



SERVING CHURCHES — REACHING RUSSIAN SPEAKERS

October 2017

Finding a Family Out of the Orphanage

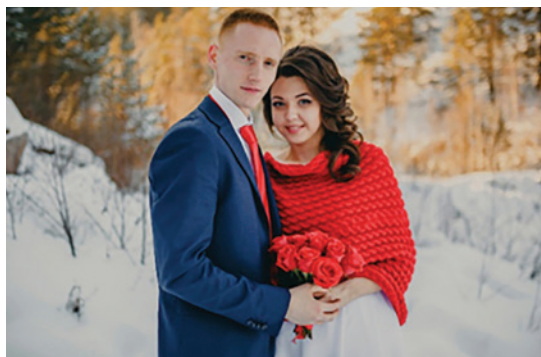
Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Throughout the years, the Lord has used the SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* ministry to reach thousands of Russian-speaking children with the Gospel. Many have been gloriously saved. It's even more wonderful to hear about orphans who have left the orphanage on reaching adulthood, only to enthusiastically join the *Orphans Reborn* teams as full participating members. Their hearts' desire is to see as many orphan boys and girls saved through faith in Christ just as they were saved. And with 700,000 orphans in Russia alone, the need is truly great.

Oleg Smal is our faithful OR coordinator in Russia's Krasnoyarsk region. He recently shared a heart-warming story impacting his own family—a story that vividly demonstrates how God is using your support to help the churches gather a rich harvest of young souls for His glory.

In February, I was invited to a wedding where the groom was an orphanage graduate named Denis.

And the bride was none other than Dasha, the daughter of Oleg Batanogov, one of our OR workers!



Denis is celebrating his new life in Christ and joy with Dasha, his new bride!

After the wedding, we had time to fellowship around the tables and Denis made it a point to visit with me. He told me that in the past, I had played a key role in his life. Once I had taken him to one of our Christian summer camps. At that particular time, he did not seem to value any of the experience at all and misbehaved.

But when the camp was over, Denis

was scheduled to go to a secular camp where orphan children are taken to spend the summer. It was there that he began to see the difference. In desperation, Denis ran away from the camp and spent an hour walking along the road where I had driven him. He soon realized that he was lost and had to go back to the other camp. And from that day forward, Denis decided that he would get closer to the Christians who were visiting his orphanage as part of Orphans Reborn. In the fall when our team's visits resumed, Denis immediately joined the Bible lessons taught by Oleg Batanogov and Paulina Kozlova (who herself is an orphan graduate)!

It wasn't long before Denis repented and trusted in Christ, followed by baptism. God continued to work in his heart, and eventually he and Oleg Batanogov's daughter Dasha got married. Although Oleg Smal didn't know all this and had forgotten the long ago incident, he praises God for the beautiful outcome of His sovereign work. Oleg said it demonstrates how even a small involvement in the life of another person can make an eternal difference. It also demonstrates how the support of SGA partners for Orphans Reborn is being used to gather a tremendous spiritual harvest. Yet there are thousands of children that need to be reached. Pray that God will provide resources to send even more workers into this harvest just waiting to be gathered!



Please pray for Orphans Reborn graduates like Denis as SGA-sponsored teams continue to reach them for Christ.

Bible Questions in the Gym



Alexei Akhmaev
SGA-Sponsored Missionary
Pastor in Krasnoyarsk,
Russia

Across Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and their neighboring countries, sports and athletic competition has always been a favorite pastime for men, women, and children. Through the years, we have joyfully shared testimonies from dedicated missionary pastors who use sports outreach as part of their overall ministry.

Alexei Akhmaev is one such faithful missionary. Not long ago, he shared about his divinely-arranged meeting with a young man named Ivan, whom he met at a local gymnasium in the Krasnoyarsk region . . .

When I first met Ivan, he struck me as a young, strong, self-sufficient, confident young man. His youthful energy and drive were the guiding factors in his life. One day while exercising and playing sports, we started to fellowship with each other. I learned that Ivan was a good student and he planned to continue his studies at Krasnoyarsk University. So one day, I began a conversation with him about religion. I soon discovered that Ivan had many questions. I could see his genuine interest, so I presented him with a

copy of the Scriptures and also several testimonies of famous sportsmen.

