



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

In Dark Places, Jesus Calls Out to Lonely Orphans

Your support helps churches to tell them of the new birth (John 3:3)!



INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ Orphan children eager to learn Bible truths
- ♦ Even older orphans respond to Christ's truth and love!
- ♦ God is bringing orphans "home" to His family

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)

Learning About Baptism and Other Bible Truths

Your Support Helps Orphans Reborn Workers Teach God's Word and Share Gospel Hope

Olya I.
SGA-Supported *Orphans Reborn* Team in Russia

Each January, we celebrate the baptism of Jesus Christ in Russia. It is a very important day in Russian culture, so we have a Bible lesson on this topic. There were a lot of questions from the children about the meaning of baptism, what to do if they are not baptized, what to do if they were baptized when they were infants, etc. This topic turned out to be very interesting for the orphanage staff as well.

Zhenya is one girl who asked a lot of questions, and she was very active during the lesson. She said that she was not baptized and she used to worry a lot about that, but now she understands that she needs to be baptized when she has a relationship with God.

Now she prays to God when she needs help or if she wants to talk to somebody when she has nobody else. We want the children to think about God more than once a week. So we gave them Christian magazines so they can read Bible stories during the week. They can also use them to solve different puzzles, to play games. The following week, they told us what they had done, had read, and learned. One of

the boys named Alexander was very shy and quiet during the lesson. But afterward he came and very quietly said that he liked the lesson and would wait for us to come again. He was holding the magazine and whispered that he would read it every day!

Another boy named Andan came to Sergei with a lot of questions about Christmas. He has developmental problems, but he was so glad to have a personal talk—when an adult was very patient, kind, and ready to answer all his questions without being irritated. Also, Dima (a graduate from the



Talking with Alexander.



Andan (in yellow) participates in the activity.



Dima at church.

to be surrounded by such people. Thank God, he found a construction crew where the head is a Christian, and where several other members of our church work. He feels very comfortable among them, and he is glad that God has answered His request. And now he's happy to come to church!

Finally, one day before the lesson, a teacher asked Nadezhda (a member of our team) to come to her. She pointed to Kostya and said that he uses a lot of foul language. He is a very good boy but has this problem. Nadezhda had a long talk with him about swearing, that it is a language that the devil likes and how important it is to have a clean heart, clean thoughts, and a clean mouth. He promised to try to swear less. In a week they had a talk again. He said that he almost

orphanage) comes to church regularly. He stays after the worship service to have fellowship with the youth, and he is very glad to be surrounded by Christians. He remembers our visits and as he said: he had never met such kind people. When he finished his education and was looking for a job, he wanted to find a place where Christians work because he wanted



Kostya.



Visiting the orphanage.

did not swear and he would try not to swear at all. She gave him some chocolate and he gave her a big hug. Such small details may seem unimportant, but we see God at work in even these small results. Please keep praying for these children, that more will come to the Lord in faith. ♦



Zhenya (left) with another child at the orphanage.

The Gospel Turns Pain into Hope for Older Orphans

Your support sustains outreach in Belarus and beyond!

Pavel B.

SGA-Supported Orphans Reborn Team in Belarus

We regularly see how God works in the lives of older orphans, turning pain into hope. Their stories moved us to tears and reminded us of the boundless grace of our Heavenly Father.

Let's take the story of Agatha—a fragile girl with a difficult past: For a long time, she remained distant from the church and spent time in an orphanage. Her brother Sasha and sister Nastya have been visiting us regularly for a long time. Sasha, with his quiet strength, overcame many doubts thanks to prayers and support. Nastya—always with a sparkling smile—helps with the younger children, becoming a big sister to them, and now works as a teacher in elementary school.



Agatha, Nastya, Pavel, and Sasha.

Agatha saw these changes: **how Sasha became calmer, and Nastya—kinder and more confident.** One Sunday, Agatha came to church again, not out of habit, but with a thrill in her soul. Sitting in the back row, she began to join in the singing during worship, and later as I talked with her, she said, “I saw how they changed. Maybe God will change me like that someday?” We hugged her, prayed together, and then continued talking with Sasha and Nastya.

Another heart-warming story is about our Anya: My wife and I adopted her from an orphanage. Anya came to us with a baggage of pain—the fear of rejection and an emptiness in her soul. But God, in His tenderness, healed her through our family. Last week over a cozy family dinner, Anya suddenly looked at us with shining eyes and

said, “I’m so happy I have two sisters, Vera and Maria. They’re my best friends, and with them I finally feel at home.” Vera, our eldest biological daughter, teaches Anya how to draw and shares secrets, while our youngest, Maria, joyfully gives her toys and hugs her before bed.



