



SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION  
**Good News Report**

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

# Through Your Prayers and Gifts, Jesus Opens Closed Hearts!

## Read the Stories . . .

### INSIDE: YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS AT WORK

- ♦ A steady, loving witness is often what it takes.
- ♦ Orphans learn about the Passover—and salvation!
- ♦ A special thanks to you from Ukraine. (You'll want to read this!)

*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)*

# Your Support Provides a Steady, Loving Witness to Orphans

SGA-Supported *Orphans Reborn* Team in Western Russia

Peace, dear brothers and sisters! As we minister to the children in western Russia, we are seeing:

- trust gradually building,
- the children opening up, and
- something greater happening through simple things like games, crafts, and conversations.

We thank God for every encounter, and that He is at work even in ways that are not always obvious at first glance.

Our visit to the **first orphanage** kicked off with the usual activities, while some of the kids hung out outside chatting, having fun, and catching up. These spontaneous conversations are where trust and a genuine connection begins to happen. That is how our team member Anna managed to get to know a girl named **Snezhana, who is 15**. She is one of four siblings who all live in this orphanage. **Her mother leads a reckless life, and her alcoholic father left to take part in the war and was killed.** The kids were raised by their grandmother, whom they call “Mom.” Snezhana is a very open, kind girl but she hides behind a mask of either indifference or excessive brightness and noise. We had the opportunity for a one-on-one conversation.



Talking with Snezhana.

We talked about relationships, about how God designed marriage, and why He created relationships between a man and a woman in the first place. **Please pray for Snezhana and her entire family, as her father’s death had been a very difficult blow for her grandparents, who are the only**

**guiding lights in these children’s lives.**

On another day, we received a call from the head teacher at another orphanage with whom we have had a warm, trusting relationship with for many years. They needed our help. **A serious incident had occurred—several ninth-graders assaulted a teacher who ended up in the hospital.** It came as a shock to us. We prayed for God to give us wisdom, the proper words, and the understanding of how to handle the situation.

**Pastor Vladimir on our team was the one who took the lead in talking with the boys.** He didn’t speak down to them, but as a man who had himself

once lived a completely different life and came to God after much turbulence. **His testimony truly struck a chord with the boys—it was clear that they were listening to him and that something was happening inside, even if not all of them showed it outwardly.** We talked with the rest of the boys about the value of women — that they are God’s beautiful creations, and how important it is to cherish, respect, and protect them.

**It was an emotionally challenging but very important trip.** We see that such institutions really need support—not only in practical matters but also in prayer. Please continue praying for this situation, for the recovery of the educator, for the children’s hearts, and for all the staff at the orphanages. It is especially important here for God’s work to be continued and bear fruit! ♦



Pastor Vladimir talks to the boys.

# Orphans Learn the True Meaning of Passover!

*How your support communicated the Gospel this year*

Elena R.

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

Passover month here in Russia has been busy and filled with enjoyable activities. We prepared a series of Passover-themed lessons and teaching materials for orphans—and God used it! Between 13 and 16 students from grades seven through nine participated in the meetings. We bought prizes for the students and offered them fruit and nuts as treats.

**The children learned about the events of Holy Week and learned that the term reflects the suffering Christ experienced.** Then they opened plastic eggs and found symbols inside related to each day of the final week of Christ’s life. They correctly guessed the meaning of the symbols in nearly every instance. During class, we examined **key moments from the final days of Jesus Christ’s life** as we looked through the slides. We discussed the actions of Mary and Judas, the profound meaning of Christ’s prayer, and the events surrounding His crucifixion.

**The students paid close attention to these significant and pivotal events, which culminated in the Resurrection.** They were particularly struck by the humility with which Christ walked His path. We concluded the story by reflecting on how Christ saves everyone who believes in Him and chooses to live according to His Word. These thoughts stayed with the students, filling their hearts with hope!

Other lessons taught about the various groups of people who witnessed the event. Afterward, we reflected on the meaning of symbols and traditions. Ultimately, the children learned that the most important aspect of Passover is the



Lessons with children in the orphanage.

Resurrection of Christ. **In conclusion, we highlighted the key points: His victory over sin and Satan, His triumph over death and hell, and His gift of eternal life which He offers to us all.**

Our final lesson on Passover talked about how the entire world is part of God’s wise design, as well as how Christ’s earthly ministry was part of this great plan. The main emphasis was that the task of every believer today is to share the Gospel and make disciples. We thank our brothers and sisters through SGA for their active participation in our ministry. We are praying that our future classes for the boarding school students will be successful and impactful. ♦

# A Special Thank You from Ukraine to Every SGA Supporter

Many people throughout Ukraine are feeling weary. The war seems to have no end. However, the believers are remaining steadfast, in love and hope. Much of that love and hope comes from people who don't even live in Ukraine. It's you! It's the men and women who are reading the stories of how God is at work. It's the ones who faithfully pray, even when they don't know exactly what to pray about. It's the people who sacrificially give. And it's not going unnoticed!

