



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

You Are Helping Believers Reach Vulnerable Orphans!

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ God directs three hurting orphans to a place of safety and blessing.
- ♦ Spiritual warfare for the destinies of older orphans.
- ♦ Your gifts allow *Orphans Reborn* to reach all ages.

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 Help a Pastor Reach Troubled Orphans

Illness kept them from camp, but God had a better plan!

Vyacheslav, coordinator of the *Orphans Reborn* team in Russia's Khabarovsk Region



Vyacheslav and his family took in Anton (left) and Maxim (right) at the orphanage's request.

One summer day, we received a call from the administration of the orphanage where we conduct Bible classes. **Their request was unusual. We were asked to take two boys—(Maxim and Anton) and Eva, a girl who was 13—for a month.** Due to health issues, they could not be sent to the camp since it was far from civilization and it would take a long time for an ambulance to get there if one of them had a problem. My wife and I, after a half hour's consideration, agreed to do it. We had about two weeks to get the house ready—food, beds, etc. But God had everything worked out. We found everything we needed and even more.

The first week of us all living under one roof was like a honeymoon. We all read the Bible together in the evenings, and during the day my wife taught lessons with everyone participating. We went swimming and had other activities. But afterward, the boys' behavior issues that we had been warned about surfaced. **We were hoping that our clearly defined rules and a Christian atmosphere of love and encouragement would make an immediate difference, but it didn't work out that way.** The boys started to negatively influence our older adopted sons (Nikita and Seryozha, who became a part of our family in the spring). Together they



Anton, Maxim, and Eva with Vyacheslav's children.

broke many toys, a child's bicycle, a scooter, the balcony door, and two chandeliers. Maxim and Anton started off every morning insulting each other. And both needed to be under constant supervision and direction in order to guide their future actions, even in little things.

We wanted to give up, but we saw God working with the girl we had taken in. Eva enjoyed reading the Bible and Christians books, which she borrowed from our library herself. She told us a lot about herself, always turned to us for advice, and during her stay with us, she ended her relationship with her boyfriend. Eva told us that being in the orphanage, getting to know us, and the entire month were the answers to her prayers, including some prayers from her childhood. **Eva asked in her prayers that God would show Himself to her, reveal Himself to her, teach her how to build a relationship with Him (she wanted so badly to believe that God exists, but she didn't know how to believe).** So, when she and her sister had been placed in an orphanage, she immediately got to know our church, about which she was very glad.

After a while, we also learned to love Anton and Maxim more when we realized that God was also working in our hearts. **We were able to model the Gospel to them even better, not only during our evening family times of worship, but also in our day-to-day affairs**—when we disciplined and pardoned them, cared for them, and guided them.

All three were with us in the camps we held at orphanages and the church—God helped them dive into the truth in His Word.



Anton and Maxim's behavior has improved after staying with Vyacheslav's family.

Now, every time we come to the orphanage, Maxim and Anton behave well just like all the other children. Unfortunately, Eva had to leave us for a while, exchanging letters with us on occasion. She misses us and wants to visit us – it is mutual, we are looking forward to seeing her. We would love to take her in if she wanted to come, but we might not be ready yet—we just recently had another son, whom we named Ilya. We now have five children with two adopted ones. Please pray for all the children, and especially for Eva. ♦

The Heartbreak of Older Orphans

Your support is hope—in the hands of Jesus—for those trapped in sinful patterns.

Mikhail V.

SGA-Sponsored *Orphans Reborn* Team in Krasnoyarsk, Russia

We would not choose an orphanage as the place for any child to grow up. Yet for many, life outside of the orphanage brings many more dangers. I am talking about what happens when children “age out” of the orphanage and must begin life on their own.

All of a sudden, they are expected to become independent adults, responsible and mature. **But many girls quickly become pregnant. We saw four boys jailed almost the next day after they left the orphanage, and a number who end up homeless.** While we sadly lose contact with many of the children, still others keep in touch and come to the church when they have need of food or other assistance. One of the orphan graduates honestly admitted to me that if it wasn't for *Orphans Reborn*, he would have long ago been imprisoned or dead from drugs.