Maria, Anya, and Vera.

The moment was filled with warmth—we all cried tears of happiness as we hugged. Anya added, “I used to think I’d never quite fit in, but God gave me a real family.” Anya is now blossoming. She’s growing up, helping with the little ones at church, sharing her story, and inspiring other orphans to believe in God’s love.

Our support for orphan graduates living in rented apartments continues: It’s like a mother’s care for grown-up chicks. Ksyusha and Lena have begun studying special subjects at their colleges. When Ksyusha calls in tears, saying “I can’t cope,” we pray together and read Philippians 4:13 . . . *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* We help with practical matters too—we bought a printer and laptop for both girls to ensure their studies are successful, as they have to read a lot online and do many papers, essays, and assignments. **They come to church, finding strength in fellowship, and we see how important their believing peers are to them.**

We are deeply grateful for your prayers, which strengthen us in our difficult times, and for your financial support, which allows us to purchase necessary items. Your support is a manifestation of Christ’s love. We pray for you, that the Lord will bless your families and ministries! ♦

MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve (Colossians 3:23-24).

Not long ago, we received the testimony of a dedicated couple in Ukraine who minister through *Orphans Reborn*. Vasily and Ira’s outreach goes well beyond the orphanage. When they first began ministering to orphans many years ago, they dreamed of one day reaching children connected to Ukraine’s social services. These children aren’t in orphanages, but they are still orphans at heart. Many lived with guardians—often elderly grandparents trying to raise their grandkids while in fragile health and deep poverty. But for years, the door to that ministry remained firmly shut. Ira said, “The director was always closed to anything Christian. We prayed and waited. And then the war began—and God opened that door!”

With SGA partners’ support, Vasily and Ira have been serving weekly at a local Social Services Center—a place where orphaned children live with their elderly guardians. They quickly saw that both generations—children and guardians alike—were deeply wounded. Many had lost loved ones. In time, every meeting became not only a time of crafts, games, and pizza, but a sacred moment of building

and bonding. Ira added, “We play games and have a Bible story and eat together. Then we meet with the older children. We talk about things they are concerned about: tattoos, swearing, relationships, holidays. We just listen and talk. They open up after playing and eating.”

The transformation has been tangible. Guardians often say that these gatherings have drawn them closer to the children in their care. The couple also regularly visits families in dire need bringing food, meat, and the Word of God into homes that often look empty and broken. It still amazes them how the same director who once resisted any Christian presence now welcomes Bible lessons and prayer. Perhaps the war softened hearts and showed people that we can’t rely on ourselves. We need God!

For Vasily and Ira, ministry isn’t something separate from their everyday life—it is their life. For both, the story is never about them. It’s about the God who still opens closed doors—even in the darkest times—so that the fatherless might find a Father, and the broken might find hope again. ♦



Visiting children at the Social Services Center.

Hope Shines Out of Heartbreak

Your support helped reach orphans at a lakeside summer Bible camp

Vyacheslav P.

SGA-Supported *Orphans Reborn* Team in Far East Russia

Greetings, dear brothers and sisters! Over the summer, we spent a wonderful week at the Baptist Union campsite on **Haka Lake**. This time we chose a simple theme of a royal game, bringing the children into the setting of kingdoms, knights and dames—to their delight. **In total, we had 41 children, with 19 of them coming from orphanages.**

The storyline moved easily from the king of the camp legend to the True King—Jesus—as well as from camp events to biblical truths. As always, the children enjoyed it all and were upset that they had to leave. Already on the third day the kids were begging, “Let’s stay here for good!”, especially those from the orphanages.

They appreciated that in the camp, they were not yelled at, that they are loved, and were just happy together with all the children. For us it was hard to realize once again, what a horrible reality these kids have to live in.



Children at the summer camp.

The last time I wrote that we were praying and thinking about taking more children into our family. I prayed for God to show His will in the near future.



On this day, God truly visited us. We were asked to take in **six children who were left without custody as their caregivers had divorced.** Four of them are siblings. We learned from the children that the previous custodian had **severely beaten them all**, and the two older girls told my wife of worse abuse. The kids seemed to be almost completely neglected and kept at home permanently. With us, they were swimming and bathing at the lake for the first time, as well as going to the park and many other activities that we did together. For all of them, it was all for the first time.