Angela is one of SGA's Storytellers in Ukraine, and she joins her brothers and sisters there in expressing thanksgiving to the Lord and to SGA partners for supporting them in these difficult days. She says:

*"There are moments in this war when gratitude rises so strongly, it feels like it must be spoken. Because there is something the world doesn't always see: Ukraine is not standing alone. We don't mean politically—we mean spiritually. There are believers like you across the ocean—brothers and sisters we may*

*never meet—who have chosen to carry Ukraine in prayer. Many have no personal connection to our country, yet your hearts have been moved by something deeper than geography: they've been moved by compassion, by love, and by Christ.*

*In Ukraine, we often measure life by sounds—the distant thunder of explosions, the buzz of drones overhead, the*

*sirens, the heavy silence after. The hurried prayers whispered in basements, stairwells, and shelters. And yet, in the middle of it all, there is another sound we've learned to recognize: **the steady, unseen work of God's people praying.** Because somehow...we feel it. We feel it when the sky is loud, and when the sky is calm. We feel it when:*

- *Chaplains stand strong with tired eyes. When pastors sit beside grieving families with only Scripture and presence.*
- *Believers keep gathering, even when strength is running low.*
- *A message comes through: 'We prayed for you today!'*



Believers in Ukraine worship together.

*To someone far away, that may seem small. But here, it isn't. So today, from a war-weary, yet Christ-proclaiming, community of believers in Ukraine, we simply want to say: THANK YOU. Thank you for praying and giving when no one was watching. And above all—thank You, Lord, for uniting us as one Body, for teaching us what love looks like, and for sustaining Your Church even in the shadow of war. We may be separated by borders, languages, and oceans. But in Christ, we are one—and by His mercy, we are still here!"* ♦



Destruction from the war.

## MUCH PRAYER, MUCH POWER IN ACTION

*Do you not say, "There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest?" Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest (John 4:35).*

We have occasionally shared reports from SGA-supported missionary pastors laboring in Russia's Far East—a unique region that is frequently very challenging for evangelical church ministry. Not long ago, we received a report from Pastor Andrei, who has been serving in the Far East for some time. In it, Andrei demonstrates the patience and faithful labor that is necessary for fruitful Gospel ministry.

*"Last fall, we went together with the youth to a nearby town for evangelism. We had fellowship with the people, sharing the Gospel with them, and inviting them to a meeting with us. There were two people, Rodion and his girlfriend. We talked with them and read the Bible together. These two people attend our meetings from time to time. We also continued our weekly Bible Study meetings with unbelieving young men at the church building. Every Monday we meet with them, studying the Bible and praying together. They have started to consider committing their lives to God. Stepan, who was baptized about six months ago, became my assistant and he goes with me to witness about the Kingdom of God.*

*A team of brothers went witnessing in another town—Nikita, Vadim, Yan, and Odyssey (a young man from my Bible Study group who has not yet come to faith); Stepan, who was recently baptized, Veniamin, who was also recently baptized, another man named Andrei, and myself. We regularly invited a family to visit with us, or we would visit a family that does not know the Lord. We try to make new*



Witnessing with other men.

*contacts in order to serve them in as much as we are able. They do not always love to talk about God, but they like to spend time with us.*

*In December we planned a town wide event—a Testimonies Night and this was very interesting. Alisa, a young lady who does not know God yet, asked if she could share her life story as well. She shared that God touched her (an unbeliever) and gave her a revelation about Himself. This was an unusual event, because she only started to study the Bible with one of the sisters from our church two months ago. God is at work in her heart. Then we had a youth Christmas Eve, to which we invited unbelieving young people to in order to show how much we care for them! There is another young lady named Anfisa, who started to attend our group wanting to know God and was open to the Bible Study. In addition to all this, the team from the Sunday school held two children's celebrations where we were able to share the Gospel with 60 children and 15 parents."*



Youth Christmas Eve event.

These meetings and evangelistic efforts are bathed in prayer before they begin, and the teams trust God with the results. We are deeply thankful to God for Pastor Andrei, his ministry team, and their faithful labors. May many more respond to the Gospel in the days ahead as God works in the hearts of those who hear! ♦

# In Belarus, Christ's Love—and Yours—Reaches Old and Young

Vladimir T.  
SGA-Supported Missionary Pastor in Belarus

This year, God's mercy in our region has continued through **our services in the local centers for the visually impaired.** A musical group performs during the service, and I am given the opportunity to preach the Gospel at the end.



Pastor Vladimir preaches after the musical group performs.

We primarily share stories from the life of Christ and invite people to pray to God with us. In addition to sharing the Gospel, I set up a table with literature: mostly regular Bibles, children's Bibles, and Scripture portions. I see how eagerly some people take these books. One woman named **Tatyana** came with her son who is 27 years old and in a wheelchair. Since she has a Bible, she asked for Bible commentaries because she does not understand everything she is reading. This shows that people read and reflect on the Word of Life.

Our **work at the nursing home** continues with one brother holding a service there about twice a month. This is a difficult category of people, because due to old age or other reasons, they do not have the



Distributing literature.

same mindset as ordinary people. They are like children. That is why they love to see the Bible in cartoons or sing children's songs with movements. The church collects clothes for them and holds special concerts. When we interact with the audience, we hear that they understand and know the Bible better.

