



What a Difference God Has Made!

Christ's Love Brings Peace to a Foster Family

Pastor Sergei (Mogilev Region, Belarus)

SGA-sponsored children's ministries often send wonderful reports about how the Lord changes the lives of young boys and girls as they hear the Gospel and see His love modeled before them. A faithful missionary pastor in Belarus named Sergei recently sent us the story of a family who willingly took in a troubled young orphan girl 11 years ago. The foster mother, Tatiana, had previously come to faith, and as she tells the story through Sergei, her conversion helped pave the way for her adopted daughter's path to Christ . . .

Karolina was seven years old when I met her in the orphanage. She was a



Karolina (center) left her troubled childhood behind for new life in Christ.

real problem child. Several families had tried to adopt her but eventually had to bring her back because they could not cope with her behavior. She would crawl under a table and scream non-stop. I would visit this orphanage often, and Karolina would come up to me and try to stand by me as much as possible.

I began to take her home with me on weekends, and eventually she began spending nights at my home, and I would return her to the orphanage during the day, as she was in kindergarten. She gradually became accustomed to me. Then the day approached when she would have to go to school. The educators at school scared the children and the children saw school as a horrible place. Karolina was taken to Italy over the summer while I prepared the paperwork to adopt her (she didn't know this was happening). She returned from Italy with a bandaged

hand, and I found out that she was dreading school so much that she began gnawing her hand almost to the bone. When I told her that she was being adopted, the hand-gnawing stopped and her hand healed.

Then the problems began for my family during that first difficult year. Karolina didn't want any strangers to come to our home. She would stand at the door and scream until the strangers left the house. It was then that I came to God and my life changed. So did the life of my adopted daughter. Constant fellowship with believers, Sunday school, Christian camps for children, and small group Bible study all helped to shape her as a young girl who thrived in a Christian world of acceptance, love, and security. She was no longer in a hostile world, but in a world where God's security ruled. She repented and trusted in

Christ, and now she is 18 years old. I am very happy that she has come to Jesus, and it was her own decision!

What a wonderful story of hope, testifying of God's power to change lives. Yet while Karolina was adopted into a loving family, the vast majority of orphan children will not be adopted and will grow up in an orphanage. That is what makes SGA-sponsored children's ministries so vitally important. You—our faithful partners—are making it possible for children's workers in the churches to reach these children by supporting summer camps and outreaches such as *Orphans Reborn* and *Immanuel's Child*. When children reached through these ministries begin attending Sunday school for the first time, their discipleship continues and many come to the Lord in saving faith. You are helping to build up the body of Christ as you equip the saints . . . *for the work of service* (Ephesians 4:12).



Orphan children in the CIS face a bleak future without the hope of the Gospel. We are thankful for your support of the SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* ministry.

A Divinely Arranged Meeting in Central Asia

My name is Aida. I was born into an ordinary family—I am the middle child of three girls. My parents were not particularly adherent to religion, although Dad often read from a children's Bible. I don't even know how we received this Bible.

When I turned 12, my parents separated. It was a very sorrowful time for me—I loved my father, and I didn't think he would ever leave us. Yet it happened, and this is probably when I began to think about God. And I began to ponder why I was born, what would happen if I died. We had heard as children that when God loves a person and he dies, maybe God will give him another life. This was very important to me, as I wanted to be among people whom God loves.

And right at this difficult time for us, my mother encountered a believing family while at the hospital. They invited her to church, and my mother went several times

to the meetings. That was how I met with them, and when I turned 15, I repented. Of course, I had many questions like other children, and this family was a blessing for me. They explained a lot to me, answered my questions, and helped me realize that I was a sinner in need of repentance. I was converted and now have a relationship with God. I had found the Father who will never leave me. My salvation was in 2002, and I was baptized in 2008.

After I graduate from the Bible institute, I want to continue ministry with children. I am very grateful to God, for me each session bears fruit. God knows what I need, and He gives very valuable truth to me. And I realize the importance of discipleship, and now I try to be a very good student and work with the young sisters. Even now I start to communicate with them. I wish to express my gratitude to those whose support made my studies possible.



Church Anniversary Leads to Witness Opportunities

Gennady Prokopovich, Marina-Gorka, Belarus

A few months ago, we celebrated the 95th anniversary of our church in Marina-Gorka. The House of Prayer was full of both Christians and unsaved people. The youngest was a newborn baby and the oldest was a 90-year-old sister in Christ. Golgotha Church in Minsk helped us celebrate. Former Sunday school students, unbelieving husbands, elderly, unbelievers' children, and others whom God is drawing to Himself were invited, and they all heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was a very encouraging and refreshing time for our church. I am very thankful for your open hearts and concern about our material needs.



The church building in Marina-Gorka is small, but filled with joyful believers praising God.

Reaching Youth Through Sports Ministry

Sasha Dubynin (Novosibirsk, Russia)

Today, sports are increasing in popularity among youth of differing age groups, and the youth of our church have began sports ministry. We believe that we can win young people to the Lord in this way. At the end of 2015, our youth began training in volleyball at one of the schools in Vladivostok and the Lord has shown His blessing. We have a number of youth who come to our meetings from there, and in February of 2016 we ran special youth meetings for Bible study. I had the privilege of traveling together with young brothers from our church in Novosibirsk to a sports conference to help develop our ministry even further. Our goals include beginning a Christian Sports Club, holding sporting events on the university campus, and increasing the Bible study groups with students and youth of our city.



