

SUMMER BIBLE CAMP REPORT 2025



In a Time of Hardship

A Summer of Hope



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DR. GORD BALFOUR

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

– John 1:5

A Place to Experience God's Love

When the war in Ukraine erupted years ago, normal life in the region came to an end. The war also strained Mission Eurasia's resources to the limit. We suddenly had our hands full, ministering to the millions of displaced people in Poland, Moldova, and Ukraine itself.

But we knew it was important for our Summer of Hope Bible camps to continue, as young people needed a refuge of peace and safety more than ever.

Now, thanks to your support, that decision is bearing fruit throughout Eurasia from Mongolia to Israel, and the many places in between.

At summer camp, young people of all ages find a supportive environment where they are accepted and nurtured. **They learn about Jesus**, who loved us all so much that He died in our place. And they discover new friendships that change their outlook on life.

In group meetings, they delve deeply into the Bible and learn to apply it to their lives. They find a safe place where they can talk about their troubles and receive wise counsel.

Of course, there are lots of fun activities, too!

And they experience it all amid the beauty of God's creation.

This is what your generous gifts make possible. As you read the joy-filled testimonies from this year's summer Bible camps, I hope you'll see what a wonderful difference you are making in the lives of countless young people. The camp experience makes a lasting impact on these children and teens, equipping them to face the future with faith and courage.

So, on behalf of the children, the camp staff members, and all of us at Mission Eurasia—**thank you!**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Gord Balfour". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Gord Balfour
Executive Director, Mission Eurasia Canada

*“God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.”*

– Psalm 46:1

Summer Bible camp—where children of all ages find hope and purpose.



A Story of Tragedy—and Transformation

Russia’s war in Ukraine is **Europe’s largest conflict since World War II**. The flood of refugees to other countries has now reached nearly **6 million**. But millions more have been internally displaced, fleeing to the relatively peaceful areas of western Ukraine. The majority of these displaced persons—about **90 percent**—are women and children.

Such statistics will have little meaning for the children traumatized by war. But those children will remember the horror: The sound of shells exploding in the night. The sight of their homes being consumed by flames. The grief of losing beloved family members.

Imagine the contrast when they come to summer Bible camp: Suddenly, instead of violence and cruelty, they’re surrounded by love and kindness. Instead of chaos and disruption, they find order and peace.

Even for those who haven’t endured war, camp offers a healing experience. Many come from dysfunctional homes marked by strife, addiction, poverty, and abuse. At camp, they find a refuge where people respect one another and God. Through Christ’s love, they realize that there is still joy and beauty in the world.

Meanwhile, children from healthy Christian homes find their faith strengthened in a life-giving, Bible-based environment.

As you’ll see, the importance of summer Bible camp for these young ones is immeasurable.



Ukraine



Number of Camps: 152

Number of Children/Teens: 19,100

WHILE WAR CONTINUES TO RAVAGE THE EASTERN PARTS OF UKRAINE, THE WESTERN REGION STILL AFFORDS SOME SAFETY FOR FAMILIES. AND MISSION EURASIA IS THERE, HOLDING SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS AND WELCOMING THE CHILDREN WITH OPEN ARMS.

A Heart Changed by the Gospel

Andrii, 11, seemed sullen and withdrawn when he came to camp. He avoided other children and spent his time playing with his phone. Like so many Ukrainian children, his family had been displaced by the war.

But during a meeting on that first day, the Bible lesson struck a chord in Andrii's heart. When he heard about Jesus choosing His disciples, he raised his hand. "Does this mean Jesus could choose me, too?" he asked.

By his fourth day at camp, Andrii was ready to respond to God's call. "I want Jesus to save me," he said. "I don't want to live without Him!"

By the time camp was over, Andrii was a changed person. "I don't recognize my son!" his mother said later. "He has become attentive; he now deliberately puts away his phone to spend time with me, to walk and talk. I am amazed."



By his fourth day at camp, Andrii was ready to respond to God's call.



Roma was so inspired by his camp experience that he wanted to keep attending church.

A Young Boy's Zeal for God

The Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia is only about 30 kilometers from the front lines. The sounds of war can be heard there every day. But children there still find a haven at summer Bible camp.

Roma was one of those children. He caught the staff's attention early with his maturity and helpful attitude. He always listened attentively to the Bible stories and encouraged the younger children to participate in activities.

