

Another  
**SUMMER OF HOPE**  
for the Hurting Children and Youth of Eurasia



# SUMMER BIBLE CAMP— A REFUGE FOR GOD’S LITTLE ONES

**See the wonderful experiences your support has made possible.**

There’s something special about ministry to children and youth.

We know that the decisions they make during their formative years can determine their future. So, it’s vitally important that they hear the gospel at this critical stage of life. They’re already being pulled in unhealthy directions by the world, so having a strong Christian influence during this time can help them avoid destructive choices.

Young people also have an openhearted simplicity that makes them especially receptive to God’s message. Is it any wonder that Jesus had a special love for children and welcomed them into His presence? Of course, they were also drawn to Him. I think they sensed something about Him that the jaded adults around Him missed—His pure, boundless love and essential goodness.

This is why Mission Eurasia has always made children’s ministry a priority. And we’ve found that one of the best ways to reach them is by inviting them to a summer Bible camp. They can enjoy the beauty and peace of God’s creation, which many have never been exposed to before. They can have fun with other kids in a safe atmosphere of love and support—again, a new experience for many of them. And through their Bible classes, they can learn about the God who loves them.

As you read the personal testimonies of the children in this report, you’ll see how profoundly their lives have been changed by their time at summer Bible camp. And you’ll sense the gratitude and wonder they feel as they reflect on their experiences.

Another thing you’ll notice is the sheer breadth of our Summer Bible Camp program. We’re reaching children all across Eurasia—from Israel to Mongolia, and many places in between. They come from a diverse mix of cultures with a wide variety of experiences. Some have known only the relentless horror of war; others come from more peaceful backgrounds. Some have grown up with a strong Christian influence, while others have grown up in the predominantly Muslim regions of Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Still others have struggled with dysfunction, addiction, and abuse.

But there are certain things all these young lives have in common: a yearning for love and truth; a desire for healthy human companionship; and a need for the redemption that only Christ offers.

All these things are what they find at Mission Eurasia’s Summer Bible Camps.

As you read, I hope you’ll realize that your support of these ministries is worthwhile and vital. We never forget that it is your generous giving that makes it all possible.

So, for all the precious children and youth whose lives are better because of you — **thank you.**



Dr. Gord Balfour  
Executive Director, Mission Eurasia Canada



*“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”*

— Matthew 19:14

## Results from our 2024 Summer Bible Camp program:

Country	# camps	# of children/teens	# of churches involved	# who accepted Christ
Azerbaijan	4	170	9	15
Armenia	13	860	23	117
Belarus	13	910	8	2
Georgia	6	550	12	40
Israel	4	170	3	5
Kazakhstan	16	900	20	20
Kyrgyzstan	13	370	15	150
Moldova	52	3,540	57	92
Mongolia	1	700	15	75
Poland	23	2,000	12	100
Tajikistan	20	580	25	35
Turkmenistan	1	60	2	10
Uzbekistan	15	400	17	4
Ukraine	180	20,500	237	510
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>31,710</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>1,175</b>

Summer Bible camp offers children a refuge of fun, fellowship, and spiritual growth.



## War and Its Most Vulnerable Victims

Sadly, Russia's offensive against Ukraine has been ongoing for more than a decade now. That means a whole generation of children is growing up, knowing only the brutality of war.

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the war has caused more than **6 million Ukrainians** to flee their home<sup>1</sup>.

Nearly a million have fled to neighboring **Poland**, with more than 100,000 going to nearby **Moldova**.

Within Ukraine itself, a staggering **3.7 million** people have been internally displaced, most of them leaving the war zone for the relatively peaceful environs of **western Ukraine**<sup>2</sup>.

Against this backdrop, Mission Eurasia's Summer Bible Camp program has taken on even greater significance.

Our camps this year have welcomed scores of war refugees, giving them a respite from the trauma they've experienced. We offer war-weary children a completely different experience—a peaceful environment where love, support, and compassion prevail.

