Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty article highlighted life in the eastern Ukraine city of Mariupol, which is located a mere **12 miles from the front lines of the simmering war zone with separatists**. Since fighting began in 2014, more than 14,000 people have been killed, and thousands more have been turned into refugees. Rockets even rained down on the city's eastern district back in 2015, killing 27 and wounding 97. **Today, explosions can still be heard in the distance. A young civilian who works at a steel mill said, "Everyone's just tired."** Another young lady—a graphic designer—was quoted as saying, "Yes, it's quiet now, but we know that can change at any moment. Everyone here has a suitcase packed."

This is a glimpse into the tragedy of this awful conflict that has devastated so many lives. **SGA-supported missionary pastors continue making regular trips into the conflict zone to deliver food and other aid to needy families. SGA president Michael Johnson and other staff recently visited the war zone to see the ongoing ministry firsthand, and the deep needs that exist.** In the midst of the heartbreak and bloodshed, the power of the Gospel is changing lives and redeeming lost souls. Please continue to pray for the pastors and their safety, for the families they visit with Gospel hope, and for peace to come at long last. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The many wonderful reports we receive regularly from SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* teams across Russia and her neighboring countries never cease to warm and encourage our hearts. More than that, they continue to amaze us as we see how God is working in these loneliest and most broken of children to redeem them and bring them to Himself, rescuing them out of a hopeless future. Never underestimate the part you play in it all, as your prayers and faithful support undergird all that we do. Not just in *Orphans Reborn*, but in Bible training, **Compassion Ministry**, sponsorship of missionary pastors, provision of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, and so much more. Thank you! And please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Two boys in an orphanage in Belarus attend a Christmas program prepared by an *Orphans Reborn* team.

Canadian Connection

Within our Canadian context, the news has been dominated about abuse and death of Indigenous children in residential homes across our nation. This tragedy has been kept hidden and silent for far too long and we cry for justice of those who have had no voice. May we as a nation respond in a God-honouring way.

In much the same way, SGA hears the cry of children across Eurasia in countries where children suffer in silence. Though the reasons may be different for these little ones being housed in large facilities, they still struggle with loneliness and neglect. Parents often make wrong choices causing harm to children.



We have visited children in such communities with many directors and staff doing their best to care but lacking sufficient resources. This is where we can assist as a mission, providing that encouragement and meeting very practical needs. Our missionary pastors have found an open door to cheer the children up in this otherwise mundane existence. Programs

are offered to relieve staff for even a few hours, conducting activities, bringing in snacks and special treats of every description, and especially the Gospel. This is all made possible by generous donors in Canada like you.

You see your gifts, however small, make all the difference in a child's life. I have traveled to some of these orphanages with a trunk load of bananas and saw huge smiles as we distributed them as a healthy choice to devour. We also share chocolates and candy for those with a sweet tooth. Little toys, colouring books and various booklets are left for the children to stimulate their minds. Included are Bibles and age-appropriate, thought provoking publications sharing the love of God.

Many will have the privilege this summer of attending a week at a summer camp because of your generous response to the camp campaign. Our goal is for 40,000 children to have a week away in the country that could change their life for eternity by receiving Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Pray with us that little ones will come to Jesus. Share a gift today for orphans who otherwise will never hear that God loves them. Together we can open the door to these children. Thank you in advance for providing funds so that missionary pastors can enter with gifts in hand.

Serving together,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Ball".

Bill Ball

Executive Director, SGA/Canada

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