



PRISONER OF THE TUNNEL

*Dear Friends,
During the past years,
Mission Possible's work for the
children and youth of the streets
has been growing. When we
write to you from the field of
ministry, our desire is to show
you glimpses of the life of those
who are saved physically and
spiritually for the simple reason
that somebody cares.*

*Come with us to the streets
of Odessa, Ukraine,
through this story about
the homeless children's
underground life.*



ODESSA
SASHA OSIPOV
Director of the
Street Patrol

Kolya and Vladik met each other a few months ago. They became the best of friends. Both are 11 years old. They share the same fate: homeless in Odessa.

The boys' tattooed leader

They live in the pipe tunnels next to a school in a remote area of the city where there are not that many other homeless. They share the chamber

with Roma, 12, Zhora, 12, and Vova, 15, who, being the oldest, is the leader. Others respect him immensely. First of all, he has a certificate of release from prison in his pocket. It is considered high currency in the street world. Second, Vova's body is covered with tattoos. It doesn't matter that they have been made clumsily with a child's hand. However, the "great leader" has not gone beyond the pipe tunnel and glue sniffing, and he looks awful.

Kolya is very introverted and withdrawn. Sometimes during the meal you cannot get a half a word out of him. He is an orphan, and his sister is in some reform school (Kolya doesn't know where).

"I will never return to my mom."

Vladik is Kolya's polar opposite, like a whirlwind. He is not quiet even when he eats. On the street you rarely see such a chatty little fellow. Vladik loves to listen when we read the Children's Bible. Once when we were getting started with the meal, he asked, "Could you read today about how Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread?"

"Sure, but why that one?"

"Well, I like it a lot when it says that even Jesus was feeding people."

Vladik has no father or relatives. If his mother is brought up, he gets somber.

"I have a mother, but I don't want to



Mission Possible's street patrols bring regular relief to hundreds of hungry children, also feeding them with spiritual food.

talk about her, okay?"

"Why not?"

"She is a bad person. I will never return to her."

Vladik and Kolya, such different boys, like a plus and a minus, are the best of friends. But I guess a plus and a minus attract even in this case.

Imprisoned behind the hatch

Some time ago the pipe tunnel boys had a scary experience. It was morning and they decided to go to the market place to find something edible. Kolya stayed underground to sleep. The search for food took a few hours. Upon returning, the boys discovered that the hatch was welded shut. If

things had been different, they would have just moved into an other tunnel, there were many of them in Odessa. But Kolya had been trapped!

When he heard the voices of the others, he burst in tears and pleaded that the others would help get him out. But what could a few scared, 12-year boys do? They decided to wait for the Mission Possible patrol to come.

"I will save you, Kolya!"

We came at 2:30 pm, as we always did. We encountered three scared boys: two outside, one welded inside the chamber. Vladik's reaction was surprising. He walked around the hatch, wiping his nose, rubbing tears off his

face and yelled with fear and anger, shaking, through the hatch: "Don't worry, Kolya. I will not leave you! I will pull you out!" It is not at all common to see such friendship among the street children who are fighting for survival.

The children refused to eat until after their friend had been freed. The tool box of our driver, Valera, came in handy. He always has all the necessary things with him. Twenty minutes later, Kolya was free again.

The children were full of smiles and laughter. Then they settled down to eat. After that we read from the Children's Bible about how Jesus freed people from chains and shackles.

A Word from the US Director

I met Sasha last year for the first time. I was impressed by his passion to serve the Lord, rescuing and caring for children from the streets of Odessa. If Jesus was here in the flesh today, He would be on the streets with Sasha - talking to, helping, feeding and teaching the street children. I admire Sasha and our team in Odessa for their service and dedication and I want to do everything possible to enable them to keep on with their ministry. Thank you for making this possible with your prayers and with your financial giving. When you support Mission Possible, you join Jesus and Sasha in feeding the children on the streets!

Yours in Christ, Nasko Lazarov

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