Later, I lost contact with Ivan because he went to study at Krasnoyarsk University. But God is great, and I learned that Ivan met Christians at the university who were involved with the student ministry of our church, so he started to attend church meetings. Soon he received the Lord as his Savior!

Today, Ivan is no longer a boy, but a committed servant of God, a good husband and father of two children. And his studies did not end at Krasnoyarsk University. He has enrolled at Novosibirsk Biblical Theological Seminary, and is now a student pursuing biblical knowledge!

God's chain of grace didn't stop with Ivan's salvation. Alexei added that God gave them the joy of witnessing the repentance of Ivan's mother. At first—like many Russians—she thought that evangelical Christians were a "sect" that had stolen her son from the family. But she observed her son's changed life and what he actually became, as well as experiencing his love and care for her. Ivan's mother's heart melted and she also came to faith in Christ.

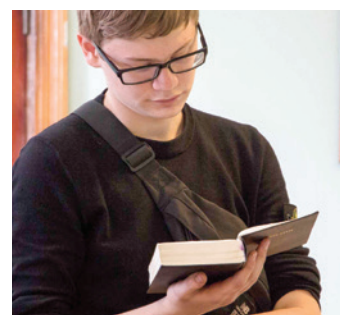
And it all started one day with a trip to the gymnasium!

Orphans Reborn



110 orphanages 7,226 orphans
268 orphans who attend church 282 volunteers
182 graduates who attend service regularly
77 churches involved in Orphans Reborn
86 graduates involved in Orphans Reborn

Since the year 2000, the SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* ministry has been reaching thousands of love-starved children with the hope of the Gospel. Your faithful prayers and generous giving help support the tireless day-in, day-out labors of the OR teams. On this page are several wonderful snapshots of the ministry that goes on year-round. Please continue to intercede for the children as they learn of the Savior who loves them so!



Sensible Stewardship

By Larry Forcey

I did not have a will in place, so I decided to go through the process when I learned of the opportunity SGA had arranged with PhilanthroCorp. Each step of the process was seamless. The estate specialist I worked with was very helpful and unassuming. I entered the estate arena with apprehension, but PhilanthroCorp's team of experts helped lessen my concerns.

It feels comforting to know that I have plans in place for when the day comes that God calls me home. Because of these plans, it should be less overwhelming for my loved ones. PhilanthroCorp's help provided me a way to bless those in my family, as well as those charities with whom I currently contribute. I would encourage others to go through this positive experience. PhilanthroCorp is providing us with the opportunity to ensure our resources are still useful to God's work after our departure. I'm so thankful that I utilized this great service!

Editor's Note: Periodically in the pages of InSight, we share helpful columns on the subject of estate planning from PhilanthroCorp, a nationally-known Christian charitable planning firm that works exclusively in the areas of estate and gift planning. They can help you understand issues such as probate, taxes, trusts, wills, powers of attorney, and other complicated matters. There is no cost or obligation to you for this service. For further information, please visit our website at <http://www.sga.org>. Or you can call (800) 876-7958 to speak on the phone with one of their Estate Specialists.



The Warmth of the Gospel on a Cold Winter Day

Pastor Pavel Belous
SGA-Sponsored *Orphans Reborn* Leader in
Belarus

In January, our country is in the midst of winter's cold. Even so, there were a lot of opportunities for ministry with local orphan children in spite of various hindrances. And we can see the Lord working in their hearts over time.

We began the month by visiting orphanages to celebrate Christmas with the children. Our desire was to also involve older orphan graduates in our celebration. We are thankful to the people who provided us with a place outside the orphanage to hold our celebration. There were about 30 people including volunteers. We had a wonderful time together and began the new year with prayer and a Bible message. We shared poems about each child reflecting on the good things in each one of them, and also gently pointed out things they needed to change in their lives. We gave them gifts that SGA partners helped provide, such as dishes, hygiene items, candy, and detergent.

The next highlight that month was our winter camp, which was held at a rented Christian recreation center. A total of 10 orphan teenagers took part. Our theme

was overcoming fear—fear of the future, fear of the past, and fear of the present. We also spoke about the fear of God. These times of fellowship are very important for the orphans, who spend time with their Christian peers and find friends among them. Having Christian friends is very helpful in familiarizing the orphan children with the church. We helped pay their expenses so they could come to the winter camp.