The impact of camp on Roma's life was long-lasting. After camp ended, a meeting was held at the local church. Roma expressed his desire to attend. The leaders explained that there would be no children's program, and the attendees would be mostly adults. "I don't care," Roma said. "I just want to be in church!"



After the loss of her father, Daryna found comfort at camp.

Healing for a Broken Heart

At just 10 years of age, **Daryna** heard the worst news a child can receive: Her father had been killed.

Two weeks later, Daryna had the opportunity to go to summer Bible camp. Her mother, though she was worried, agreed to let her go.

During her first few days at camp, Daryna seemed lost in sadness, staying by herself. But with the persistent care of the camp leaders, she began to open up. She smiled. She talked. She drew. She came back to life.

During Bible lessons, Daryna discovered that she could bring her pain to God. And she learned to pray. After a while she could say, "I feel a bit better now."

Daryna also began joining in camp activities and making new friends. They laughed, hugged, and sang together. Her mother noticed the change afterward, saying, "The camp gave Daryna what we couldn't give her in these last few weeks—lightness, warmth, and joy. Thank you for the ocean of love she felt. It was exactly what she needed."

A Counselor With a Heart for Children

The camp experience changes the lives of staff members as well as the children. **Valeriia**, 18, has long been involved in children's ministry, and this summer at camp deepened her commitment.

Here's her story:

"I decided to take part in camp because I truly love children. I love talking with them, especially as they begin to grow and think more deeply. Camp gives us a whole week to live together, to get closer to the children's world, and to make the week memorable for them. I simply wanted to share what God has given me, the opportunities He entrusted to me, and to be useful for the kids.

"My top three lessons from camp:

1. I became more patient. Being with children 24/7 is hard work, and camp gave me the space to practice patience.
2. I learned to adapt to unpredictable situations and to take on responsibilities that were not originally mine when help was needed.
3. I discovered how to correct children with love, without anger, even when emotions could easily take over.

"I realized that, after camp, I want to keep building deeper relationships with the children. There is so much happening in their minds and hearts, and I want to be there to help and to walk alongside them when they need it.

"I am deeply thankful to God for such a wonderful team. We went into camp to show the children who God really is—different from what they might imagine. But at the same time, God revealed Himself to us in new ways, too."



Valeriia came to help the kids—and found that God was changing her, too.

"Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear."

Psalm 27:3



Poland



Number of Camps: 29

Number of Children/Teens: 2,100

POLAND AND MOLDOVA HAVE ABSORBED THE LARGEST PORTION OF REFUGEES FROM RUSSIA'S WAR ON UKRAINE. AS THOSE COUNTRIES STRAIN TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THEIR NEW ARRIVALS, MISSION EURASIA'S SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS ARE PROVIDING A REFUGE OF PEACE AND LOVE FOR THE DISPLACED CHILDREN.

The Long Road Back From Trauma

Children react in various ways to severe trauma. Some retreat into depression, while others become belligerent. But it's all a response to the sadness and loss they feel.

Nastya came to camp with a hostile attitude, using foul language and being rude to the other kids. In talking with her mother, we discovered that their family had come from Kharkiv, Ukraine—one of the hardest-hit areas of the war. Two years ago, Nastya's father went missing. Last year, his death was confirmed. Nastya was suffering in pain from a devastating loss.

Our staff began working patiently with Nastya and her mother to bring God's healing to this precious child. Over time, her behavior began to change as she developed warm, trusting relationships with camp workers.

War leaves a deep imprint on the souls of vulnerable young people. But, as we saw with Nastya, God's compassionate love can heal them.



Nastya needed healing from her severe trauma. God was there to meet her.

God's Patient Love Reaches a Troubled Youth

Klym was a familiar figure to our camp staff at Szczecin. He had come to some events previously but then would always disappear. Just 13, Klym was already being influenced by life on the streets, with drugs and unhealthy relationships part of his daily experience.

The staff were surprised one day when Klym appeared on his bicycle. For two days, he stayed but avoided group activities. Then on the third day, he approached camp director Vitaliy and said, "I want to be [in the camp] with you. If you need help with something, I'll do it."

That was the turning point. From then on, Klym participated enthusiastically, helping the staff however he could. They even included him as a helper with the leadership team.