We're deeply aware of the awesome responsibility we've been given in nurturing these war-damaged lives back to a healthy life.

We're also reminded of the stress this puts on our resources as we serve the flood of refugees who has come to us for help and solace.

**So, your generous financial support means more now than ever.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

<sup>2</sup> <https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/ukraine-situation>

*At camp, Alina learned that she could actually talk to God in prayer.*



## UKRAINE

### Discovering God for the First Time

**Alina, 9**, lived with her family in Kharkiv, Ukraine very close to the Russian border. Their city was shelled regularly, and Alina grew accustomed to constant warfare and the sound of air raid sirens. With the disruption of electricity, water, and phone service, life in Kharkiv became unbearable. Alina's family fled westward, settling in a village near Lutsk in western Ukraine.

There, Alina was invited to camp by a classmate. The Bible lessons at camp were her first exposure to God and the gospel. She asked many questions and was surprised to learn that she could communicate with God simply by praying to Him. This spoke to the hunger in her young heart, and Alina began praying aloud every evening after the camp program.

Alina was thrilled to receive her first Bible, where she could read about all the heroes she had heard about at camp. In her free time, she always had her Bible in her hands. Now, Alina is involved in our New Life Church and looking forward to next year's camp.

*Ivan discovered the God of love at summer Bible camp.*



### A Young Child Experiences God's Love

Like so many Ukrainian children, Ivan has experienced the horrors of war firsthand. But through his summer Bible camp experience, he learned about a loving God who brings peace to the human heart. **Here's his story:**

*"I'm Ivan, and I'm 6 years old. My mom is helping me tell this story.*

*"Before coming to Rivne, I lived peacefully in my beloved Zaporizhzhia. When the explosions started, we moved to my grandma's place. Later, my mom, dad, brother, and I left for an unknown place.*

*"We ended up in a dormitory in a small room, but we had fun because we were together. One day, my mom and I went to the volunteer center called Volunteers of Hope to ask for help. There, we learned about a children's room, and we ended up staying there for the entire summer. Then I went to kindergarten, my brother went to school, and later, we went to camp.*

*"The camp was so much fun. I loved building with Legos, making crafts, and singing lively songs. I love my counselors; they talk about friendship and are my friends, too. Now I know who Jesus is. Camp has ended, but I always look at a picture of everyone who was at the camp. Sometimes I kiss it, feeling like it helps me relive all the joyful moments I experienced."*

# MOLDOVA

## Finding a Refuge from War

**Nadezhda** and her daughter **Katya** fled from their hometown of Kherson in Ukraine, which had come under Russian occupation. They spent months traveling, homeless, until finally settling in Chişinău, Moldova.

Nadezhda describes their experience: *“Out of all the countries where we found refuge from the war, Moldova welcomed us the most warmly! We have received food, other supplies that we needed, and emotional support, and for that we are very grateful!”*

A Mission Eurasia volunteer invited Nadezhda and Katya to a two-day children’s camp at the iCare help center, and they had a wonderful time. Nadezhda was especially grateful and happy that her daughter enjoyed herself so much. Katya was engaged in everything, eager to learn during Bible classes, and impacted by what she heard. She was very happy to learn that we would have other activities for children that she could attend.

This is how God reaches people for His Kingdom—through the love and practical support of committed believers in times of need.

