



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION
Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

Dedicated Believers in Jesus Christ Carry His Hope to Orphans and Many Others!

INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Visually impaired orphans rejoice to welcome those you helped send to them!
- ♦ Read how *Immanuel's Child* reached children and parents in Muslim nations.
- ♦ In Siberia . . . the love and Gospel reaches village after village.

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)

They Were Waiting for Us!

Your gifts help reach visually impaired orphan children with Christ's love!

Alexander B
SGA-Sponsored *Orphans Reborn Team* in Belarus

Greetings to you! We periodically visit an orphanage for visually impaired children in our region. Every visit to the orphanage is an unforgettable time for us. First of all, the meetings with the children encourage us to express gratitude to God for our good eyesight (unfortunately, we very often forget to thank God for our health).



Gifts for the children.

Secondly, the children win special places in our hearts and our desire is to sow the good seed of the Gospel in theirs. We saw the children peering out the windows when we arrived at the orphanage. They were waiting for us! In spite of their visual impairments and the masks required because of the coronavirus, the children recognized us, and we had



Experimenting with tin cans of Sprite.

a wonderful meeting together. They especially enjoy singing songs with us.

We presented a small, interesting experiment to them. We asked children who weighed differently to stand on tin cans of Sprite, both full ones and empty ones. The children squashed the empty tin cans of Sprite at the end of the experiment, but the full tin cans of Sprite remained full inside although crumpled. The teacher then shared a lesson and held overhead a squashed, empty tin can of Sprite. The empty bottle is not ready for the onslaught, but the person who lives according to God's principles and with strong faith is ready to wrestle with evil. He is *filled* with God and Jesus Christ to give him support in life!



Talking to a small group of boys.

We divided into groups and continued to talk with the children in these groups. We talked about Jesus Christ suffering on the cross for sinful people, about Daniel and his friends—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—and their faithfulness to God. They were not afraid even of the fiery furnace and they didn't worship the idol. What are our choices in this world and what principles do we use in our lives? The children asked their teachers many questions.

I thank and praise the Lord for this ministry to children with very sensitive hearts! I thank all of you who help our ministry and pray for us! ♦

How You Helped Send *Immanuel's Child* into the Former USSR's Muslim Lands

Albert G.
SGA-Supported *Compassion Ministry* in Central Asia



Immanuel's Child stars and gifts for the four children that attended the Bible study class.

Dear friends! We are very grateful for your faithful support and the gift of giving, which we are able to share with needy families in our area through the *Immanuel's Child* Christmas outreach!

One of the families that we blessed with gifts is a large one. There are six children in the family. Their mother had worked together with one of the brothers from our church before his relocation. **When they worked together, the brother witnessed to her about Jesus and invited her to the church, and several times the church had visited this family with the Gospel.**

The mother in the family is Uzbek while the father is a Tatar. We worried that the children would not want to come to the church, but they did—praise God for that! As we talked, we found out that **the older girl had attended our Christian camp several times** and she still had sweet memories about that time. She shared that she would come again to the camp, but then remembered that we are now under

restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. All four children attended a Bible study class in our Sunday school, where they heard the Nativity story.

Then we had a private conversation, and I was able to ask them a couple of questions and then gave them some spiritual exhortations. I told them, "Now you are laying the groundwork of your whole life, and it will depend on what you choose to build it on, so build your life on the teaching of Jesus Christ and become His disciples!"

The children were very happy that there are people who do not forget about them, and they were especially delighted to get your gifts and presents. **I told them about the Bethlehem Star and the people whose names are written on them and who are praying for their family.** May the Lord bless you and reward you hundredfold and may the Lord Himself grow this seed of goodness and lead them to saving faith in Christ alone! ♦

Orphans Reborn in Russia's Far East

Slava Prokudin

Orphans Reborn in Komsomolsk, Russia

During this school year that started in September, we have been able to continue visiting orphanages, since the quarantine measures have not affected our meetings with children. Suffice it to say this school year has opened to us as a year of new opportunities and a new approach to working with children.