We have high hopes for Klym. His journey with God has just begun, but we're confident that, with patient love and prayer, he will grow and persevere in the faith.



Klym was aloof at first, but began responding to God's love, helping wherever he could.



Moldova

Number of Camps: 51

Number of Children/Teens: 3,360



At camp, Yarik found the answers he was seeking.

Olya, in Her Own Words

"My name is **Olya**. I live with my parents and my older sister. I spend a lot of time with my sister. We go for walks and talk about different things. What I enjoyed most at camp was archery, though I really liked all the activities. But my favorite moments were when we all sat in a circle and sang Christian songs with the guitar.

"When we sang the song, 'One Way,' I felt that God was near. I pray that we can gather like that more often and spend time together. After camp, I want to become a better friend and hope to have more faithful friends and to be close to my loved ones.

"The most important thing I took away is that we need to believe in God and take time to build a relationship with Him."

Every Child of God Is Important

When **Yarik** came to camp, he seemed distant and aloof. His family had fled from Ukraine, and Yarik had a very strained relationship with his parents.

Like many teens his age, Yarik was questioning things. After one Bible lesson, he approached a leader and asked, "Who created God?" That led to a long conversation, and it seemed to change him. After that, Yarik began to participate more in camp activities.

At another meeting, Yarik prayed for the first time. He asked to talk with his leader Mikhail again—who happens to be a fellow refugee from Ukraine. Yarik was able to open up about the deep pain and struggles he had endured.

Mikhail could listen with compassion, because he had experienced similar things. At the end of their conversation, Yarik said, "You know, I realized that I'm not unimportant to God. At least somebody cares about me."



Olya was blessed and inspired by her camp experience.



Uzbekistan

Number of Camps: 13

Number of Children/Teens: 370

IN THIS CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRY, FEWER THAN TWO IN EVERY 1,000 PEOPLE ARE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS. SO, MISSION EURASIA'S SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS ARE ESPECIALLY IMPACTFUL.

How the Love of God's People Healed a Broken Heart

Kirill was born with a severe form of cerebral palsy. When he was 3, his parents wanted to place him in an orphanage, but his grandmother offered to take him in. After that, his parents rarely visited him. He felt abandoned.

"I did not understand much," he recalls, "but as I grew older, these things caused me pain. The children in the neighborhood did not want to be friends with me; they often called me names and laughed at me.

"I thought I was a burden for my grandmother and that no one needed me. Thoughts of suicide began to come to me. I began to hate myself. Several times I tried to plan suicide, but it did not work out."

Then, a neighbor invited Kirill to a summer Bible camp. Kirill and his grandmother were wary, not knowing how it might work out. But the neighbor was persistent. Finally, Kirill's grandmother agreed to let him go.



At camp, Kirill experienced the love and acceptance he longed for.

Kirill describes what happened next:

"To my surprise, several young people came to my house and took me with them. They spoke kindly with me, and I quickly became friends with them. At camp, I was completely amazed that everyone treated me like a close friend, and people I saw for the first time in my life became close to me.

"During the evening prayer at camp, I realized how deeply I was hurt by my parents. I had many questions and the camp counselors answered all of them with the Bible. I understood that the Lord loves me, and I saw it through my friends at camp. Their attitude toward me was genuine and sincere. I also realize that I am needed by God and by people.

"I did not want the camp to end. At camp, I felt as if I were in paradise. I had the sense that I was a healthy person and people treated me as if I were healthy. On the last day of camp, I invited the Lord into my life as my Savior. Now my heart is filled with peace and joy. I am grateful to the Lord for this encounter."



Tajikistan

Number of Camps: 7

Number of Children/Teens: 290

CHRISTIANS ARE ROUTINELY PERSECUTED IN THIS MUSLIM-MAJORITY COUNTRY IN CENTRAL ASIA. BUT MISSION EURASIA HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN SHARING GOD'S LOVE THROUGH OUR SUMMER BIBLE CAMP PROGRAM.

Seeing Lives Change Through Christ

Gloria, 24, is a camp counselor and School Without Walls (SWW) graduate. At camp this year, she worked with **Kamila**, who felt God's touch and had a deep conversion experience.