**We also visit the orphanage and walk down the long corridor hearing, "Uncle Volodya! Uncle Volodya!"** I want to be with these kids more often, I want to visit them regularly. One girl named **Mstislava** told us how she has already been through three foster homes. This time, there were 18 children. Among them, the teenage girls stood out, in good spirits, and all had dyed their hair the same reddish color. **We got to know them because they sing Christian songs, and discuss how and why the Savior came into this world.** By the end, as has become our tradition, we prayed for them: praying that they will find a family while still young, praying that they will create healthy families, and praying that God would take them into His family. Please pray with us!



(Top) Mstislava; (Above) Visiting with the children.

Pray for us, that we may prosper with God everywhere! Thank you for becoming involved in the ministry in our region through your prayers for us. May God bless you and help you in every need! ♦

# Equipping Stewardship

Garland Gould  
SGA Senior Vice President of Partner Engagement



Garland Gould

Now that we have briefly walked through the first two steps of *Biblical Estate Design* in past issues of the **Good News Report**, we move to step 3—**Gathering the Necessary Data**. This step can be easy to take for granted as it is a straightforward task.

However, many plans have unraveled because there was a mistake in the data. The mistakes can be in simply forgetting to include an asset, a significant error in valuating an asset, and often times a mistake in how that asset is titled. The titling is critical as it instructs *how* the asset is to be transferred. It is critical that your professionals have a complete and accurate "inventory" of your estate assets so they can put in place a plan that will accomplish your God-

given goals.

We have a **Guide to Planning Your Estate** that will offer more information and explain in more detail these rules and options, and we are happy to send this to you in either printed form or electronically. We think this guide will help you gain this familiarity and hopefully inform your prayers as you seek God's guidance. We also have an *Estate Inventory* booklet that is an excellent resource as you take the important step of gathering your data. Please let us know if we can answer any questions and if you would like to receive the resource, *Principles of Estate Planning* brochure. We also have an informational newsletter that you may find helpful and interesting. You can reach us for either, or both, at [plannedgiving@sga.org](mailto:plannedgiving@sga.org).

*Let us remind you that this information and service is our ministry to you and not contingent on any future gifts.* ♦

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Children across the former Soviet Union who are in orphanages face challenges that children raised by loving parents in a good home don't face. In addition to the emotional scars left in their hearts and minds, many of them end up in crime, drug abuse, alcoholism, or even prostitution once they have to leave the orphanage at age 18. It is into these young lives that the SGA-supported **Orphans Reborn** ministry is



Praying for orphaned children.

making a great difference—sharing the love of Christ and the hope of the Gospel. Your gifts help accomplish so much more: Bible training, provision of Bibles and Christian literature, Summer Bible Camps and other children's ministries, Compassion Ministry, and support of missionary pastors. Please pray about how you can help today! ♦



Distributing Bibles and aid.

# Insight FROM MICHAEL

## *Orphans Reborn* is now reaching more nations!

During my time at SGA, the Lord has allowed me to be a part of some incredible ministry across the former Soviet Union, and to help secure support for it. The *Orphans Reborn* outreach is one of those ministries that we are featuring in this month's **Good News Report**. When you look at what God has done through this wonderful ministry through the years, it is truly amazing.

During our last fiscal year alone, your faithful support helped reach more than 17,000 children in six former Soviet countries—**Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Moldova**. In addition, *Orphans Reborn* is now active in **Poland** reaching children in 12 orphanages. And the ministry goes way beyond just the orphanage.




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*“As these children experience the love of Christ in action and hear of the hope of the Gospel through the Lord Jesus Christ, lives are changed.”*

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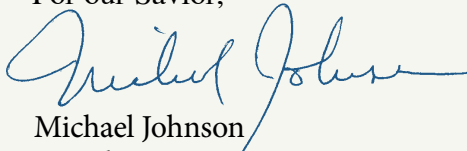
God has opened the door for these faithful teams to also visit **boarding schools, shelters, children’s cancer treatment centers, hospices, foster families, and juvenile detention centers**. Children in **low income or dysfunctional families** are not forgotten, as well as children with **behavioral issues**. As these children experience the love of Christ in action and hear of the

hope of the Gospel through the Lord Jesus Christ, lives are changed. **You have truly been a part of all of it.**

I can’t neglect to mention another truly wondrous work of God. And that is when orphan children repent and trust in Christ as their Savior, grow to adulthood, and then join the *Orphans Reborn* ministry to reach other children with the Gospel just as they were reached. **This fills me with great joy, and I trust it fills you with the same joy!** They are able to identify with and relate to orphan children like no other because they lived it and know what it is like. The Lord uses them to bring children to Himself in such a powerful way—yet another example of His chain of grace in countless lives.

**Please join me in continuing to pray for *Orphans Reborn*, as there are thousands more children who need to be reached.**

For our Savior,

  
Michael Johnson  
President



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