

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

—Psalm 46:1

JULY 2020



BRINGING HOPE AND HEALING TO THE PEOPLE OF EURASIA: UPDATE ON MISSION EURASIA'S COVID-19 RELIEF EFFORTS



Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Mission Eurasia has re-focused much of its efforts on bringing hope and healing to the people of Eurasia affected by this unexpected crisis. As a result of the prayers and generous support of our ministry partners, Mission Eurasia has developed a multi-faceted, holistic approach designed to address the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of men, women, and children threatened by this pandemic. We are grateful to God for our faithful ministry partners, our dedicated young School Without Walls students and graduates, partnerships with local evangelical churches and volunteers throughout Eurasia, and the cooperation of local authorities, who together have made it possible for Mission Eurasia to play a leading role in turning the challenges of COVID-19 into new opportunities for ministry.

Here is a summary of the ways that your generous and faithful support has helped Mission Eurasia bring relief to the people of Eurasia during this pandemic.



Strategic Leadership Training Events

When quarantine was first imposed in Eurasia, Mission Eurasia organized an analytical and strategic web conference called **“Our Answer to the Pandemic: Church Ministry in the Face of New Challenges.”**

This unique, first-of-its-kind event helped to educate and motivate church leaders, active Christians students, and young Christian leaders throughout Eurasia about



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new, strategic approaches to ministry during this unprecedented crisis. A total of **8,700 Christian leaders** throughout the countries of Eurasia made the conference available through their social media networks. Since then, a total of **14 additional web conferences** and webinars were presented on the topics of ministry to the family and children, church planting, personal evangelism, and the role of Christian healthcare workers during the pandemic. These web events were viewed by more than **30,000 individuals throughout Eurasia**.



Development of New Strategic Resources

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mission Eurasia has adapted and developed a total of **37 new educational and motivational resources** for evangelism, leadership training, biblical stewardship, and summer projects for children and teenagers. These resources were distributed to **1,200 churches** throughout Eurasia and were used to train **4,500 church leaders**.

To provide spiritual direction and emotional comfort for those affected by the pandemic, Mission Eurasia has printed 1 million copies of a special **Good News Prayer Guide (MOLITVOSLOV)** in the Russian and Ukrainian languages that includes Scripture references and suggested prayers on topics such as forgiveness, protection, peace, and more. We estimate that this unique and timely resource has already impacted the lives of **600,000 people** throughout Eurasia in their search for God during this pandemic.



In addition to the printed version of the Good News Prayer Guide (MOLITVOSLOV), Mission Eurasia developed a mobile app version of this prayer guide in the Georgian, Ukrainian, and Russian languages. Our School Without Walls students and other young leaders have shared this prayer app with approximately **68,000 other young people** throughout Eurasia, motivating them to pray and to place their trust in Christ during this time of crisis.

Stories of Impact



"I pray in the morning and evening with my wife and children. I never thought that God could use this quarantine for such a blessing. I was baptized as a child in the Orthodox Church, but I haven't gone to church for a long time and I didn't even know how to pray. I am disabled and unable to work, so I am very grateful to those who gave me a copy of this wonderful prayer guide. I began using it myself and then my whole family joined me and now we pray together."

Sergey, Chernigov



“I am a medical student from the Congo and am studying in the city of Vinnitsa, Ukraine. When I was a teenager, I would go to Sunday school. But during my time at university, I didn’t even think about God and lived like all of the other students. When quarantine was imposed, I understood that I wouldn’t be in school until at least the fall and I couldn’t go home. I began to drink and even thought about suicide because I was so lonely. Once while in the city, I was given a prayer guide and a New Testament. It was as if God knocked on the door of my heart and reminded me about Himself. Now I pray every day, read my Bible, and participate in online church services. Now three of my roommates are also reading the Bible and praying with me. I thank God and you for your support.” **Marsel, Vinnitsa**

In all, Mission Eurasia has printed **1.5 million copies of Scripture**, including the Gospel of John, and other scriptural resources which are being used as evangelistic and discipleship tools by young School Without Walls, Next Generation Professional leaders, and national churches in their outreach ministries.