We pray for God to direct us in what to do in the long term, while experts say that in our neighborhood it would not be possible. But we know that nothing is impossible for our God. We know that God is in control and He will see things out, though we are not fully convinced that God is directing us to take these children into our family. **Thank you for your continued prayerful and financial support! Please pray also for these six children.** ♦



Spending time with the six children.

Equipping Stewardship

Garland Gould

SGA Senior Vice President of Partner Engagement

In the past two installments, we began looking at the 5 Biblical Principles, which are:

1. God is Owner of All
2. The Priority in Estate Distribution is Dependency
3. The Motivation for Estate Distribution is Love
4. People are More Important than Dollars
5. It is Required That a Servant be Found Faithful

At this point we have discussed the first two *Biblical Principles* and you may recall that we describe *Principles* #2 and #3 as our “directional arrows” as they guide our decisions about our distribution. **The Motivation of Estate Distribution is Love** is *Principle* #3. Our Scripture reference here is well known . . . *for God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life* (John 3:16). No greater display of generosity has ever been shown and it guides us now.

So practically, how do we apply this? *Principle* #2 instructs us that those financially dependent on us are our priorities, so you might think family members no longer dependent on us do not qualify for distribution, but under this principle they do. When considering distribution based on

dependency, it may be possible to quantify that need. So while this principle doesn’t guide you in amounts, percentages, or any other way to quantify the distribution, **it does eliminate a common consideration—tradition. Or to put it more causally, “just because.”**

Therefore, as you consider what this may look like in your unique situation, remember to always be going to the Lord in prayer, asking for His guidance in all your decisions. If your estate distributions are not made to those financially dependent on you, and you are not giving motivated out of love, then you are likely missing God’s plan for your estate.

If these principles, or any others, raise questions, please remember we are pleased to serve you.

We have two booklets to help you, the *Estate Planning Guide* and the *Estate Inventory*, at no cost to you. We look forward to speaking with you and serving you as you consider God’s plan of stewardship for your estate. ♦



Garland Gould

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Reaching lonely, forgotten orphan children with Christ’s love is just one of the many ministries carried out by the faithful churches SGA serves across the former Soviet Union. Through *Orphans Reborn*, many of these boys and girls are receiving much needed love and care, and above all—the **life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ**. Your gifts and prayers help accomplish not only this, but also provision of Bibles and Christian literature, other children’s outreaches such as *Immanuel’s Child* at Christmas and **Summer Bible Camps**, sound Bible training, and so much more. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Visiting a family-style orphanage in Belarus.

Insight FROM MICHAEL

Your Support is Paying Eternal Dividends as Orphans Turn to Christ!

For those of us who grew up in loving homes, the lives of children living in broken or dysfunctional homes can be hard to fathom. When we read or hear about cases of terrible neglect and/or abuse, our minds are shocked and our hearts are broken. How is it possible for someone to deal with the most young and vulnerable in such a fashion?

Across the former Soviet Union, thousands upon thousands of children are in orphanages right now. Some of them are true orphans having **lost both parents**, but others are what we call “social orphans,” or those children who have been **removed from their homes** due to abuse or neglect. I can remember when the Soviet collapse first happened more than 30 years ago, some children were even **abandoned by their parents** at the orphanage because the parents could no longer care for them, for a variety of reasons.

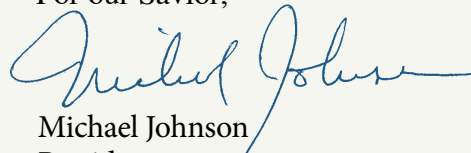
That sorrowful reality is what brought the SGA-supported **Orphans Reborn** ministry about, by the grace and merciful provision of our loving God and Father. For many years now, you—our faithful partners in ministry—have helped **dedicated, caring teams of church workers** make regular visits to orphanages in their communities or regions.

Sometimes they travel great distances. They spend quality time together with the children, loving on them, playing games and doing crafts. **Most importantly, they have the opportunity to share lessons from God’s Word, and teach them about the Gospel.** They teach them about the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who loves them most of all, who can save them from their sins and give them the certain hope of eternal life with Him.

And the reports that we receive from the **Orphans Reborn** teams on a regular basis are **wonderful testimonies of how God is changing these young lives.** It is even more joyful to hear when the orphans reach adulthood, and having come to Christ through the ministry, that they want to become part of the **Orphans Reborn** teams themselves, reaching other children as they were reached.

You have truly been a part of all of this through the years. It could not have happened without your prayers and support, and I can never thank you enough!

For our Savior,


Michael Johnson
President



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