

2021 | 2022

ANNUAL REPORT

Gift of Hope



“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.” —Matthew 18:10

GIFT OF *Hope*



A gift at Christmastime lifts the hearts of afflicted children.

Every winter, Mission Eurasia leaders visit families throughout the region, bringing happiness to children with **Gifts of Hope**.

Each Gift of Hope contains delightful items such as sweets and toys as well as useful items like socks and mittens, and hygiene supplies to protect against COVID-19. Most importantly, there are Scripture resources that tell children about God's saving love.

In a dark world, God’s message of hope is resonating.

War. Disease. Poverty. Economic chaos.

In recent years, the people of Eurasia have experienced a series of bitter calamities.

Starting in 2020, the Covid pandemic devastated families across the region. (You’ll read about one of those families in this report.)



Then, just as the Covid crisis seemed to be easing, the simmering conflict in Ukraine intensified and is now on the brink of all-out war. Once again, violence, dread, and anger gripped this besieged nation that has already suffered so much.

War has been a grim fact of life in many parts of Eurasia. Long-lasting conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia, and other places have left entire generations permanently scarred.

Meanwhile, starting in 2021, worldwide supply disruptions led to critical shortages of food, energy, and other necessities. The resulting hardships put enormous pressure on people and their governments. In Kazakhstan, thousands of protesters took to the streets and dozens were killed. Protests in Belarus were brutally suppressed. Evangelical Christians were especially targeted for persecution.

Children can’t understand these terrible things happening in the world around them. But they suffer because of them. They can’t control the events in their lives. But they bear the weight of them.

In this harsh environment, Mission Eurasia’s Gift of Hope program takes on even greater importance. These precious children need hope. And they need to see God’s kindness in a world that seems increasingly cruel.

This is what the Gift of Hope program brings to families throughout Eurasia. And it’s all possible because of your generous support.

In 2021-2022, leaders from Mission Eurasia’s *School Without Walls* program brought Gifts of Hope to more than **131,000 children** in **12 post-Soviet countries**. Many of these children have grown up knowing only war, misery, and deprivation. The joy they experience upon receiving unexpected gifts is impossible to describe.

Through your continued generosity, the Gift of Hope program is bringing light to the dark places of Eurasia—and happiness to the hearts of precious children.

God's

MERCY IN A TIME OF GRIEF

Ketevan was living happily with her husband and three children in Georgia when tragedy struck their household.

In early 2020, few people could imagine that the COVID-19 virus would soon sweep across the globe in a deadly pandemic. But Ketevan's husband was one of its early victims. He was taken to a hospital, where doctors did their best to help him. But they had little experience in treating this insidious new disease. His condition grew worse and worse.

Finally, Ketevan received the news no wife wants to hear—her beloved husband was gone. The family sank into a deep sadness that seemed to have no end. “My children stopped smiling,” Ketevan recalls.

Into this dark scene, God sent His messengers—in the form of some young leaders from School Without Walls (SWW). “God's people, young guys and girls, brought our children gifts,” Ketevan says. “After talking to those young people, my children changed. They had joy and hope in [the] future!”

Along with Gifts of Hope, the SWW workers brought God's Good News to Ketevan's family. They invited the family to a local church. Now, Ketevan and her children are experiencing God's love and mercy as never before. “Thanks to those young people who brought gifts and Scripture to my children, we have become part of the Christian family,” Ketevan says. “My children now have a Heavenly Father. I am grateful to everyone who has helped my children to get through the depression and bring hope for their future.”



Ketevan and her children became part of God's family after a visit from SWW workers.

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” —Matthew 19:14

GIFT OF HOPE DISTRIBUTION 2021–2022

Thousands of people in 12 Eurasian countries have been impacted by the Gift of Hope program in 2021–2022.

When people receive Christ through the Gift of Hope program, we strive to connect them with vibrant, healthy local churches where they can grow in their faith. In the past year, we partnered with nearly **1,000 churches**, which actively supported this ministry.

This winter:

- **16,379 volunteers** gave their time to make the Gift of Hope outreach a success.
- **148,458 copies of Scripture** were distributed to children and their families.
- **336,110 children**, family members, neighbors, and schoolteachers were reached.

In all, **390,000 people** were impacted by the Gift of Hope outreach.



CHANGING LIVES ACROSS THE LAND— THROUGH **GIFT OF HOPE**



Vika and Yulia, Belarus

“Wow! You also have gifts for us!” That was the response of two young girls when they saw the Gifts of Hope that SWW leaders had brought for them.

Inna Yermakovich, a young SWW leader from Pinsk, Belarus, describes what happened: “Thirty small children came to see the Christmas play in the village concert hall. Sisters Vika (6) and Yulia (4) were fascinated as they had never seen anything like that in their kindergarten.” The children then participated in a seven-day program that taught them more about the birth of Christ. “The sisters were thrilled!” Inna says. “They drew pictures, put up Christmas posters, helped their parents with chores, made gifts for Jesus, sang songs about Jesus, and learned a verse from the Bible. The Bible they received as their gift helped them in each step of the Christmas quest.”

