

Gift of Hope

See how one Gift of Hope and the light of Christ open doors to transforming a child, their family, and community!



THE IMPACT OF GIFT OF HOPE



Marat lives in the remote village in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic of Russia, a spiritual wilderness and tinder box for Muslim extremism. The economic turmoil and disruption caused by the global pandemic have only complicated life for children like Marat who live in these post-Soviet countries in Eurasia, where evangelical Christians often struggle to live out their faith.

One of our School Without Walls (SWW) leaders, who carried a guitar and brought gifts that include God's Word, visited Marat's village this past Christmas. It was a welcomed and unexpected treat for these children. But **Mission Eurasia's annual evangelistic outreach — known as Gift of Hope — is about far more than Christmas carols and receiving gifts. It's about sharing the Good News of Jesus.**

"Thanks to the children's Bibles you brought, I will learn more about Jesus Christ," said Marat, who held his gift tightly in his arms.

Marat is one of **126,500 children throughout 12 post-Soviet countries in Eurasia who received a Gift of Hope this Christmas.** School Without Walls leaders distribute gifts filled with toys, sweet treats, socks or mittens, and hygiene items — that include sanitizers and masks in response to COVID-19 — and most importantly, a children's Bible. **As a result, this ministry project has impacted more than 375,000 children, family members, neighbors, and others from Russia to war-torn countries like Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and to the snowy remote areas of Siberia!**

Gift of Hope has impacted children like Marat, who have little to no access to the hope of the gospel, a result of communist leaders who decades ago tried to push Christ's message out of the former Soviet Union. Even today, these children live in countries impacted by atheistic leadership, corruption, and moral decay. But by sharing the story of Christ through Gifts of Hope with Marat and others, there is hope for the future in Eurasia.

Marat added, "I will pray that a church will be formed in our village where my family and all of our small village can go."

Thank you for your prayers and support that helped make this happen!

*"In the world you will have tribulation.
But take heart, I have overcome the world."*

—John 16:33



CHRISTMAS IN ABKHAZIA

Flying high above the remote mountains of Abkhazia in a former Soviet plane, Mission Eurasia's Pavel Tokarchuk prepared for an exciting day of ministry. The old Soviet biplane, once used by propaganda officers decades before to spread communism, was now being used to carry the hope of Jesus Christ through our **Gift of Hope** outreach to a village with little to no evangelical presence.

"It's one of the poorest regions of Eurasia and we want to share the hope of Jesus Christ with them," said Pavel, as the plane approached the make-shift, snow-covered runway in the village of Pskhu on Jan. 7, the day many in this part of the world celebrate as Christmas.

The village is located in the forests of the Caucasus mountains in Abkhazia, a former Soviet province located between Georgia and Russia. In the wintertime, the village is nearly impossible to access on roads that are often covered by ice and snow. During the days of communist control, the people who lived in this region were oppressed and lived amid harsh conditions. To this day, there is no evangelical church in Pskhu. There is only a Russian Orthodox church. While a majority of the Abkhazia population identifies as Russian Orthodox, there are few evangelical Christians among a significant Muslim minority. But Mission Eurasia is working to change this reality!

Mission Eurasia worked with local ministry partners to distribute a total 1,000 Gift of Hope gifts throughout the Abkhazia region in schools, orphanages, and homes of children whose parents are imprisoned. In the village of Pskhu, the team shared about the birth of Christ and distributed gifts, which included *My First Bible*, to 28 schoolchildren and 17 preschoolers.

Sergey, a church-planting movement leader in Moscow, helped with the Abkhazia project. He's witnessed how this outreach has impacted children in orphanages, institutions, and throughout Russia and the region. "Thanks to this

ministry in Russia, more than 50,000 children received gifts and heard the gospel message," he said.

"This Gift of Hope project has motivated hundreds or even thousands of volunteers and Christian leaders to go outside the church and carry the gospel to others during the Christmas holiday."

The project also touched Vyacheslav, a decorated, former Soviet pilot who flew Pavel and his team into the mountains. He chose to fly the plane on a vacation day because of the impact the annual Gift of Hope project is having on children and families in his Abkhazia homeland.

"It is a great honor for me personally, despite my holiday to transport the evangelists on our plane to this distant mountain village," he said. "I am ready to serve because you are doing this for the sake of God and to bring these children joy, hope, and Christmas gifts collected with love."