Here are Gloria's recollections:

"Kamila is very open, friendly, sincere, and independent. She is always ready to help, and for a 14-year-old girl, she is remarkably brave and wise."

"During the two days of our camp, we held training sessions on various topics. On the second day, Kamila chose to attend a seminar led by one of our sisters. There, the Holy Spirit came upon her. She began to open up to those present and wept deeply."

"In the end, she made a very important decision—one she had been open to for some time but had been afraid to take the first step: to give her life to Jesus and follow Him. We prayed together the prayer of repentance and afterward her heart was filled with joy."

"In the following days, she continued to share about her past, which had brought her much pain and tears. Yet it was clear that the Holy Spirit was working in her heart, bringing freedom into different areas of her life."

"At the end of the camp, she decided to tell everyone about her choice to follow Jesus. We continue to stay in touch with her and pray for her. I believe this is only the beginning of her wonderful journey with Him."

Gloria (above) witnessed the dramatic change in Kamila (below) as she gave her life to Jesus.



Belarus

Number of Camps: 4

Number of Children/Teens: 170

REMNANTS OF THE SOVIET ERA STILL HANG OVER THIS TINY NATION. MOST OF THE PEOPLE ARE NOMINALLY CHRISTIAN, AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY BY UNREGISTERED GROUPS IS PROHIBITED. THE TRUE MESSAGE OF CHRIST IS GREATLY NEEDED HERE!

Getting Serious About Christ: Anya's Story

By the time **Anya**, 15, came to camp, she already had cancer and was in remission. The only child of a single mother, Anya is a natural leader who enjoys interacting with other children. But like many teens, she is also easily distracted.

Anya had been exposed to Christian influences before, but faith was not a top priority in her life. While studying the Bible at camp, she was struck by the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:21: "Where your treasure is your heart will be also." That made her think seriously about living for Christ rather than the passing pleasures of this world.

Now, Anya is eager to learn more about God—and to share what she's found with her mother at home.



Anya learned that real treasure is in knowing Christ.





Kyrgyzstan

Number of Camps: 8

Number of Children/Teens: 410

SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS ARE BRINGING THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL TO THIS POOR, MOUNTAINOUS, MUSLIM-DOMINANT COUNTRY.



Artyom (second from right) was changed by the unconditional acceptance he felt.

The Power of Acceptance

Like many 19-year-olds, **Artyom** was struggling to find his purpose in life. His friendships were often unhealthy and his relationship with his parents was strained.

But when he came to camp, Artyom found a completely different atmosphere that changed his outlook. There were healthy activities and heartfelt conversations. Most of all, Artyom felt accepted as he was, without judgment or ridicule.

Artyom went home inspired to rebuild his family relationships, and surround himself with people who will help him grow spiritually.





Israel



Number of Camps: 6

Number of Children/Teens: 310

THE POPULATION OF ISRAEL INCLUDES MORE THAN 1.3 MILLION RUSSIAN-SPEAKING JEWS FROM THE FORMER SOVIET UNION. MISSION EURASIA'S PROGRAMS—including SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS—are REACHING THEM WITH GOD'S LOVE.

Replacing Fear with Faith

Like Ukraine, Israel has suffered in a brutal war that leaves traumatic scars, especially on the children. Our summer Bible camps have had a great impact here, bringing the gospel message of love and hope to the young people of Israel.

Adel came to camp tormented by fear as a result of the war. But she met several new friends, and by the second day they were preparing a Bible-based skit together. Adel played the role of David, who defeated Goliath.

By the time camp ended, Adel was greatly encouraged and inspired to participate in more Christian events.

Adel (first on the left) found strength to overcome her fear.





Georgia



Number of Camps: 7

Number of Children/Teens: 570

SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS SERVE A VITAL FUNCTION IN THIS NOMINALLY CHRISTIAN COUNTRY, WHICH IS NEVERTHELESS HOSTILE TO EVANGELICAL ACTIVITY.

Reaching Adults With God's Love

Children aren't the only ones who benefit from summer Bible camp! **Eric**, 25, was already on a journey with Christ when he heard about camp, and his decision to attend changed his life. Here, in his own words, is what he experienced:

"These five days have been a profound spiritual awakening for me. I've gained experiences that have deepened my relationship with the Lord in ways I couldn't have imagined.