Several days ago, I was in a café not far from the church. In front of the entrance, I saw two homeless people who were drinking vodka and eating instant noodles. They were very dirty, drunk, and in their faces I could see that they had been living this way a long time. Then I saw another guy who was much younger and looked much better. **I recognized him as being one of the graduates from the orphanages who attended our lessons.** He ate with dirty hands from one plate with them, and drank vodka. He was smiling and laughing at the same time. But when he saw me, his face dropped and I could see that he felt ashamed.

His smile disappeared.

I felt pained that such healthy and strong boys choose such a cheap path that leads nowhere. The next day, he came to our group for older orphans like nothing happened the day before. It is



The Krasnoyarsk *Orphans Reborn* team continues to support orphans after they graduate by delivering bags of groceries for them and their children.



Orphans Reborn teams plan many outdoor activities for the children.

impossible to help them in our own strength, but what is . . . *impossible with man is possible with God* (Luke 18:27). We keep inviting older orphans to

events, fellowship, and Bible studies. We rejoice when we see even minor changes and victories in their lives.

In the beginning of the school year, there are usually many new children who come to the orphanages, and we begin our work with them. We hold regular sports events with them to teach them discipline, and each event ends with a Bible lesson. **They have serious problems, and many are already heavy smokers—even at 10 years old!** They bully each other and mistreat their teachers. They have had no people in their environment to teach them another way of life. Almost every day, I hear, “Uncle Misha, could you find a good family and caring parents for me?” Our hearts are broken before God, and we ask Him for mercy over these orphaned children. **We pray for God’s miracle, and that our influence with prayer, will result in their salvation.** ♦



Nastya listens carefully to the Bible stories and does her Bible lessons thoroughly. This is her first time being sent to live in a shelter and she is struggling because the other girls do not want to be her friend.

Despite Covid, *Orphans Reborn* Finds Ways to Win Hearts

Your gifts provided help in time of need

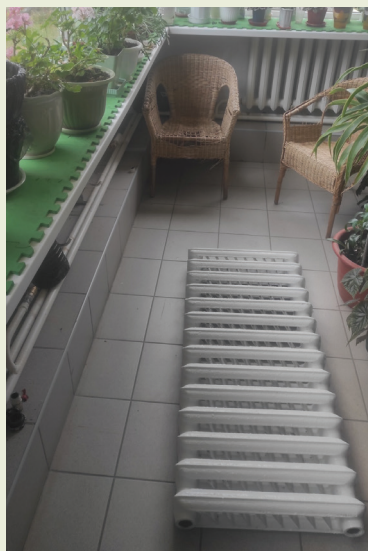
SGA-Sponsored *Orphans Reborn* Team
Smolensk, Russia



Popcorn snack for the orphans.

The situation with COVID-19 is still critical and we have not been able to directly visit orphanages with Bible lessons here in Smolensk. While it was not too cold, we could have some outdoor activities. We made popcorn, played games, and sang songs. Once it began to rain when we were out together with the children. But even bad weather did not spoil our picnic. We became even closer because we had to hide from the rain under a roof, we had very close fellowship and could give hugs to each other.

Once we had a call from the orphanage in a nearby town. They asked if we could help to buy a vacuum cleaner as their only one had broken. **So**



New vacuum cleaner and radiators for the orphanage.

many bedrooms, halls, and corridors to clean, and no vacuum cleaner! We bought a big professional model for them, and hope it will be useful and helpful. It has now become cold outside and it is important that it is warm in the children's bedrooms. **In one of the orphanages, the radiators broke. And it was urgent to get them fixed.** The state could put them in a waiting line for repairs but the problem was urgent. The orphanage asked if we could help. **We did and changed the radiators.**

We continue our ministry in a local special school for orphan graduates. It is not forbidden to hold Bible lessons there and we do every week. We also try to help with medicine and hygiene items. It is so good to continue fellowship with the graduates.