## Mentoring God’s Precious Young Ones

*“My name is **Angelina**, and this year I was a camp counselor at the Extra Life camp. I had a group of seven girls, and I want to share about one of them—Sasha.”*

*“This was Sasha’s first time at a Christian camp, and we grew very close; she was able to open up to me. Sasha arrived at the camp feeling a bit skeptical and anxious. She had never heard about God or His personal love for her before. The lessons we had really touched her, and she listened carefully and answered questions thoughtfully. I saw a genuine interest and a desire to understand in her eyes. She absorbed every word, and I could feel her heart slowly opening up to new ideas.”*

*“During our conversations, Sasha told me that the camp showed her how God helps others and that if someone asks for forgiveness for their sins, God forgives them. She said this experience had a positive impact on her. She felt a lot of kindness and quickly made new friends, which became a source of joy and support for her.”*

*“When I asked Sasha how her life would change after the camp, she said, ‘I would start helping anyone in need.’ She gave thoughtful answers to the lesson questions, and her reflections were sincere and deep. When asked about strength, she said she needed it to help others. About wisdom, she said it would help her distinguish between good and evil. She also said that while money is necessary for living, it doesn’t solve everything, and she wants to become even more generous. As for salvation, she said she needs it to be closer to God.”*

*“Sasha also shared that she wants to incorporate more good deeds and care for others into her life. Her sincerity and desire to do good deeply touched me. This camp has been a real blessing for both of us, and I’m grateful for the chance to be part of her spiritual journey. Sasha’s story reminds us that every act of kindness and every word of love and support can make a positive difference in someone’s life.”*



*Katya and her mother Nadezhda fled the war in Ukraine and found refuge at a summer Bible camp.*



*Angelina guided Sasha into a genuine relationship with God.*



*At camp, Sasha listened, learned, and discovered that God has a plan for her life.*

# POLAND

## A Refuge of Kindness in a Cruel World

*"My name is **Masha**, and I'm 9 years old. I want to share my experience from my trip to a Christian camp. It was an unforgettable and joyful time, even though I was in a new country, far from my friends and family.*

*"I had been to camps before, but this one was special. I met many kind people, and we were treated to delicious meals every day. There were always fun games and activities to keep us busy, and we even got prizes for participating.*

*"I live with my mom, while my dad stays in Ukraine. My family is great, even though I don't have any brothers or sisters. When I arrived at the camp, I was instantly filled with joy and a good mood. They talked a lot about God, and I enjoyed learning more about Him. I've had God in my heart for a long time, and it comforts me to know He is always with me, even when I'm far from home.*

*"The camp brought me so much happiness, despite being away from my loved ones and friends. I felt happy and safe, and each day was filled with kindness and warmth."*



*Far from her home and friends, Masha found joy at summer Bible camp.*

## Sharing and Learning Together

*"My name is **Edita**, and I'm a member of the Bible church in Warsaw. I'm always open to learning and serving. I did my Bible school training at my church and was invited by the organizers to the camp as a leader and nurse. I've been involved in camps since I was a child. I started as a participant, then helped out as an assistant, and now I'm a leader. I chose to join the camp because I see how God works with children and their parents through these camps and how He works in my own life. I grow spiritually and develop through these experiences.*

### **"I've learned:**

- To accept people who serve differently from me.
- To care for those I serve with, including my assistant.
- To motivate and encourage children to keep striving until they succeed.

*"I will be more attentive to the people I serve with and their needs. I'm especially grateful to God for the opportunity to serve the children, for the children on my team, for the leadership team, and for the wonderful cooks."*



*At camp, Edita found her calling in helping others.*



# UZBEKISTAN

## Bringing Healing to Broken Families

*"My name is **Malika**. Since childhood, I've been going to church with my mother. My father, however, followed a different religion—Islam—and was always opposed to my mother taking me to church. Every time we'd go to church and go back home, my mother would tell me not to mention that we had been at church. My parents often argued because of my mother's faith and her church attendance. I didn't fully understand it at the time and always thought my father was right, believing that we didn't need to go to church, even though I actually liked it there.*

*"When I was 13, the constant arguments in our family led me to stop attending church. I began to think that if my mother didn't go to church, my parents would be happy together. But over time, I felt like something was missing in my life. I lost my joy and became easily irritated. I knew that my behavior wasn't right, but I kept doing what I knew was wrong. "This year, my mother suggested that I attend a youth camp. Initially, I didn't want to go and refused, but when my close friend from church called and said she would be going, too, I decided to join her. When I arrived at camp, I quickly realized that this was God's plan for me. It felt as though I had finally found what I had lost. Each day during morning prayers, the Lord spoke to me through the Scriptures. He began to show me how much He loved me, and I couldn't hold back my tears. All I could say in response were words of repentance.*

