

Growing in Grace and Truth

Young Orphans Progress in Discipleship



Pastor Pavel
Belarus

And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and in His name they will walk (Zechariah 10:21).

The Lord Himself spoke the above Bible verse in reference to the regathering of His people Israel. Yet it is also a wonderful picture of how He faithfully grants strength and spiritual growth to those who seek His face. Joyfully, we are seeing this happen among orphan graduates reached with the Gospel through the SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* ministry.

In Belarus, Pastor Pavel wrote about how a young girl named Anya is progressing in her faith. This past summer was packed full of ministry with the orphan children and youth, and in July, Anya took a step that filled everyone with great joy . . .

We have talked about Anya more than once. We met her during the first year of our ministry while she was still in the orphanage. She was

already active and open to the things of the Lord. Two years later she graduated, and we continued to stay in touch with her. By God's grace, we were able to help her during her university study, letting her stay in an apartment with believers. For some time, she lived in this home with a Christian family. Then she moved to a rented apartment to live together with several sisters from our church who are part of our Orphans Reborn team.

This constant fellowship worked in Anya, and began changing her deeply. She regularly attended church, youth gatherings, and small groups. Anya was in our summer camps several times and began to help in the kitchen. We were very excited when Anya repented during one of the services. So this past summer, Anya was baptized in the church after Bible study and meeting with our church elders. Now she is involved in the children's ministry of our church, and is seeking God more and more. There



Anya's baptism.

is still much growth ahead for her, but we are rejoicing that she is a part of God's family now. We ask you to pray for Anya's continued spiritual growth and her future life.

Orphans Reborn at Summer Camp

Pavel also reported a gloriously fruitful summer camp season, which included 18 children from the orphanage and foster families. In fact, they made up almost a third of the campers! Seven of the children were at camp for the first time. The children and youth learned a lot about God during that session, and realized that the Christian life brings joy. The highlight was the last evening. All the children expressed thanksgiving, while four repented during the evening gathering.

After the first church camp was over, the



OR team was able to spend another week together with the children . . .

For us it was a further demonstration of God's love to these children—19 in all from different orphanages. We were in the same place for the whole week learning the basics of the Christian faith. Every evening, we gathered around the campfire with families from our church. They shared their testimonies and gave the children their counsel. During the camp we had two Sundays, and we spent each of them at the church. One Sunday, the campers sang a song for the congregation. After the service, we held a teen gathering where the



Sweet fellowship and sharing of testimonies while enjoying a meal can bear amazing Gospel fruit!

youth could fellowship with their friends from the camp.

Please continue to pray for these children, as well as for Pastor Pavel and the faithful workers who are discipling these young people. As they graduate and must leave the orphanage, our prayer is that many will enter this challenging world with faith in Christ as their sure foundation.

Visiting Orphans Reborn in Action

Lana Yusov
SGA Children's Ministry Coordinator

Today, I visited an orphanage in Vovchik, Ukraine, in the Chernobyl area. I accompanied the *Orphans Reborn* team from Revival Church, which included Pastor Yaroslav Machinsky, and OR coordinator Grigory Karpov. Grigory was raised in an orphanage himself. He is married and has a daughter. He and his wife have carried on the OR ministry in Vovchik for a long time.

We brought sweets, fruit, toiletries, and more nutritious food items such as pasta and other items for the orphans. According to the director of the orphanage, orphans today in Ukraine are having a very difficult time, especially the ones who graduate and want to continue their education. As an example, she told us that to be in a cooking school, the orphans are required to pay tuition in the form of food products in order to be taught how to prepare them. At colleges and universities, they must pay tuition plus rent for their dormitory rooms. Many are "social orphans" instead of true orphans, where both parents are dead. Only true orphans receive support from the government, but the majority of these children have at least one parent living who is not supporting them. The government has little means to help.