"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

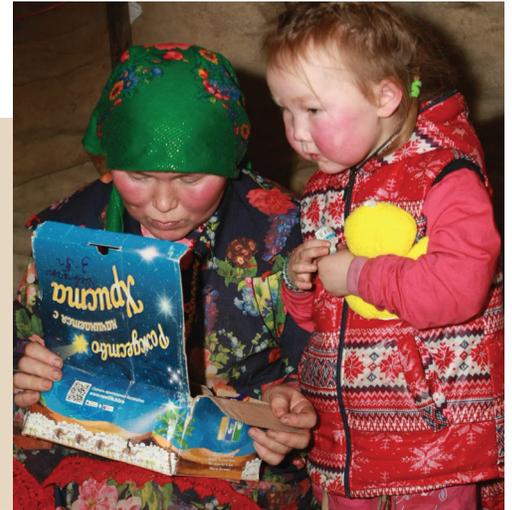
—Matthew 5:16 ESV



STORIES OF HOPE

12 countries and 126,500 Gifts of Hope — transforming one child's life at a time.

This past Christmas, we saw so many miracles happen through these Gift of Hope gifts distributed among hurting children. These children live in countries like war-torn eastern Ukraine and in Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh region, where 150,000 refugees fled from conflict that erupted last September. Our teams distribute these gifts in the most remote areas of Siberia and Mongolia, where people ride snowmobiles and few have access to Bibles and evangelical churches. Gift of Hope opens the door to conversations of faith between children, their friends, and family who wouldn't have access to the gospel any other way.



See where Gift of Hope touched lives throughout Eurasia:



Total number distributed: 126,500
Total people impacted by the project: 375,000

GIFTS OF HOPE STORIES — IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Read the stories of children and family who were impacted this past Christmastime by *Gift of Hope*.



Emil's story

Emil is 6 years old and is in the first grade in Azerbaijan, a country that recently entered a ceasefire agreement after war erupted between this nation and Armenia last year over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. Emil's father died in the conflict and School Without Walls leaders visited Emil's home during Christmas. At first, the boy's mother and grandmother did not want to let SWW leaders in the house. "But when they understood why we were doing this, they allowed us to come in," SWW coordinator Zaur shares. "When we greeted Emil, he welcomed us as if we were his family and he gave us a big hug. We gave them a New Testament and expressed our condolences for such a loss. May the Lord keep and save this family!"



Hasan's story

"I had never heard of Jesus Christ before," said Hasan, who lives in Russia. "Thanks to you and your friends who visited our house, I learned that I can receive salvation and eternal life thanks to faith in Jesus Christ! For the first time in my life, I heard how they sing to God playing the guitar."

"Now, I have a dream to learn how to play the guitar and sing to Jesus in the same way. All this is unusual for me and I want to learn more about Jesus and sing songs to Him. Thank you for coming to our village."



Alena's story

"Thanks to Mission Eurasia, my children and I have learned even more about Jesus Christ," shared Alena, who has two children, Alexandra and Nikita. "Despite the fact that we are Russians and live here in the North Caucasus, we have never been religious and never went to church. Although there is no church here, we will read the Bible and try to seek fellowship with Christians. Now that we have learned more about the truth that you have told us, we have a desire to learn more about God."

BRINGING RELIEF TO REFUGEE CHILDREN AMID TRAGEDY



This past fall, children in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh woke up to a nightmare of bombings, death, and destruction in their own neighborhoods as war erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Even after a peace agreement was reached weeks later, the damage was done.

More than **150,000 refugees** were forced to flee their homes — one mother fled with her seven children in her bare feet — and rebuild their lives after losing nearly everything. Our School Without Walls leaders and ministry partners reached out to these hurting refugee families. They brought food, clothing, and 5,000 Gifts of Hope. Our teams shared the story of Jesus' birth and sang songs about the hope He brings to a lost world.

Hope amid the 'smell of poverty' in Moldova

A team of School Without Walls students visited one of the poorest villages in northern Moldova to distribute Gifts of Hope to about 100 children on Christmas Eve, which is celebrated in many parts of Eurasia in January.

While Christmas often smells like tangerines and spruce branches in most countries throughout Eurasia where this is the custom, Mission Eurasia's Alexandr Belev shares, there also is the "smell of poverty."

"We hope that our ministry will bear much fruit for the Kingdom of God and that the smells of grief, sin, and pain will be covered by the peace of mind and heart that comes from a personal encounter with Jesus," said Alexandr, a pastor and international director of School Without Walls.

"Those who have no relatives have the smell of a dreadful loneliness," he said. "Patients with COVID-19 have the smell of medicine." Only the Good News about the Savior who was born can overcome these smells, he said.

Thank you for helping Gift of Hope open doors for the gospel to be shared.

Our Gift of Hope children's evangelistic outreach is truly a "door-opener" for ministry in communities throughout Eurasia where there is often little-to-no access to the Good News of Jesus Christ. ***Thank you for your prayers and support!***



For those who would like to continue their support for this ministry, go to <https://missioneurasia.org/donate/> and click on the Gift of Hope option. Or, if you prefer to mail a check, you can send it to P.O. Box 496, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. Or call us at **630-462-1739**.

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