*"As we gathered around the campfire, I realized that I had been holding onto resentment towards both my father and God. My heart had been wounded, and I had become hardened. I felt unable to share my struggles with anyone. But that night, I understood that I needed to forgive my father and return to God. We spent a long time praying together, and I forgave my father. Afterward, my heart was filled with love and warmth toward him. "My relationship with my father was strained; we only saw each other during dinner, and I never felt like talking to him. But from that day of prayer, I resolved that when I returned home, I would start talking to my father and pray for his salvation every day. I made new friends at camp and found someone with whom I could share my feelings. I am so grateful to the Lord for arranging this encounter at camp—it was truly a blessing in His mercy!"*



At summer Bible camp, Malika learned how to forgive his father and deepen the relationship with His Heavenly Father.



# BELARUS

## Learning to Love the Bible

*"My name is **Nikita**. I turned 11 this year. I want to share a bit about Bible Fest. This wasn't my first time attending, and I enjoyed everything: the discussions about the Bible, the food, the games, and making new friends. When we talked about the Bible, it felt like being in a cartoon. It was very interesting and easy to understand.*

*"The most fascinating thing about the Bible lessons for me was that God became the central figure in the story, and since He created the whole story, it means I am also a part of it. I want to make the right choices in this story. "I'm glad I even got to help out. My mom led a lesson and helped in the kitchen, and I assisted her. I hope that next year the school will continue. Thank you to everyone who organized this school!"*



Nikita developed a love for God's Word at camp.

# TAJIKISTAN

## Developing New Leaders Through Camp

*"Peace to you, dear brothers and sisters. My name is **Alexandr**, and I serve as the youth leader in Isfara and am a School Without Walls (SWW) graduate.*

*"As someone deeply invested in the spiritual growth of the youth and teenagers in our church, I felt a strong calling to organize a camping retreat. The goal was to foster closer relationships with the teenagers and develop their leadership skills.*

*"At camp, God gave us the chance to connect with each participant, understand their needs and goals, and pray for them. We assigned responsibilities, which helped uncover and develop their leadership skills and sense of responsibility. I learned how to delegate tasks—something I hadn't done much before—and I realized I need to pray individually for each teenager. With no prior experience in camping retreats, I also learned how to set up and take down tents.*

*"After the camp, I plan to keep meeting with the teenagers, spending more time with them both in ministry and in casual settings. I've come to understand that the devil is always at work, and each teenager faces various challenges, so I need to stand in prayer for them.*

*"I'm grateful to God for providing us with this wonderful opportunity to hold the camp, especially under the challenging conditions faced by churches in Tajikistan. The camp brought us closer together and gave us a chance to reflect on our personal lives and our service to Jesus. May God bless everyone who supported us with their prayers and financial contributions!"*



*As a camp counselor, Alexandr dedicated himself to fostering the spiritual growth of teenagers.*

# TURKMENISTAN

## Young People Are Finding Christ

It was a miracle that summer Bible camps were held again this year in Turkmenistan because Turkmenistan is one of the most repressive countries in the world. In 2024, it ranked 29 out of the 50 most dangerous countries to follow Jesus. But this year, because of God's help and your generosity, Mission Eurasia hosted 60 young people. Ten teenagers arrived at camp as unbelievers. But by the end, they had all accepted Jesus as their Savior! During the weeklong camp, attendees participated in games, workshops, and fellowship. The climax came when seven new believers were baptized in the Caspian Sea.