As always, we continued to hold Bible study for children and teens from the orphanage. They regularly attend and enjoy the Bible study. They feel comfortable and are learning from God's Word. In addition to our ministry at the orphanages, we invite the children to our home for fellowship. The children are more open and feel more confident in our home. They also understand that we genuinely desire to fellowship with them. We want them to become part of our family through staying at our home and having contact with our own children. All of these activities bring us closer to each other, and affect real change in their hearts. Our desire is to be a good Christian example for the children. We praise the Lord for such great opportunities to serve the Lord. We thank you for your support and prayers—they help us realize that we are not alone in this ministry!

CIS in the News



Kyrgyzstan Considers Faith-Sharing Ban, Other Measures

Kyrgyzstan's State Commission for Religious Affairs is pushing tight new restrictions on religion in the Central Asian nation, according to Forum 18. If parliament adopts the proposed restrictions, all religious literature would be subject to censorship, sharing beliefs

would be banned, and groups wishing to form would have to have at least 500 members before they could apply for registration. As this issue of *InSight* went to press, parliament had just begun considering the amendments to the 2009 Religion Law.

This is yet another part of a continuing trend in the Muslim-dominated CIS nations of Central Asia. Evangelical churches have already faced considerable pressure in carrying out their ministries, and this will certainly make a difficult situation worse. Please lift our brothers and sisters across Central Asia in prayer, knowing our God is able to . . . *do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think* (Ephesians 3:20).

Subscribe to SGA's New Electronic Publications!

Just go to our
website

www.sga.org

How You Can Help

Children's ministries are among the most fruitful outreaches across the CIS. At SGA, we continually receive wonderful reports from missionary pastors and their congregations about how they are effectively reaching young boys and girls with the Gospel. They are now busily engaged in follow up ministry from summer camps, and making advance preparations for *Immanuel's Child* outreaches to needy children this Christmas. Your gifts help make this possible, as well as all our other ministries such as Bible training, distribution of Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, humanitarian aid, and other compassionate ministry. There are still millions to reach with the life-changing Gospel. Please pray about how you can help today!



Insight from Michael



Michael Johnson
SGA President

I am always blessed—and thankful—when I read the wonderful reports from SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* teams across the CIS. Having personally

visited orphanages in the CIS and meeting hundreds of orphan children, I know that this wonderful ministry that you help support is changing young lives on a daily basis. You are truly making a difference for Christ!

Another wonderful thing happens through *Orphans Reborn*. When the boys and



girls saved through this ministry reach adulthood and must leave the orphanage, quite a number of them get involved in Bible-preaching churches and become part of the *Orphans Reborn* teams themselves. No one knows the heartbreak and despair of being in an orphanage more than these young adults, and they want other children to find the love and peace of Christ that they have found. It is a blessed and fruitful ministry, taking to heart the Lord's

command . . . *My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples* (John 15:8).

Please continue to sustain *Orphans Reborn* in prayer—both the faithful workers and the children who are hearing the Gospel. And as always, please pray regularly for the many other SGA ministries including Bible training, follow ups from summer camps, *Immanuel's Child* Christmas



outreaches that will take place in little more than two months.

Pray for Compassion Ministries that reach many needy families with food and the Gospel. Remember SGA-sponsored



missionary pastors in prayer, as they are on the front lines of Gospel ministry. We can never thank you enough for all that you do to help sustain these vital outreaches for the glory of Christ!



InSight is published to report religious news about Russia, the rest of the CIS and the ministries of:

Slavic Gospel Association
6151 Commonwealth Drive
Loves Park, IL 61111
www.sga.org
E-mail: insight@sga.org
Phone: 815-282-8900
Fax: 815-282-8901

To start, cancel, or change the mailing address on your subscription to *InSight*, please send your name, your old address, and your new address to the address listed above. Please allow six to eight weeks for the fulfillment of your request.

International Offices

Noble Park, Australia
Cambridge, Canada
Eastbourne, England
North Shore, New Zealand

U.S. Board of Directors

Warner Tillman, Chairman
Harry Leopold, Vice Chairman
John Wauterlek, Treasurer
Brian Kult, Secretary
Michael Johnson, President
Dr. Allan W. Vincent
Dr. Bill Atkinson
Dr. Rick Goertzen
Kelly Abbott
Dr. Robert W. Provost, President Emeritus
Evon Hedley, Director Emeritus

SGA is a charter member of:



Evangelical Council for
Financial Accountability