When the children saw the candies and



We thank God for the close bonds He is forging between the children and the OR teams.

sweets we brought them, they were so excited! Their caregiver said they had not had such treats for a very long time.

It was great to see that the children knew a lot of passages from the Bible, and tried to answer all questions when they were asked. Grigory said that growing up as an orphan himself helps him to relate to the children, and to show them that God can take care of them. The children all love him, and he cares for each of them.

The OR team in Vovchik is praying to establish a transitional facility for the orphans who reach age 18 and must leave the orphanage. They do not want to lose them to the world after their graduation. They want to help them to begin lives in the world, assisting them with paper work, counseling, discipleship, and guidance. They have a Christian attorney and other believers who are ready to help the graduates to adapt into the real world, and to be re-socialized. Please pray with us for this to be realized! Thank you for your prayers and support of *Orphans Reborn* through SGA!

January, 2016

Dear SGA/Canada Partners in Ministry,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Thank you for your faithful prayer and financial support for pastors and churches in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). **Thank you** as well for trusting SGA/Canada to facilitate these integral ministry partnerships. **I thank the Lord for each of you** and for your generous responses as I have poured out my heart and shared through *InSight* and in person.

Through you, God has answered many prayers!

For almost 18 years, I have been privileged to serve as the executive director of Slavic Gospel Association in Canada. This has been a cherished, once in a lifetime opportunity. The Lord has graciously blessed SGA/Canada much more than I could ever have prayed for or imagined. With my encouragement, the SGA/Canada board hired someone to eventually replace me. Pastor Bill Ball began serving with SGA/Canada on May 1, 2015. **I resigned as executive director, effective January 31, 2016.** Bill will succeed me.

As the Lord brings SGA/Canada, and Lynne and myself, to mind, **would you please pray for:**

- **Dr. D. A. Carson's Oct. 17-30/16 CIS ministry trip** and additional funding – about \$7,500
- Resources to **translate into Russian and print** 15,000 copies of **Dr. Carson's Basics for Believers**, a commentary on Philippians – about \$15,000 additional funding
- **SGA/Canada's general fund** that has been significantly impacted by recent giving patterns and decreased "Where Needed Most" donations (ministry delivery and office operations)
- **Future ministry for myself and Lynne** – interim pastoral ministry or whatever the Lord provides

Serving with SGA has blessed Lynne and myself with many precious relationships. We are praying that we can travel to the CIS again to say "Good Bye" and "Thank You." Our hearts' desire would be to do the same across Canada. For now, may this letter in a small way suffice.

Thank you again for your care for those whom we serve and for myself and Lynne. While we have met comparatively few of you, **each of you is a precious gift from the Lord for which we thank Him.**

God bless you.

Yours gratefully in Christ,



Allan Vincent
Executive Director (Retired)



PS After Jan. 31/16 I can be contacted at allanwvincent@gmail.com or 519-502-2351 (cell)



Orphans Reborn



Orphan children, whether they are true orphans or "social" orphans who have been placed in orphanages because of abuse or neglect, have a deep need for love and hope. Through your support of SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* ministry, you are having an eternal impact in thousands of young lives. These snapshots are small glimpses into the ministries and resources you help provide, and the happy faces of the children tell the story of how God's love draws the hurting and broken to Himself. Please keep praying for *Orphans Reborn* teams, and for the children receiving ministry.



Christ's Love for Special Children with Special Needs

Dmitri is an SGA-sponsored missionary pastor laboring in Belarus. Recently, he sent in a wonderful report about a summer camp that his church held for children with physical challenges and other special needs—a camp SGA partners helped make possible.

In his report, Dmitri shared a letter written by a girl named Alina, who has



Alina experienced the love of Christ through an SGA-sponsored summer camp, and now shares with other children what Christ has done for her.

a heartbreaking story. But her life was changed by the Lord through summer camp, and the Lord used her to share His love with the other children at the camp . . .