Here are two personal testimonies:

*"My name is Murat, and I'm 16 years old. It was my first time going so far and for such a long period away from home! I really enjoyed it and had a great time interacting with my peers. Thank you to everyone who organized this event for us. My name is Ali, and I'm 17 years old. I used to think about Christians in a completely different way, but after this camp, my perspective has changed... and I've become one of them! I realized and understood that Jesus is the Savior for everyone who believes. This camp was very useful, interesting, and a blessing to my life."*



*Young people in Turkmenistan enjoy their summer Bible camp.*



# KAZAKHSTAN

## Helping Children Find God

**Ksenia**, 19, served as a counselor at Mission Eurasia's summer camp in Kazakhstan. As a Christian from an early age, Ksenia feels privileged to help others find the faith that has meant so much to her. Here is her description of the camp experience:

*"I love serving children and teenagers and watching their gradual transformation as they open their hearts to God. After camp, there's still a lot of work to do. We keep in touch with the teens, collect their contact information, and try to stay connected with them even after camp ends. Each time I go on a trip, I see how much I've changed. We all need a place where we can deeply connect with the spiritual world and experience God's glory. These unforgettable moments leave a deep impression on my heart and memory.*

*"There are a few key lessons I've learned: the importance of being present with people during their hard times, not letting emotions take over, especially when things don't go as planned, and having the courage to speak the words that God wants to share through you.*

*"After each trip, I understand people and teenagers in a new way. I see how hard it is for them to deal with their struggles on their own and I've begun to pray for each teen, asking God to protect them. I'm increasingly aware of how gracious God is to teenagers and how He tries to reach every young heart. I also realize that God is working in me as well, as serving children who tend to isolate themselves has become a true art. We've learned a lot about this in our team of servants.*

*"I'm deeply moved when I see the Holy Spirit touching teenagers' hearts, making them cry before God or repent. These moments are deeply etched into my heart, and I am crying even now as I recall these special moments in the children's lives. Serving children is not just about helping them; it also has a powerful impact on my own heart. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a blessed ministry."*



As a camp counselor, Ksenia was able to share her faith with spiritually hungry children.



# KYRGYZSTAN

## A God for Everyone

**Bulat**, 17, participated in a camp for children with disabilities. An open and enthusiastic young man, he joined eagerly in all the games and workshops. He especially enjoyed doing crafts, which allowed him to be creative and make things with his own hands.

Most importantly, Bulat learned that God hears every prayer and that he can talk with God like a friend. This was a revelation for him. In the evenings, he often sat quietly, praying, asking the Lord for strength and health, and lifting up his friends in prayer.

For Bulat, camp was not just a place of joy, but also a significant step in his journey to understanding his relationship with the Lord. By the time the camp ended, he had a strong conviction that God is always near and hears all his prayers.



Bulat learned that he can talk with God as a friend.

# ISRAEL

## Finding Freedom in the Messiah through Camp

**Ada** grew up feeling constant pressure from her family, which made it difficult for her to form healthy relationships. She struggled with a variety of addictions and was ashamed of her faith. But her experience at camp made a lasting impact on her life.

Here is her story in her own words:

*"I really enjoyed the camp. I overcame my addictions and realized that God is always with me and will support me. The leaders were wonderful, and I felt a lot of love, something I had been missing. Everything was fun and uplifting. I grew closer to many people and made friends I plan to stay in touch with after camp. Events like this should be organized more often! They nourish our faith and help us spend more time with fellow believers. Thank you to all the organizers!"*



The camp experience made a lasting impact on Ada's life.

# GEORGIA

## A Wayward Teen Finds His Way

*"My name is **Ako**, and I'm 16 years old. My sister goes to church. A few weeks before the camp, I did something bad with my friends, and we ended up in jail for it. Later, they let us go (it's a long story). During that time, I promised my sister that if I got out of jail, I would definitely go to this Christian camp. The people I met here and the way the leaders interacted with us have instilled in me a great love for people. I didn't know how to pray before, but through the services here, I not only learned how to pray, but I also felt empty before—and now I am full.*

*"I feel like all of this has changed me. I believe I can change everything in my life. I don't want to go down the same path I was on. I will get my life in order and glorify the Lord through it."*



Ako discovered God's redemption through his camp experience.

