

Summer Bible Camp Report **2018**

A Summer of Hope for the Children of Eurasia & Israel



Jesus said,
"Let the little
children come to me
and do not hinder them,
for to such belongs the
kingdom of heaven."
- Matthew 19:14


MISSION
EURASIA

Train to lead. Equip to serve.

Thank you for helping us share the hope of Jesus with **11,635** children and youth at Bible camp!

Thank You for Your Special Role in Making 2018 a *Summer of Hope!*

Thank you for making 2018 a **Summer of Hope** for thousands of Eurasia and Israel's most vulnerable and hurting children. Braving violence, poverty, war, and spiritual darkness, our dedicated young leaders—in partnership with local evangelical churches—boldly served as the hands and feet of Jesus to thousands of children and youth who might otherwise never have had a chance to hear the message of Good News. Our summer Bible camps are specially designed to share Jesus' love with the most difficult-to-reach children and youth: orphans, refugees, homeless children, victims of war, unreached children, and children with special needs. **This summer, a total of 11,635 children and youth at 157 Bible camps in 14 countries were reached with the love of Jesus because of your incredible generosity and prayers!**

In every country where we work, the young leaders trained and equipped by Mission Eurasia's School Without Walls (SWW) program and Empower camp

training events hosted fun, safe, Bible-centered camps for at-risk children and youth, introducing many young hearts to their Savior for the very first time. Your dedicated support also equipped SWW students, churches, and other Bible camp leaders to share **33,000 life-changing copies of God's Word** and Christian literature through the camps, providing an opportunity for children and their families to read firsthand about a Savior who loves them so much He died for them and longs for a personal relationship with them.

Thank you for equipping our young leaders for this special ministry to the children of Eurasia and Israel as they shine Christ's light. We hope you will be inspired in your faith as you read this report and soak up the heartwarming stories and photos of young lives changed forever because of the gift of your compassion, support, and prayer. All we can say is,

thank you!



Country	Camps	Participants
Armenia	7	630
Azerbaijan	2	160
Belarus	9	510
Georgia	7	660
Israel	3	210
Kazakhstan	4	170
Kyrgyzstan	5	415
Mongolia	4	600
Moldova	38	3,750
Russia	28	1,280
Tajikistan	12	330
Turkmenistan	3	70
Ukraine	30	2,700
Uzbekistan	5	150
Total:	157 camps	11,635 children & youth





The Life-Changing Gift of God's Word

At summer Bible camps, children don't just hear about God's love for them—they also experience it firsthand. This happens first through the love and kindness of the camp leaders, and then again when each child at camp is given his or her very own copy of God's Word and can read about His love for him or her. For many children, because of poverty, isolation, or an unbelieving family, the copy of Scripture they receive at Bible camp is their first encounter with God's Word. Often they can hardly contain their excitement, and they eagerly share their copy with parents, siblings, friends, classmates, and neighbors. Even just one copy of God's Word can impact dozens of people!

This summer, an estimated **33,000 copies of Scripture** and Christian literature were placed in the hands of children, youth, and families through Bible camps across Eurasia and Israel, providing a never-ending resource for them to experience God's love and hear His voice over and over again as they learn to read Scripture in the context of a local church community.



Olga's Story:

"My Heart Was Filled with Joy"

Last year, 10-year-old Olga attended Bible camp for the first time in Berdyansk, Ukraine. There she received her very own copy of the New Testament and eagerly soaked up the Bible lessons, games, and activities at camp. When the camp was over, she was sad to leave but promised to continue reading her copy of Scripture. At this year's camp, our Berdyansk School Without Walls (SWW) students were thrilled to see Olga again as she ran up to them to share some exciting news:

"Because my parents aren't believers, I had never learned anything about Jesus before your camp last year," shared Olga. "But when you gave me the New Testament and the book of Bible stories at camp, I couldn't stop reading them. For several months, I was reading them all the time and thinking about the things you taught us at camp. Then I began to pray, trusting that God would hear me. A few months after camp, I repented before God, asking Him to forgive my sins. After I prayed, I felt so much better, and I wanted to find other people that I could pray with, so I began to go to the church in my town. There, I got to pray with others and learn more about the Bible in Sunday school. When I found out you were going to hold another Bible camp again this summer, my heart was filled with joy. I came here right away so I could share with you what God has been doing in my life!"

Thank you for giving joyfully to provide the life-changing gift of God's Word to thousands of children just like Olga at summer Bible camp!

Young Lives Changed at Camp Because of Your Support

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
- Luke 4:18-19

SASHA'S STORY: Finding the Hope of Jesus in the Midst of War

Sasha is seven years old and lives just a few miles from the front lines of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Because he has lived in the midst of war for most of his young life, Sasha can identify weapons from miles away just by the sounds they make. While childhood is supposed to be a time of joy, Sasha's life so far has been filled with anxiety, and he had forgotten what it is like to go to sleep at night without fear . . .