Their mother, Natasha, was also thrilled to see the change in her little girls. “The whole event was amazing, but the Gifts of Hope were the highlight of it,” she said. “We have never received so many positive emotions and especially knowledge about God.”

*“... To proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance
of our God, to comfort all who mourn ...” —(Isaiah 61:2)*

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound...” —(Isaiah 61:1)

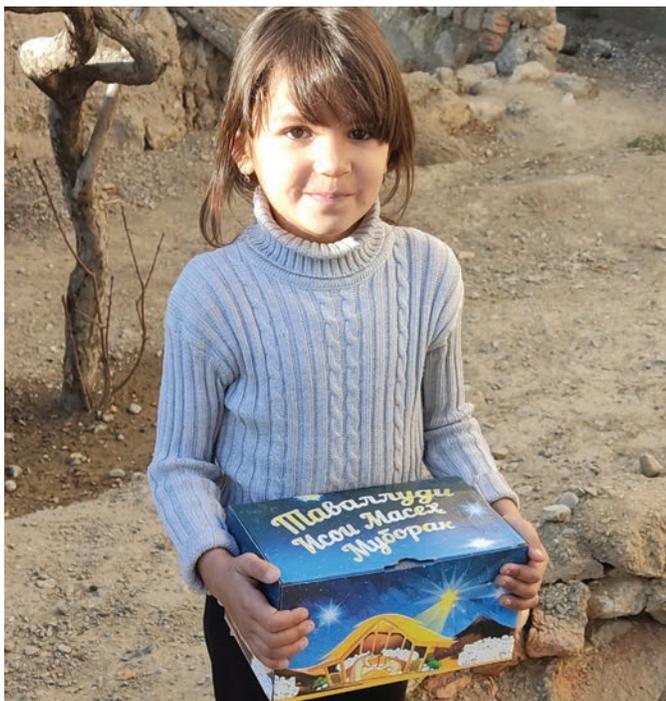
Sevindzh, Azerbaijan

In the Azerbaijani language, her name means joy. But at eight years old, Sevindh had already lost her father to the brutal war in her homeland. She now lives as a refugee with her mother and grandparents, who are struggling to survive.

Some SWW leaders felt called to visit her home. They arrived with a Gift of Hope. When little Sevindh saw the illustrated Scripture book they brought, she was immediately intrigued. She began reading it and gazed with awe at the pictures. She asked her visitors to tell her more about Jesus. When they told her she could actually talk to God, she said, “Can I ask Jesus for something?”

“Of course,” the SWW workers said. “And when you ask from the heart, He will answer you.”

Sevindh now knows she has a Heavenly Father—who hears her deepest wishes. And she prays to Him every day.



Rukhshona, Tajikistan

She is only seven. But when she came to a feeding program SWW was sponsoring in her village, she wanted to get involved right away. She participated eagerly, helping with tasks and learning the Bible lessons with joy.

Later, SWW workers visited Rukhshona’s home to deliver Gifts of Hope. Her mother and sister came out and greeted them enthusiastically, thanking them for the care they had shown. Rukhshona herself came running out and gave her visitors a warm hug.

When the girls saw their gifts, they beamed with joy. The sweets were a special treat—because the family couldn’t normally afford such luxuries. They all reveled in the love they had experienced, and said, “God made this day truly festive for us.”

“... And provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.” —(Isaiah 61:3)

A Ministry

OF JOY TO THE DOWNTRODDEN

“Our church of the Holy Trinity is in Gori, Georgia. Our small town, where Joseph Stalin was born, was really affected by the Russian-Georgian war in 2008. One of the priorities for our church is to work with refugees, families with many children, widows and orphans. The COVID-19 pandemic became a “snowstorm” for us. Many people died. Many children became orphans. Right after the “snowstorm”, a long “winter” came—that is, economic crisis, social instability, and hopelessness that have entered our homes. The people who were affected the most were refugees, families with many children, and those with little money. But the main problem was that those people didn’t know the Lord. And the Lord put it on our hearts to visit the settlement for refugees and take the Good News about the birth of our Lord to them and give them gifts. The children were overjoyed to come and visit us. We gave them Christmas gifts and shared the Good News about our Lord. Some of the parents wrote us letters of gratitude, sharing their joy. One of those letters was from Ketevan Shevardenidze [whose story you read on page 4].”

— Pastor Vissarion, Gift of Hope partner

You have a part to play, too!

Thank you for your generous support of Gift of Hope. You can always help us bring joy to even more children by visiting <https://missioneurasia.org/donate/> and clicking on Gift of Hope. Or you can send your gift by check to: P.O. Box 496, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. You’re always welcome to call us at **630-462-1739**.

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