Women's Ministry Day Camp in Ukraine

Vadim Adelfin, Ukraine

Not long ago, we were able to hold a one-day women's ministry camp at our church in Kompaniavka. Women attended from several towns and villages around us. After the opening prayer, we held a fellowship where the women could share about their ministries in their churches. We also held study sessions where we examined the roles of Mary and Martha in the Scriptures, and afterward had discussion where the ladies shared how the truth of God's Word touched them, and shared their worries and concerns. The women also planned to gather to study the course called "Here is Your God" and to invite unbelieving women to attend. It is a great joy for me to see their desire to grow spiritually. During these women's group meetings, our brothers will be evangelizing local men.



The Gospel in the War Zone

Editor's Note: Because of the danger and sensitivities in eastern Ukraine, full names and specific locations are not being used in this report.

Pastor Yury
SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor

We praise God for your support of SGA's Crisis Evangelism Fund, which brings together opportunities for humanitarian aid and preaching the Gospel. The situation in our town is volatile, with intensified shelling at night. For the past month, the suburbs and one of the housing complexes have been shelled heavily, with human casualties and people badly wounded, destroyed houses, and shattered windows.

Your financial support makes our outreach to unbelievers possible. Among them is Viktor's young family, including wife Vera and their children-Vika, Slavik, and Bogdan. Viktor and Vera both repented, were baptized, and the children now attend our Sunday school. There are other families with whom we have established relationships; however, they had to leave the area because of the hostilities. We are praying and hope that the seeds sown in their hearts will eventually grow by God's grace. Apart from that, almost all children from the unbelieving families attend



Viktor and his family

Sunday schools and come to the church together with their parents on holiday services, such as Easter, Harvest Festival, and Christmas. We hope the Word of God will eventually reach their hearts, too.

Viacheslav works in a coal mine, but isn't paid enough to support his wife and two boys. We have very good relations with this family. We visit each other, and share the Gospel with them. Viacheslav's teenage son Ivan goes to Sunday school and the *Tomorrow* club for teenagers, and is one of the active and committed students.

The circumstances of each family differ, but they all are destitute, need physical help, and also the ultimate hope that only the Gospel brings. May the Lord bless you as you continue to support this ministry.

CIS in the News



Renewed Conflict Flares in Another CIS War Zone

Back in the 1990s, the nations of Armenia and Azerbaijan fought a war over a region called Nagorno-Karabakh. In 1994, a truce was arranged and a so-called "neutral zone" established between the two sides, yet in reality it was a frozen conflict—the roots of which lie in the collapse of the Soviet Union. Last April, armed conflict broke out with the worst fighting in many years, and the

Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe Minsk Group brokered another cease-fire. Then in December, another battle flared and three Armenian soldiers were killed. Strategic Forecasting published an analysis saying that Russia's deep ties with Armenia will likely play a significant role in the region's future.

The Minsk Group was also involved in trying to bring peace to the conflict in Ukraine, but the cease-fire continues to be violated. Our concern is for our brothers and sisters in the evangelical churches of both nations—both for their safety and for the opportunities God grants them to proclaim peace and reconciliation through the Gospel. Please remember them in prayer.

How You Can Help

Across Russia and her neighboring countries, millions of people are living in spiritual darkness. Your prayers and faithful support are making an eternal difference. Provision of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature helps sow the Word of God, and support of missionary pastors enables them to devote their time to sharing the Gospel with every opportunity God grants. You help advance *Orphans Reborn*, summer camps, and Sunday school ministry. Needy families are receiving food and other aid. And most of all, eager students are studying God's Word to prepare for lifetimes of ministry. Please pray regularly for the faithful Bible-preaching churches we serve as they advance the kingdom of God.



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Insight from Michael

Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen (Revelation 7:12).

I am thankful and excited for the opportunity to share with you—our faithful partners—in a monthly column like this. The subject will differ from month to month, but the goal will be the same. I'll share a few personal reflections that I hope will encourage your hearts. And I want to give God the glory for all that He is accomplishing to bring the lost to Himself across Russia and her neighboring countries.

After 14 years away from SGA, I have been amazed and encouraged to see what God has done through the faithful churches we serve. Over his nearly 23-year tenure as SGA president, Dr. Bob Provost worked tirelessly to help our brothers and sisters seize every opportunity for advancing the Gospel. It's a legacy I'm looking forward to continuing, and we have a lot of work yet to do in reaching the yet unreached regions of Russia.



Michael Johnson
SGA President

This issue of *InSight* leads off with an article on children's ministries, and most notably, *Orphans Reborn*. That's a special joy to me as I had the privilege of helping to launch that fruitful ministry in my previous role as vice president of advancement. Reaching children for Christ is so vitally important for the future of the churches in the CIS, and what a blessing to see how God has drawn many of these most needy of children to Himself. Many are now living fruitful adult lives as the Lord's disciples, and they are eager to reach other children

as they were reached. You have been part of this wonderful success, and I can't thank you enough.

I look forward to these monthly visits with you, and pray you will be blessed, encouraged, and even spurred on to greater things for God's glory.



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