We devoted one of our first meetings in all three orphanages to an open communication evening. We tried to create a good atmosphere with candles and soft music, subdued lighting, and, of course, we were the first to answer the questions. What are you grateful to God for? What kind of pain (struggle) are you going through? What are your plans and dreams for the future? We knew that there were certain risks involved, that it would be hard for some to talk about these things, so we did not insist on mandatory responses to our questions.

God blessed these evening gatherings in a special way! The children talked about themselves and some wept as they shared about the pain they were going through. Sometimes one of the children left the room, but then came back. The children were talking about wanting to meet their relatives: their mothers, sisters, and brothers or about the pain of someone's death. We were struck by the ugliness of sin that we were talking about at these evening gatherings and how much pain these little hearts could contain. Even during the conversation we previously had with the children, they were not able to open their hearts to us. We were asked to hold such evening gatherings in all orphanages, which was a particular encouragement to us.

Anya has changed her attitude markedly towards the local church from neutral indifference to positive: and now she is a regular attendee including



Craft projects with the children.



church meetings and prayer groups. But she hasn't made yet the final step to follow Christ: she is still attracted by both the world and God (His people). Pray for her to come to saving faith at last. I can't wait to see her life to be changed and maybe her life will become a living testimony to others.

The following news relates both to my wife and me and the ministry. Dasha and I had planned to take custody of a teenage boy at the orphanage even before we got married. A year ago, my wife and I separately from each other (without telling each other about it) began to pray for one of the boys. When we realized that we had been praying for the same thing and that the time had come to take custody of the boy, we submitted our request to the administration of the orphanage. We were told that the boy had brothers: aged 12, 13 and 15 years old. That was like a stop sign for us. But later we began to think and pray about taking custody of the three brothers.

We visited the officials again, they were happy to hear about our willingness to take custody of all three but said that they still had a 17-year-old sister. Thus, we decided to take them all into our family in the near future. At the same time, our pastor offered to sell us his house. We really didn't have enough

money but having decided to take all four of the children into our family, we realized that we will need it and will be repaying him gradually. God has enlarged our hearts, so that we lovingly could accept these children in them, now we are a little worried that we probably won't have enough wisdom - please pray for us!

It is hard for us to express our full gratitude to you for your loyalty in supporting the *Orphans Reborn* ministry and providing support to our family, especially during the quarantine period. ♦



Evening gatherings in three different orphanages.



Bible lessons and games.

God is Not Bound by a Pandemic!

He Answers Prayer and Uses Your Gifts to Reach Souls for Christ

Alexander Khoroshkov

SGA-Sponsored Missionary Pastor in Krasnoyarsk, Russia

Greetings to you, beloved co-workers in the Gospel! In spite of the limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue on with our ministry. We are visiting all our **church plants** in the villages.



Nadia (left) welcomes many children into her home.

In **Sush**, our sister Nadia and her family are reaching many with Christ's love. Needy children in their village find hospitality, care, and support. In Sush, she is called "Nadia-Jesus." The children love her a lot! Daily they visit her for fellowship, a meal, and for humanitarian aid including clothing, which our believers collect from different churches.



Repairing the House of Prayer.

There is another town called **Turan**, where Denis and Sarah visit. They are repairing the local House of Prayer, and still have work to do to get it finished. The group in Turan is quite small, and both

Denis and Sarah visit on Saturdays to begin heating the building. On Sundays, they have a worship service that is attended by a small group of sisters. The family is active in street evangelism. They distribute Christian booklets in the Tuvian language, Scriptures, and other Christian literature. They also



Street evangelism in Turan.

regularly hand out clothes and food that we as a church collect to give to people in need.

The most difficult place for ministry is in **Bai-Khaak**. Outreach there is conducted by the family of Konstantin and Valentina Yanov. There was a severe lockdown due to the pandemic in this village, and there was no opportunity to visit the local orphanage where they used to do a lot of outreach. The school is also closed. Both Konstantin and Valentina were sick with the virus as well. Yet they do what they can. Services in **Kyzyl** only restarted in July of last year with all the restrictions and safety measures being observed including masks and social distancing.