Ministry to Families in Need

Mission Eurasia’s School Without Walls leaders and those involved in our “Family as Mission” initiative have been able to serve **12,000 families** throughout Eurasia who have been in quarantine and without adequate financial resources because of job loss and other challenges during the pandemic.

The Story of Tatyana’s Family



Recently, SWW leaders visited Tatyana, who lives with her sons in a small, rented room in a hostel. “The building is in disrepair, and on one side of the house, the bricks are crumbling,” Tatyana shared with frustration. The hostel conditions are not ideal for daily life, but Tatyana and her sons don’t have any other choice. They live on the fifth floor, but the shower and toilet, which they share with everyone else in the building, are on the first floor. “The neighbors are constantly shouting, and their dogs are always barking, so I haven’t been able to sleep normally for a month,” Tatyana continued.

Along with the discomfort of living in a hostel, Tatyana has been battling cancer for more than a year. Now, she can’t afford to pay for her medication, and she can’t get to the hospital for treatment due to the restrictions placed on public transportation. “It would take me an hour to walk to the hospital, and I am afraid to go outside, because I’m at risk of infection,” Tatyana said with sorrow.

When the SWW leaders arrived at her door with food, facemasks, and gloves, Tatyana accepted these life-saving gifts with tears of gratitude. “We were starving, and I have lost a third of my hair, but you just saved us,” she said in a trembling voice. Along with the food and protective items, the SWW leaders gave Tatyana and her sons copies of *Light* magazine so they can learn about God and get connected with a local church through online services.

The Story of Angelica's Family



Recently, SWW leaders from Berdyansk, Ukraine visited the village of Osypenko, where they brought food and Scripture to families in need. One of these was that of Angelica and Yevgeniy, who have three daughters: Dasha, Masha, and Marina. After the COVID-19 pandemic began, Yevgeniy lost his job, and now the family is struggling to buy food and other necessities.

“Life has become much more complicated during quarantine, and we have absolutely no money to pay our bills or take care of our children,” Angelica shared. “Most of our food comes from the garden, but even that isn’t enough. Thank you for visiting us! We are especially thankful for the food you brought us. It was greatly needed today. God Himself brought you to our family. We were on the verge of despair, but thanks to our time of fellowship and prayer, my heart feels at peace. Now, I believe that the Lord will continue helping us.”



Ministry Through the Next Generation Professional Leaders Initiative (NGPLI)

When the pandemic began, Mission Eurasia’s Next Generation Professional leaders started looking for opportunities to serve their colleagues, clients, and Christian community, particularly active church leaders and volunteers in Christian organizations. NGPLI primarily focused on medical and legal issues by providing training, consultations, and resources for approximately **4,500 active Christian workers** who wanted to minister to others during the time of quarantine, but who lacked the expertise and experience to do so. Leaders of the Association of Christian Medical Workers and the Association of Christian Lawyers provided consultation for a number of churches and missions in Russia and Belarus, helping them to navigate the challenging medical and legal challenges posed by COVID-19 in order to carry out their ministries in the most effective way possible. In Central Asia, Christian medical communities formed online prayer and healthcare networks to provide medical advice and spiritual assistance for approximately **7,000 other medical workers** and patients dealing with COVID-19.

In addition, through NGPLI webinars and other online events, approximately **600 business leaders** and **2,000 entrepreneurs** received trained on how to adapt their businesses and keep them viable during the pandemic.

Finally, as part of our efforts to encourage biblical stewardship and generous giving among the Christian community, training was provided through NGPLI for more than **3,000 people** on how to manage their finances and develop a family budget during the crisis.