In order to share the life-changing hope of Christ with children like Sasha who are traumatized by war, our School Without Walls (SWW) students from Berdyansk have been hosting summer Bible camps for children living near the front lines of the war in eastern Ukraine for the last four years, providing a safe, peaceful respite from the tragic realities of conflict. During this summer's camp, Sasha participated in as many activities as possible, and he listened eagerly during all of the Bible lessons. On the last day of camp, Sasha shared: *"I've never had many friends before, but at camp I've made so many kind and loving Christian friends! I don't want camp to end, but today I realized that God will protect me no matter where I am, so I don't feel scared anymore. During the Bible lessons, I learned that God loves His children, and I believe that He will be with me when I'm scared. When I go home today, I'm going to ask my mother to pray with me, and I'll show her the beautiful magazine you gave me that talks about Jesus. I know He will never leave us."*





Young Lives Changed at Camp Because of Your Support

VALENTINA'S STORY:

*"The Most Important
Decision of My Life"*

Sixteen-year-old Valentina attended one of our extreme sports Bible camps in Moldova this summer, where her life changed forever:

"Last year, I was invited to a youth Bible camp and I refused to go. But then I got to know Taisa, one of the School Without Walls (SWW) students, and I was so encouraged by her kindness and the kindness of the other SWW students I met that I made the decision to go to camp this summer when they invited me. I felt a strong desire to learn more about Jesus, no matter what my parents told me.

"One evening at camp, we discussed what happens to us after death and what we would say to God if we meet Him face-to-face. The next morning, I woke with confidence that I no longer needed to fear death because I could spend eternity with God. I started praying, and I immediately felt His presence. That day I made the most important decision of my life and repented. Because of Jesus, my life now has meaning, and I am enjoying every moment with Him. I am so thankful for Taisa and the other SWW students who befriended me and invited me to camp! My life will never be the same."



Thank you for equipping our camp leaders to share the hope of Christ with young people like Valentina and Sasha, whose lives are changed forever because of the Good News they heard at camp!



A Special Opportunity to Share the Good News with Unreached Children and Families

Summer Bible camps create a unique opportunity to sow seeds of faith in places that are normally completely unreached by the gospel. Tragically, thousands of children in Eurasia grow up without ever hearing about their Savior, which is why our School Without Walls (SWW) students and leaders are so passionate about taking the hope of Jesus to the places where the Good News has not yet reached.

Even nonbelieving families are often eager to send their children to Bible camp because they recognize the positive impact of the camps on them, and they are grateful for the kindness and friendship of our SWW students. And camp is often the first step in a child's connection with a local evangelical church. From rural Mongolia, where our young leaders ministered to children from Buddhist families, to the North Caucasus region of Russia and the countries of Central Asia, where our leaders hosted camps for Muslim children, our Bible camps provide the opportunity for thousands of unreached children to hear the life-changing message of God's Kingdom for the very first time.



SEYFADDIN'S STORY:

An Open Heart to the Good News

Seyfaddin is 14 years old and comes from a devout Muslim family in Azerbaijan. This summer he participated in one of Mission Eurasia's summer Bible camps for the second time. Although the village where the camp takes place is largely Muslim, the local families have begun to recognize the positive impact of the Bible camps on their children, and they continue to send their kids to camp, even when they don't agree with the religious ideas being taught at camp. This summer, Seyfaddin decided to bring his little brother to camp so that he could learn about Jesus, too. Seyfaddin was deeply moved by playing the part of the Good Samaritan in a skit at camp, and he began to talk with our School Without Walls (SWW) students about Jesus and Jesus' teaching about being a good neighbor. Although Seyfaddin's family told him that he can only pray to Allah, Seyfaddin was still eager to learn more about Jesus and wanted to learn to say the Lord's Prayer with the other children at camp. Our SWW students plan to continue their friendship with Seyfaddin, his brother, and their entire family so that they can share the hope of Jesus with them.

Please pray for Seyfaddin's family and the other families in the village, that their hearts would continue to be open to the Good News proclaimed through our leaders at Bible camp!

Thank you for helping us share the Good News for the first time with thousands of unreached children and their families through summer Bible camps!



Empower Camp Training Events

Empowering camp leaders for compassionate, effective ministry to children & youth

At the heart of our summer Bible camp ministry are our **Empower** camp training events. Each specialized Empower conference equips hundreds of our School Without Walls (SWW) students and other Christian leaders throughout Eurasia to organize and lead fun, safe, effective, and gospel-centered summer Bible camps. This year, we hosted Empower training events in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Georgia that equipped **650 young leaders** to lead a total of **168 Bible camps**, impacting **16,000 children and youth** for Christ!