My mother was deprived of her parental rights because she was an alcoholic and could not take care of me. I did not have a father at home. Then my mother died, so I was taken from home and raised in an orphanage. When I was seven, I was adopted out and my foster mother was a Christian. I began to attend church and the next year I sincerely repented. Now I'm 15 years old.

My friend Yana invited me to the camp. Her brother has Down's Syndrome. Since last year's camp, her family has been attending the church. For me, this special time was like a ray of daylight. Of course, I met many people and I made a lot of friends. But more important for me was to be able to share with these special kids. My attitude to people is changing, with mercy, compassion, and other qualities growing in me. Such camps are necessary not only for disabled children, but also for the healthy ones. We have learned to love and accept one another!

Dmitri says that this camp ministered the love of Christ beyond the children to also touch their families and caregivers, and for that, he is thankful to God . . .

Our camp made the greatest impression. It was an unforgettable time with people who face a lot of anxiety and troubles. They are largely isolated at their homes with their ill and disabled children, without any fellowship or any hope. We send special thanks to SGA partners and staff for your ongoing support and assistance in organizing our Christian children's camps. Thank you for the colorful Christian literature, material resources, and prayer support. The Word of God is living, and it is already bringing His blessing on those who heard!

CIS in the News



Russia Escalates Middle East Military Operations

This past fall, Russia began controversial military operations in Syria and other parts of the Middle East, aiming air strikes at both ISIS fighters and in support of Syrian president Bashar Assad's governing regime. Moscow says its air campaign targets Islamic State, but according to the media,

most of the strikes have hit rival insurgent groups fighting against Assad, some of which are supported by the United States. Russia began its air campaign on September 30, alarming a U.S.-led coalition, which is carrying out its own air strikes against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

Anytime there is an increase in international tensions, or between Russia and Western nations, there is also increased concern for the potential impact on evangelical churches. Please pray with us for the protection of our brothers and sisters, and for even these tensions to lead to open doors for the Gospel.

How You Can Help

Across Russia and the other countries of the CIS, hundreds of thousands of children are housed in orphanages or children's homes. Some of these heartbroken boys and girls are true orphans, but the majority are "social orphans" who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect by alcoholic parents. There is an effort underway to move toward a foster family system, but this is years from being fully implemented and, for the vast majority, the orphanage will be their home until age 18.

Through *Orphans Reborn*, SGA partners continue to help the churches reach thousands with the Gospel. Your prayers and support accomplish so much more—providing Russian-language Bibles and Christian literature, fruit and other treats, Bible training, children's ministries, compassion ministry, and help for missionary pastors in the field proclaiming the Gospel. Please pray about how you can help today!



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Canadian Connection

by Bill Ball



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During this winter season, we have experienced weather changes from unseasonably warm to cold fluctuations. We are reminded by our heavenly Father that He is still in control of all things. Life is in a continual flux as we seek to serve and follow God. We are also reminded that . . . Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Our lives have been transplanted from a wonderful, 35-year pastoral experience in Ontario to now follow the Lord as the new executive director of SGA/Canada. Effective February 1, 2016, this is our new role in kingdom work. Having been associated with SGA as a local pastor for the last seven years and volunteering in Volgograd, Russia, with the *Antioch Initiative* we accepted the call to serve full time.

We are grateful for loving partnerships that have been developed in the CIS (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan). These are dear servants who sacrifice for the

sake of the gospel. Our goal is to develop new and greater ministries on the foundation laid – love for God.

It will be our joy to meet you, our faithful supporters, and expand the SGA family in Canada. So many Slavic people have never heard the clear plan of salvation and we know the door is open to share. Will you join us on this journey while the opportunities are before us? There may likely come a day when we will not have such access to church planters, Bible schools/ seminaries, camps, orphanages, rehab centers, literature and compassion ministries.

My wife and I look forward to sharing the joy and challenges of our brothers and sisters in the CIS. Your prayers and financial gifts reap eternal dividends.

Bill & Judy Ball