# MONGOLIA

## Learning About the God of Love

*"My name is **Munkhdalai**. I'm 11 years old, and I live in the small town of Bayandalai. I have a sister and a brother. My dad is a police officer, and my mom works as an accountant in the district administration. We learned about the camp from our grandmother, who goes to church, and sometimes we go with her.*

*"I really enjoy spending time here with my peers in our group; they are very nice. In the life lessons, I learned how much God loves people, how He helps in difficult situations, and that I should respect Jesus, be obedient, and read the Bible more. I would really like to go to this camp again next year!"*



Munkhdalai's grandmother introduced him to summer Bible camp.

# AZERBAIJAN

## A Struggle That Ended Happily

*"My name is **Mirvari**. I'm very grateful to the Lord for this camp. When I was invited, I thought it would be a boring experience for me. I hadn't been going to church for a long time, and I always found excuses and justifications to avoid being in God's presence. I had very intense struggles in my heart. I live among nonbelievers, and this had a significant impact on my spiritual state. But from the first day, everything started to change. At first, I had thoughts like 'Run away from here; this won't help you!' But I stayed and didn't regret it.*

*"By nature, I am a very reserved person, but here I felt like I started to open up here and really live, as if I hadn't really lived before and had just existed. Each day was so interesting that we couldn't sleep at night from all the impressions, and we all talked and shared our experiences. I realized that the Lord is fighting for my heart and my life.*

*"On the last day of the camp, I repented and wholeheartedly accepted Him into my life. After that, I felt peace and hope within myself and gave all my burdens to Him, as it is written, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.'"*



Mirvari gave his heart to the Lord at camp.

# ARMENIA

## Milena's Story: Finding a New Identity in Christ

Even though she was only 12, Milena had already seen dire hardship. She and her mother had lived on the streets without any family support. So, when Milena came to camp, she exhibited a tough, tomboy exterior. "My mom always taught me to be strong," she recalls. "She didn't see anything wrong with me fighting with boys—it was just self-defense."

But at camp, Milena's attitude began to soften: "I realized that Jesus made me a girl for a reason. I really enjoyed our classes where I learned about God and many important things."

Milena was especially inspired by the children's Bible she received. She was eager to share it with her family. "When I first brought the children's Bible home," she recalls, "I suggested to my mom that we read it together, but she didn't want us to read it. So, my sister and I would still read it and share our impressions with our mom."

The devotion these two sisters shared began to make an impact on their mom, Lira. She saw the positive changes in their behavior and expressed her gratitude to the Mission Eurasia team: "You can't imagine how happy I am with the change in my girls ... This transformation is incredible. Praise God. I am grateful to you. I believe this change is due to the children's Bible that you gave them and that they now read."



Milena's experience at camp transformed her family.



# MAKING THE WORLD BETTER— THROUGH CHRIST

Our Summer Bible Camp program spans an enormous amount of territory across 14 countries in Eurasia and the Middle East. It requires vast resources to maintain and a deep commitment from our staff and volunteers.

We're grateful for the many partnerships we've forged with local churches and community groups that make this vital program possible.

Most of all, ***we're grateful for you***, and your generous support that enables us to keep going.

Because of you, the lives of countless precious children have been transformed for good. They will take the memories of their camp experience with them throughout their lives. And the spiritual nourishment they've received will fortify them for their journey through the ups and downs of life. As you can see, your giving has an eternal impact.

The Apostle Paul told the Philippians, your gifts "are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18). That is also true of your gifts to Mission Eurasia, for which we are forever grateful.

***Thank you!***

*"Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast and immovable; always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."*

— 1 Corinthians 15:58

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