



A Bridge of Hope

SLAVIC GOSPEL ASSOCIATION

Good News Report

SHARING THE GOSPEL ♦ EQUIPPING THE CHURCH ♦ HELPING THE FORGOTTEN

*Your Prayers and Support
Reach Orphans with New Birth!
Read more...*

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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)

When Orphans Ask: “Why is There So Much Suffering?”

So many children carry so much sorrow.

Orphans Reborn in Smolensk, Russia

Each Easter Sunday is a wonderful day—especially for orphans. We can discuss what a great act of love God showed on Golgotha when His Son paid the price for our sins. At the orphanage in **Smolensk**, the *Orphans Reborn* team had special lessons when they taught the children and their teachers about Easter.

We wanted them to know that Easter is not about colored eggs or a bunny. We shared the whole story, discussed it together, sang a lot of songs, made some crafts with the small children, and gave them small prizes. We also noticed that the teachers listened especially attentively. It was an important

reminder that we are reaching not only the orphans, but the adults who work with them as well.

The orphan children have many questions and carry much sorrow.

For example: “If God is love, why do people have so many sufferings?” **We often hear questions like this from adults, but when a child whose father is in prison and whose mother is an alcoholic asks you this question, it is much more difficult to answer.** During the years of our ministry, we have heard this question so many times but it is no easier to hear.

In that light, this past Easter we decided to **discuss the story of Job to show the children that**

God can turn one’s sufferings into great blessings. And they do not have to feel lonely—because God is near. Again, this was not an easy topic to discuss.

But it is vitally important to help these young souls who have gone through such suffering already. Above all, God Himself understands our sufferings . . . *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings* (Hebrews 2:10).

Please pray with us that the children will draw close to the Lord as they learn more of His great love. Thank you for your prayerful support of *Orphans Reborn!* ♦



Through your support, the children learn the true story of Easter, and the love Christ has for them.

Sign Language Interpreter Helps Reach the Deaf: “I Never Thought the Lord Would Ever Use Me!”

By Iryna Kudelia

Irpen Biblical Seminary Graduate

Editor’s Note: Your support for SGA is crucial for ministries like the Irpen Biblical Seminary in Ukraine. And Irpen graduates like Iryna Kudelia are being used by God in unique ways to build up the church and reach the lost. Here is Iryna’s story:

I grew up in a Christian home, but tended to be impatient with things, disobedient to my parents, lost interest in going to the church, and attracted by values offered by the world. But my parents kept praying faithfully for me. They would unceasingly tell me that being with Christ provides the only meaning of life for us, and that life without Him is nothing but vanity.

As they continued praying, one summer I went to a Christian camp where the Gospel was preached, and the preacher called for repentance. One night, when I heard the call to repent, the Holy Spirit prompted my heart and I went forward in tearful repentance. After that, I had a long talk with the pastor, and it was a conversation of confession.

Thanks to Christ, my life changed!

I was baptized and became active in different ministries in the Kherson church. The church in Kherson had been praying a long time for sign language interpreters because they are a large



Iryna Kudelia

church, and they had only one interpreter who had to leave periodically. **There are several at the church who cannot hear, and there was no one to help them.** I had no knowledge about this ministry, and I never thought the Lord would ever use me for this kind of work.

But when I learned about that specific need of the church, I began to pray to the Lord and pleaded **“Here I am. Send me!”** I was then placed by God for this ministry, for which I am very thankful!

My next step was to enter Irpen Biblical Seminary, and I am very thankful to God for this step of faith. **I am being trained in sign language interpretation, which is very important for us to minister to people who are hearing-impaired.** My years of study in the seminary have been a special, blessed time of my life. I am receiving the necessary knowledge and skills to apply in practical ministry. I am grateful to God for having such an opportunity. This is my third year, and I will graduate this year. Glory be to Him! ♦



A sign language interpreter means so much to those that cannot hear.

Your Faithful Support Gives Orphans Physical Training . . . and Family

Vladimir Khalyavin

Orphans Reborn in Krasnoyarsk, Russia

As part of our ministry in Russia's Krasnoyarsk region, God has given us a vision to find families for each orphan child. Not all can be foster mothers and fathers, but God has people who are able to care for an orphan over weekends and holidays, who can help them in their day-to-day situations, and others who will simply pray for them daily.

I have been making presentations of our *Orphans Reborn* ministry in several churches, and I told believers about the needs of orphans, and how each believer can serve them. **We invited each church member to become a personal prayer**

partner paired to a specific orphan. And we were joyful that almost all the orphans were coupled to a brother or sister in Christ who would pray for them daily.

And the prayers are being heard and answered! I can see the results of our prayers in the children as they participate in our lessons and meetings. This month our main subject was "Influence." We had lessons on how we can distinguish negative influences and peer pressure from our friends.

In Nazarovo, we have sports activities as part of our lessons. The children really enjoy this, and they come to our group with eagerness. Through the physical exercises, they are learning how important it is not to give up when you are under pressure, but to be persistent, making every effort and persevere in order to be successful, and to become victorious.

In this group of children, we have a new boy named Kostya, who is 12. His brothers are also in the orphanage. Kostya does not have his left arm, and when he came to our sports practice, I was concerned. I asked him how he would be able to do the exercises, and his reply was, "Would you allow me to try?" His joy (and mine) was limitless when he was able to complete push-ups faster than the others!

The sports activities and Bible lessons help give the children a chance to be successful. **They're learning to**

*"I am especially
their desire and
to act according
that they*



Through *Orphans Reborn* you are able to bring God's love to so many!

Orphans Spiritual Discipleship, Families of Prayer Warriors!

tame their anger when there could be much irritation, and not to repay evil with evil. Such discipline will help them in their later lives. We train them in being goal-oriented

and persistent in overcoming physical weaknesses, this also helps them to become better both in their behavior and in their attitude toward other people.