(Top) Ministry in Bai-Khaak; (Above) Service in Kyzyl.

Beloved, we are very thankful for you and your faithfulness in supporting our ministry. May God bless you and your churches and know that we are praying for you! ♦

CIS IN THE NEWS

Recent Data Triples COVID-19 Deaths in Russia

After months of questions over the true scale of the coronavirus pandemic in Russia and the efficacy of a Russian-developed vaccine, the state statistical agency in Moscow announced new figures indicating that the death toll from COVID-19 is more than three times as high as officially reported. **The new data by Rosstat would raise Russia from eighth to third in a ranking of countries by the number of deaths from the pandemic.** It is believed that the official death toll from governmental statistics differs because of a narrow definition of who has died from the virus, and that number has frequently diverged from the figures released by the state statistics agency.

Regardless of the numbers, we know from the faithful missionary pastors and churches that SGA serves that the pandemic has taken an awful toll. Late in 2020, we were informed that at least 50 pastors in Ukraine had passed away from the virus, and churches across the CIS have been impacted along with the rest of the population. **This makes the support of SGA partners for ministry such as Christ Over COVID so vitally important, taking food, medicines, and the hope of the Gospel to needy families.** Please pray for an end to the pandemic, and for more open doors to share the love of Christ. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Thousands of orphan children across the former Soviet Union face such a difficult plight. In Russia alone, up to 700,000 are housed in orphanages or children's homes. While some are **true orphans**, the majority are "**social orphans**" whose parents are unable to take care of them, or who have been removed from parental custody due to abuse or neglect. The vast majority will **not** be adopted out, and **without intervention, many will end up in drug abuse, crime, or prostitution after they age out of the orphanages at 18 years old.**

That is why **Orphans Reborn** is such an important ministry—reaching these children with the life-changing Gospel and showing them that in Christ, they have a future and a hope. Your prayers and support of all of SGA's ministries—Bible training, Compassion Ministry, Russian-language Bible and literature distribution, and sponsorship of church-planting missionary pastors—is so vital. **And it's making an eternal difference in countless lives. Please pray about how you can help today!** ♦



Bible lesson and tea with teen boys in a Russian orphanage.

Insight FROM MICHAEL

Looking forward as Christ continues to reach orphans despite COVID

I hope this issue of Good News Report will be as much of a blessing to you as it is to me. SGA-sponsored children's ministries such as *Orphans Reborn* and *Immanuel's Child* carry a special place in my heart. God gave me the privilege of being involved in their inception, and what an encouragement it was to me on my return to SGA as president in 2017 to see these vital ministries bearing great spiritual fruit and growing!



The past year has been so full of challenges for the Bible-preaching churches we serve and the needy families and orphans they have been reaching. **It was about this time last year that news of the novel coronavirus began capturing our attention, and in only a few weeks, the lockdowns and quarantines began.** This impacted nearly every ministry, and ours was no exception. But God's faithfulness was on full display. **The pandemic, while horrible, also opened the widest door for the Gospel since the fall of communism.** Ministry continued to go forward as we launched **Christ Over COVID**, touching

*For in You the fatherless
find compassion.*

(Hosea 14:3)

lives that included orphans—many now spread out, including sent back to struggling families. The churches we serve adapted how they do things, and thousands of children were still reached with the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ—**even if that meant going house to**

house! Lives continued to be changed, and if anything, the Lord used this heart-rending pandemic to awaken many to their need for Him.

I cannot overstate how vitally important you have been in all of this. Your ongoing prayers, encouragement, and generous support have made an eternal impact. **Throughout SGA's 87-year history, our partners have stood by us and—with God's faithful provision—sustained us and made all of our ministry outreaches possible through the years.** We are now beginning the second month of the new year as I write this, and I look forward with great anticipation to what God will do in the days ahead. How glorious it is to be able to serve together with you in the cause of the Gospel, and to see countless men, women, and children come to saving faith across the former Soviet Union. Thank you so much!

For our Savior,

Michael Johnson
President



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