Thank you for the special role you played in helping us train and equip 650 young camp leaders through Empower for successful ministry at summer Bible camp!

“The world is changing quickly, and we, as believers, are called to impact it—to see and understand the trends and be flexible and relevant in our approach to ministry. By applying both biblical values and creativity to our work, we are taking our summer Bible camp ministry to the next level. Empower brings together fresh ideas, time-tested strategies, and committed young leaders to inspire, equip, support, and bless them for transformative ministry at camp.”

—Olya, Empower conference leader in Belarus

“This year was my second time attending Empower. Being with my church team at this conference helped me personally to learn new ideas, connect with my teammates, to be more effective in ministry and, ultimately, to learn more about sharing Jesus with the children and youth we impact through camp. Thank you!”

— Sasha, Empower conference participant from Russia



Called to Serve: Summer Mission Trips


Captured by the missional vision that inspires our summer Bible camp ministry, several dedicated short-term mission groups from the US and Canada traveled to Eurasia this summer to teach English and participate in our summer Bible camps alongside our School Without Walls (SWW) students and national camp leaders. In cross-cultural gospel partnership with the local church and our Next Generation leaders, each group from the US and Canada joyfully shared Christ's love with hundreds of young people at our camps, answering God's call to serve His precious children.

Wally Kulakoff, our director of church planting and pastoral ministries, led an enthusiastic group from his home church in Dyer, IN to Korosten, Ukraine for the second year to teach English at Bible camps for children and teens. One of our faithful supporters, Philip Lockett, also led a group from his church in Texas to Armenia to teach English at camps. Nick Tishenko, executive director of Mission Eurasia Canada, led a group of believers from Canada to build playgrounds and serve at camps in Ukraine. And our valued ministry partner, ShareWord Global, sent a team from Canada to serve for the fourth year in a row at camps in Moldova, where they shared God's Word with over 700 children and youth.

We are so thankful to each of the short-term mission teams that traveled to Eurasia this summer to serve in our summer Bible camps! Their enthusiasm, love for Jesus, and love for the children they served were such a blessing to our ministry and our leaders in the field.

"At the English camp we hosted for youth on our trip to Korosten, nearly 100 children and youth came forward to accept Christ for the first time. It was so encouraging to see their enthusiasm and to see God at work in their hearts. One of the young people who captured our hearts at camp was Nadia. Nadia came from an unbelieving family, and her hobby was going to heavy metal rock concerts. At the beginning of camp, she told us that she had no place for God in her life, but by the end of camp she had joyfully and publicly accepted Christ as her Savior. Our hearts were so touched by the young people we met at camp. Thank you for giving generously to support these camps and the life-changing Scripture resources we shared there!"

—Wally Kulakoff, Mission Eurasia's director of church planting and pastoral ministries



"I thank my God
in all my remembrance
of you, always in every
prayer of mine for you all
making my prayer with joy,
because of your partnership
in the gospel from the
first day until now."
- Philippians 1:3-5

Thank You for Helping Us Impact 11,635 Children and Youth with the Gospel through Summer Bible Camps!

Your compassionate support and faithful prayers this year sent 11,635 children and youth on the adventure of a lifetime at summer Bible camp. Thank you for taking a step of faith with open hearts and open hands as you invested this summer in our Bible camp ministry. The impact of your support extends way beyond the summer months as the children and youth reached at camp become involved with local evangelical churches, where they are discipled, grow in their knowledge of God's Word, and begin sharing the Good News with those around them.

Thank you for helping our young leaders share the hope of Jesus with the children of Eurasia and Israel this summer!



Words of Gratitude for Your Support:

"I enjoyed the games and fun activities at the camp, but what I appreciated most was that the leaders taught us to believe and trust God. I learned more about how to follow God, even in the midst of difficulties, and how to be kind and loving to those around me. It is hard to change and grow, but that is what I am working on with God's help!"

—Dasha, 16 years old, Moldova

"The leaders who organized this camp became my best friends and showed me good examples of how relationships with God and others should look. I want to thank them for listening to me, getting to know me, and encouraging me. When I grow up, I want to be just like them. And now I want to help other children who are hurting from the war in our country, because I've realized that God loves every child who has experienced pain and suffering and He is our hope."

—Polina, 12 years old, eastern Ukraine

"We did a camp for young women at risk for human trafficking in Moldova. When we started to talk about the price God was ready to pay for us, they started shouting out sums of money. When we told them that Jesus had already paid the price, and the price was His own life, the gasps of awe around the room were audible. We saw a lot of reactions each day of the camp to the truth we were sharing, but this reaction was the most powerful. They were truly in awe of what Jesus had done for them! Overall, our week of camp was an incredible time of serving and sharing about Jesus with hundreds of children and youth, making new friends, and seeing young lives change before our eyes!"

—Alyona, SWW camp leader, Moldova



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