Providing Tangible Help for Those in Need

During the past six months, Mission Eurasia's School Without Walls (SWW) students have initiated and carried out more than 400 humanitarian projects throughout Eurasia, providing practical help for those in need, including the elderly, the sick, families living in poverty, and those living close to the war zone in eastern Ukraine. These projects were carried out with the partnership of local churches (including Catholic and Orthodox churches) and in cooperation with local authorities. We believe that these projects are a wonderful example of what can be achieved when different entities unite for a common purpose for the good of all. As Alexander Belev, SWW international director, shared: "For many years we have been teaching our SWW students how to become leaders who cooperate with the government and volunteer organizations for more effective ministry. In the past, only a few of our SWW leaders were involved in this type of cooperation, but today almost everyone is involved. We are now seeing the fruits of these efforts."

During this time, SWW students have distributed a total of **20,000 face masks** and **13,000 packets of sanitizing products**, along with food and medicine, to those in need.

Our Bread of Life bakeries in eastern Ukraine have also responded to the huge need during the crisis and took bread and food packages to people in surrounding villages. The people were very grateful for the tangible help but more than anything, they were grateful for the encouragement, prayers, and spiritual support during these difficult, uncertain times.

One more way our leaders in Ukraine reached out to people during the pandemic was through the eye clinic. Last May, a team of eye doctors from Village Church, Dyer (IN) came to Ukraine to do an eyecare outreach. The team regularly goes to different countries, from Latin America to Africa, to hold eye clinics to check people's eyesight, distribute glasses, and share the gospel.

On last year's trip to Korosten and surrounding villages, they saw **1,000 people**. It was an amazing time, and the love and care the people received impacted them so much that some made a decision to join the church and get baptized after the outreach.

The Village Church team wanted to come back this year to visit more villages but, due to the restrictions connected to COVID-19, they couldn't come. Dr. Ivashchik, who is a highly skilled eye doctor in one of the clinics in Kyiv, was part of the team last year. When she learned the team was not able to come, she decided to carry on their mission. Recently, she was joined by volunteers and the team went to two villages, Vaskovichi and Grozino. They saw almost 100 people. Dr. Ivashchik checked their eyesight, and gave out eye medicine, glasses, and prayer guides. Some people who came to the clinic were from surrounding villages!

Mission Eurasia's School Without Walls (SWW) students have initiated and carried out more than 400 humanitarian projects throughout Eurasia.



Anya's Story



Amid the COVID-19 crisis, School Without Walls (SWW) leaders are proactively gathering food, medicine, and Scripture, which they are bringing to hurting individuals and families in need.

While observing the safety measures required by social distancing, SWW leaders recently visited Anya, an elderly woman who lives alone in a small apartment. Her sons left their town to look for work, but they haven't been able to find anything, so they aren't able to send Anya any financial support.

As a result, Anya is dependent on the meager pension she receives from the government to survive, but this month, she didn't receive her pension payment, so she didn't have any money for food. When she saw the food, medicine, and other goods that the SWW leaders brought for her, Anya's eyes filled with tears of gratitude.

"In my entire life, no one has ever offered to help me like this, and even though you are all so young, you have brought me so much," Anya said through her tears. "I was just thinking that I wouldn't have anything to eat, because my food is almost gone. The coronavirus doesn't scare me like hunger and loneliness, especially when I have no one to help me, but now I know that there are people out there who care about me. Alto, thank you for the Hope magazine! I will read it and ask God for help."

After she expressed her gratitude for the food and Scripture, Anya shared that she spent 15 years in an orphanage when she was young, and she has endured great suffering throughout her life. The SWW leaders then shared the gospel with Anya, emphasizing how much her Heavenly Father loves her. Anya nodded her head in agreement with fresh tears in her eyes. "I can't go to church right now, but I will keep reading my New Testament while I'm staying at home," she shared. "And, when I eat the food you brought me, I will thank God for feeding me."

Story of Alexander and Tanya



Recently, our SWW leaders visited Alexander and Tatyana, who are both disabled. Alexander has cerebral palsy, so he has extremely limited mobility. Sometimes, he can go out and purchase groceries, but this has become difficult since the pandemic started. Also, about 26 years ago, Tatyana was stabbed in the back, and ever since then, she has had problems with blood circulation and mobility.