Please pray for these children, and

the other children who are hearing the Gospel and experiencing God's love through *Orphans Reborn*. May God draw many of them to saving faith as we continue to reach them in our regular visits.

The children are very creative and they love to participate in sketches. Although this is not easy for them as all of them have some speech disabilities and difficulties in expression of their thoughts. But due to their emotions, they clearly convey the story line as well as the teaching.

I am especially enthused with their desire and commitment to act according to the truth that they learn.

I have plans to keep in touch with them during the week by means of social networks. The older children have cell phones and personal accounts in networks, which makes this possible.

Please, pray for this opportunity, as well as for wisdom in that, so that I would be able to show them Jesus Christ. ♦

ly enthused with and commitment to the truth they learn."





You're Giving Them Sunday School—in a War Zone!

For more than four years, **eastern Ukraine** has been a war zone. Armed conflict with separatist militias has shattered thousands of lives, killed more than 10,000 people, and devastated local infrastructure in several towns and villages.

Yet amid the sorrow, chaos and bloodshed, God is doing an amazing thing. **The gifts of SGA partners in the U.S. and Canada helped make it possible to provide much needed Sunday school materials for needy children in these regions.** SGA-sponsored missionary pastor Alexander Nagirnyak wrote us from Ukraine's Donetsk region to send his love and thanksgiving . . .

Dear brothers and sisters,

*Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! Thank you so much for your concern and for your prayers! **On behalf of the children and our Sunday school teachers, we thank you for the funds that have been used to purchase Sunday school materials.** The children are happy and joyful to learn something new about God! May God richly bless you in His mighty ways!*

Sunday school supplies were also distributed to children who had attended *Immanuel's Child* Christmas programs back in January. None of it could have been done without you—our faithful partners. Please pray for peace to come to eastern Ukraine soon. **Pray also that God will provide more urgently needed resources for SGA's Crisis Evangelism Fund,** which assists needy families with humanitarian aid as well as Bibles and evangelistic literature.



Your support has brought Sunday school to children in Ukraine and throughout the lands of the former Soviet Union.

CIS IN THE NEWS

Kazakhstan Hosts Interfaith Congress . . . as Leaders Crack Down on Faith!

Earlier this year, Berik Aryn, Kazakhstan's vice minister for religious affairs and civil society, was at the United Nations in New York. He was at a global event called "Religious Leaders for a Safe World." Aryn gave a keynote address where he talked about the upcoming Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions that is held in the Kazakh capital of Astana every three years. About 100 delegations from more than 40 countries are expected to attend. The Congress' stated purpose is to "address vital issues such as the growing efforts of religious actors to collaborate with political leaders and civil society, their commitment to



foster tolerance and respect for religious and cultural diversity, and to engage young people across the world to prevent them from falling into violent extremism."

Ironically, evangelical churches across Kazakhstan and the other nations of Central Asia frequently face pressure—if not outright persecution—from governmental authorities! **Our prayer is that such a global spotlight will help encourage governments to protect the rights of churches** to worship freely, so that countless millions will recognize that a saving relationship with Christ is the only way to true, lasting peace. ♦

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You're part of an incredible story. Since the birth of the SGA-sponsored *Orphans Reborn* ministry over a decade ago, God has used your faithful prayers and generous gifts to reach thousands of lonely, forgotten children for Christ. **And the "Gospel Chain of Grace" continues as many of these children have come to faith in Christ, and on reaching adulthood have become part of the *Orphans Reborn* teams themselves!** It's a wonderful testimony of how God brings salvation and blessing out of the most tragic of circumstances.

Your gifts to SGA's ministries help accomplish so much—provision of Bible training, children's ministries, summer camps, food and material aid through Compassion Ministry, Russian-language Bibles, Christian literature, youth ministry, missionary pastor sponsorship, and much more. Please pray about how you can help today!



Your gifts help bring the love of Christ to orphans and children throughout the Russian speaking lands.

Canadian Connection

*Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,
and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.
(Ecclesiastes 11:9)*

Having just spent nearly three weeks in Russia and Ukraine, we have seen many children's faces. Far too often there were few smiles and nothing to cheer about. That is, until visitors come into their world with Good News and special treats!

It was our joy to explore some new initiatives in Russia with keen workers who have won the favour of government-run orphanages. Here these ladies



are welcomed as bright lights in a child's life. In some locations, the children are brought out to summer camp and smiles quickly turn to laughter. Here we have the opportunity to change a young life for eternity.

While visiting in some rehab locations, we saw the devastation of a nearly destroyed life time and time again. On one stop, we encountered

a middle-aged man who arrived willingly just five minutes after we came. It was our privilege to welcome him and pray for him. He was then introduced to the other residents, given a place to call home, and settle in for many months. All I could think was what if he had been reached when a child. So much trouble and heartache could have been avoided.

Now is the time to reach little ones with the Gospel so that life will have purpose and meaning. Camps are going strong and depending upon location, personnel, and funding, the sky is the limit in what can be done to bring joy and smiles back to children. Though few have much in terms of worldly toys, even the most simple items bring warmth and security. Give a child a Bible and it is held like a treasure.

The writer of Ecclesiastes goes on to say . . . *Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come* (Ecclesiastes 12:1) . . .

Our prayer is that children will not have to experience the 'evil' and be rescued from wasted years while they are young.

Just last evening, we sat with a family in Ukraine, eating a delicious meal, but then enjoyed the singing of young people praising God with their voices. I have never experienced such a delightful evening of food and fellowship, which was so spontaneous. My heart cry is that many more children could have such warm memories to cherish.

Thank you for your part in making this happen. Your gifts and prayers are needed today!

Bill Ball
Executive Director, SGA/Canada



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