"The teachings, the fellowship, and the atmosphere of worship created space for me to feel God's presence more tangibly than ever before. The friendships I've formed here aren't just social connections—they're spiritual bonds with fellow believers who share this journey of faith."

Now, Eric wants to continue walking with Christ—and sharing his faith with others:

"I plan to attend church every Sunday because I know I'll miss the incredible people I've met, and, more importantly, I want to continue growing in fellowship with other believers who understand this transformation I'm experiencing."



Eric found new inspiration for his Christian life at camp.

"But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy."

Psalm 5:11



Mongolia



Number of Camps: 9

Number of Children/Teens: 510

THE CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE, THOUGH STILL SMALL, IS GROWING IN THIS VAST, SPARSELY POPULATED LAND.



Byambatsogt discovered a new way of living at camp.

God Changes a Boy's Outlook—and Behavior

Byambatsogt, 12, comes from a hardworking family in western Mongolia. Without a Christian influence at home, he found the camp atmosphere especially inspiring. "I really enjoyed the camp," he says, "especially the Bible lessons, where I learned more about Jesus ... This was my first time at such a camp, and it was very meaningful for me." For the donors that support the camps, Byambatsogt says, "I am grateful to everyone who made this camp possible. For me it was a very important event in my life."

Byambatsogt's camp experience led to a definite change in his behavior. "I decided to stop using bad words and to change my character for the better," he says. "I don't want to return to my old ways—I want to continue living with the Lord."



Azerbaijan



Number of Camps: 8

Number of Children/Teens: 290

MISSION EURASIA TEAMS ARE FEARLESSLY SHARING THE GOSPEL IN THIS MUSLIM-DOMINANT COUNTRY. SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS ARE A VITAL PART OF THAT EFFORT.

The God Who Will Never Leave

Aynura, 13, was abandoned early in life by both her father and mother. But God moved in the heart of her aunt Aytekin to take her in along with her two brothers. Still, life was hard for Aynura. She remembers having to clean the streets in her town just to earn money for school supplies.

At one of the evening camp meetings, God touched Aynura's heart, and she gave her life to Jesus. She realized that God had been there all along, protecting and guiding her. Now she has a Heavenly Father who will never leave her.



Aynura discovered that God is faithful to His children.



Armenia



Number of Camps: 33

Number of Children/Teens: 1,780

MANY PEOPLE IN THIS EMBATTLED NATION HAVE NEVER HEARD THE PLAIN MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL—EVEN THOUGH IT IS NOMINALLY CHRISTIAN. OUR SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS ARE CHANGING THAT.

Grachia's Painful Secret—and God's Healing Power

Grachia, 10 years old, impressed the camp staff with his mature, gentle demeanor. But one day he got into a fight with another boy.

Lilit, the ministry leader, pulled Grachia aside to talk about it, and the boy burst into tears. "His uncontrollable sobbing and intense emotion really disturbed me," she recalls. "Once he calmed down, he shared, 'I have a nervous disorder, but no one knows. I can't control myself, and sometimes I explode for no reason, and then I feel terrible about it.'"

Lilit told Grachia about the love and healing power of Jesus, and they prayed together. God began to change his heart.

Grachia's mother now has renewed hope for his future. "The camp has helped my son start trusting Jesus, little by little," she says. "He is slowly overcoming his challenges and leaving behind the dark days of his early childhood. He's looking forward now to the bright future God has for him.

"That joy has touched our whole family. It gives us hope that God will change our circumstances and improve our lives. I'm so thankful for the hope you've given us—it's exactly what we needed to keep going."



Grachia experienced God's healing power at camp.



“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

– Galatians 6:9

Caring for the Vulnerable Ones

Children are often overlooked in our world. We adults think our activities are the most important. But the experiences and memories taking root in our children right now will shape the world in which they live.

This is why, at Mission Eurasia, we have always made our Summer of Hope Bible Camp program a top priority. Our children deserve all the love, guidance, and sound instruction we can give them—right now.

We know you feel the same way. And we so appreciate your partnership!

- ♥ With your ongoing help, our camp program will continue to thrive.
- ♥ Young people will continue hearing the Good News.
- ♥ And the Next Generation will be in good hands.



Thank you

for all you do to bring God's truth, goodness,
and love to our most vulnerable ones.

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