One of them, a young man named Yuri, came to church for the Harvest Celebration with his wife Natasha and their child. Natasha said that she was crying during the whole worship service, because everything touched her heart so much. They liked the singing and the sermons a lot. **After the worship service Ivan invited them to his home. They talked during the evening till the late night.** Yuri and his family stayed with Ivan and his family for the night and had good fellowship.



Fellowship with Yuri and Natasha at Ivan's home.

Pray with us for the time to come when we can have regular Bible lessons in the orphanages again. We pray for these children and ask God to work in their hearts! ♦

CIS IN THE NEWS

Churches Pray for Open Doors in Russia

The Bible-preaching churches SGA serves across the former Soviet Union focus on proclaiming the Gospel as God grants them opportunity. We join them in following the Apostle Paul's admonition to pray for religious freedom.

He wrote, *"First of all, then, I urge that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made in behalf of all people, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior"* (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

We ask for you to **join in prayer for continued freedom to preach the Gospel**. The

U.S. State Department recently announced that Russia has been added to the "Countries of Particular Concern" list, as well as former Soviet nations of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, along with several other countries. Yet the Gospel continues to go forth from SGA-sponsored churches, including to the orphans you read about in this **Good News Report**. Please petition the Lord with us for the *continued* open doors He has granted as SGA-affiliated churches bless their surrounding communities with compassion, salvation, and spiritual growth. This is proving to be a blessing to neighborhoods, cities, regions, and nations. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

What a wonderful blessing it is to see God at work changing the lives of young orphan children across the former Soviet Union! Whether these boys and girls are young pre-teens or older orphan "graduates" now trying to make their way in the outside world, the faithful churches that SGA serves are committed to reaching them with the life-changing Gospel.



An Orphans Reborn leader brings gifts for the children in the orphanage.

Your prayers and faithful support are helping them to do it, and your gifts do so much more—Bible training, provision of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, Compassion Ministry, summer camps and other outreaches.

You are truly making an **eternal difference** in countless lives. Please pray about how you can help today. ♦

Canadian Connection

Who speaks on behalf of the children? A serious question to ponder regarding those who many times have no voice when there are questionable circumstances and outright abuse or neglect. This is the life of countless children around the world every day and night. So often, we are sheltered from these realities unless we enter this ongoing struggle of a child's life.

Here at SGA, we have accepted this challenge and become proactive in responding to the children's needs all across Eurasia and the former Soviet countries. While every community and region has varying degrees of difficulties caring for the forgotten, we provide for the needs directly through local churches. An assessment is carried out, and we develop relationships with local authorities to ensure there is a clear understanding that ministry is accomplished through believers in local Bible-believing churches. This assignment is usually welcomed by orphanage directors with open arms, and children discover that there is a God who loves and cares for them.

Government orphanages are found in abundance across these nations. Children as young as newborns to age 18 can be located in buildings that often provide only the basic necessities and try to teach them a fundamental education. Many of these government-supplied workers are doing the best they can with the resources at their disposal. The one thing often missing is the knowledge that they are loved and a sense of self worth. Knowing there is a God who loves them is so foreign in many cases.

This is where SGA has assisted local churches with funding to provide biblical materials, food, and clothing where needed along with special treats.



What child doesn't like personal gifts at any time of the year? Relationships are developed with weekly visits and a new life with possibilities begins. It is incredible to see these transformations over a period of years. This is not a 'one stop' quick fix by any stretch.

Once a child turns 18, they are released from the orphanage and expected to live on their own in the real world, which often doesn't work out well for boys or girls. They frequently end up in trouble and develop bad habits, leaving them incarcerated or worse. The outcomes are heartbreaking and take years to repair. Our desire is to save that child from wasted years and enter them into local church mentoring and training in every part of life. They can then function well socially, spiritually, physically and mentally.

Let us hear from you today and give a child a fresh start.

Serving together,

Bill Ball
Executive Director, SGA/Canada

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