Because of their medical issues, it's hard for Alexander and Tatyana to leave their apartment, however, they refuse to give up hope, and they remain optimistic. When SWW leaders visited their home, Alexander and Tatyana were so grateful for the food and Scripture they received, and as a token of their gratitude, they gave the SWW leaders hand-knit socks.



A New Summer Camp Model for Children

Because of social-distancing requirements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mission Eurasia developed a new form of summer Bible camps for children this year that are held in local neighborhoods for groups of 10 children or less. So far this summer, around 200 SWW teams have held **123 neighborhood Bible day camps** for more than **10,000 children and teens**. This includes more than **2,500 children and youth** from **18 cities and villages** in war-torn eastern Ukraine. We are deeply grateful to all of our donors who have generously partnered with Mission Eurasia again this year to make these neighborhood Bible day camps possible, even in the midst of a pandemic. As a result, more young, hurting lives are finding hope through Christ.

Story of Amir and Milana



In June, School Without Walls (SWW) leaders from Nalchik, a small village in Kabardino-Balkaria, Russia, held a summer Bible camp for children between the ages of 6 and 12. About 40 children participated in this camp, and many of them were from Muslim families. Siblings Amir and Milana, who come from a poor Muslim family, were two of the children who participated in this camp.

To the SWW leaders' surprise, Milana brought a children's Bible to camp that she had received from a pastor, and she read it during her free time. As she read God's Word, Milana asked the SWW leaders several questions, and their responses helped her better understand the gospel. This camp was the very first time that Amir and Milana spent time with Christians, and they loved it so much that they didn't want to go home. Their hearts were moved by the love they experienced, and now they look forward to the next summer Bible camp so they can learn more about Christianity.

Story of Natasha



Natasha, a young girl from Ukraine, loves her grandmother so much that she asked her parents if they could bring her from Ocheretino, a small village in war-torn eastern Ukraine, to live with them in Kyiv. Before the war broke out, Natasha's family lived next door to her grandmother, but after many homes in their village were destroyed by shelling, Natasha's parents moved the family to Kyiv for their safety. However, Natasha's grandmother stayed in Ocheretino because she didn't want to leave her home.

God answered Natasha's prayers, and this summer, she was able to visit her grandmother in Ocheretino. While she was there, she also attended one of our neighborhood Bible day camps, which took place at a local church.

"I love this church, and I feel so comfortable here," Natasha shared with joy. "I've never met so many kind people. Yesterday, our leader, Kolya, taught us how to pray, and he said that God listens to the prayers of children. I decided to pray for my grandmother, and I even

asked her for prayer requests. I pray that my grandmother would no longer have pain in her legs and heart, and I hope she will start going to church on Sundays. My friends and I also prayed that Christ would protect our village from violence so that our grandparents won't suffer."

Natasha loves talking about God, and she brought many of her friends to camp with her. Also, because of her joy and love for Jesus, Natasha's grandmother started asking questions about the gospel. At the end of the day camp, the SWW leaders prayed with the family members of the children who attended this camp, including Natasha's grandmother.



Hotlines of Hope

While many churches in Eurasia were closed during the pandemic, some **3,000 SWW and young professional leaders trained by Mission Eurasia** were available to address the needs of those in their communities 24/7. Through telephone hotlines and social media networks, these young leaders served as beacons of hope and "channels of trust" for those who called or contacted them with questions or concerns. As a result, these young leaders were able to provide spiritual and emotional support for thousands of unbelievers with whom they shared their hope in Christ.



Estimated Total Impact

As a result of the combined ministry efforts of our SWW leaders, young professional leaders, and strategic ministry partners described above, we estimate that we have been able to impact **1,200 churches, 900 communities, 4,500 pastors/church leaders**, and at least **3 million needy, suffering people** throughout the countries of Eurasia during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are deeply grateful to all of our supporters whose prayers and generous gifts have helped make this possible. With your continued prayers and support, we hope to impact the lives of many more hurting people for Christ in the months to come.

Thank you for your faithful partnership in ministry!

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