



July 2022

Dear Friends,

Summer Declares the Glory of God! For everyone, summer means different things. For me, even though my own childhood “carefree” days of summer have long been replaced with my role as the leader of Russian Missions, I still remember the excitement of cleaning out my school locker and feeling the weight of the educational system being lifted from my shoulders...at least for a few months. Finally summer vacation, I only responsibilities were to go swimming, climb trees, play in the yard, and, of course, household chores. Now that we are all in adulthood, I sincerely hope you find time to unwind, rest, relax and refresh this summer season. Know that the work of Russian Missions goes on.



Today, I simply want to update you and, most of all, to say **Thank You** for your acts of sponsorship for Safe Haven Summer Camps and compassion toward children who you may never meet but **You** have changed their lives forever. I rejoice in God’s mercy as He brings once again, free of charge, hundreds of precious needy children to our camps. This year we have been blessed to be able to also include many refugee children who will experience safety and encouragement in our care as we give them--perhaps the greatest fun-filled week in a long, long time.

This year Russian Missions will again equip indigenous churches with the funds and materials to lead young people through our Bible study that explains who Jesus is, what it means to follow Him, and how to share this life-changing message with others. These children who have lived every day in fear and insecurity will find, love, security, stability, nurturing environment and hope for a better life through knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ. May they come to know that Jesus loves them and has a purpose and plan for their lives.

I would like to share two testimonies: 2021 Male Teenager. *“This past week I grew up and grew into my faith. This has been my third year at Safe Haven Summer Camp. God always brings something new to the table. This week has been about joy, growing, and open honesty. Praying out loud has always been a fear of mine, but the Lord was just bringing it up, pushing, pushing and encouraging me to go and pray in front of everyone. And I was just like, OK God, I get it, I’ll do it. If I want to walk on water, I have get out of the boat. So I did it and it was awesome! Major breakthrough for me.”*

2022 Recent Teenage Refugee camper. *“What I got from this camp was forgiveness and thankfulness. I realize that I need to let a lot of things go and forgive people and myself. I need to be more thankful for what I have had, what I’ve got, and what I’m going to receive. Like the other night, I forgave the misguided people who bombed my hometown. It was a huge reliever, stress resolver, weight lifter, etc. Hate, anger, revenge seem to be washed away. I want to thank everyone who was, is, and will be going to be there for me...especially God. It’s amazing what God can do!”*

Pray for the children, not yet rescued from malicious situations, that somehow God’s love will reach them. Now, more than ever, these children need to know that God loves them and that we are standing with them. *“We wait in hope for the Lord; He is our help and our shield”* (Psalm 33:20).

Your Brother in the Lord,
Pastor Sasha

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” Helen Keller

The word “missionary” usually conjures images of traveling to foreign countries to spread God’s word. Still I’m always inspired by reports from my indigenous missionaries describing ways they have served God by serving the people around them. I recall a recent remark, *“My mission field is the one I’m standing on.”*

We believe...We serve...We take action! Valery Boychenko, Ukraine

So much grief and trouble cannot be expressed in words. In Odessa one hears bombing alerts that bring anger, pity, and anxiety for innocent people who will die this night. A Christian woman went to be with her Lord. A mother and her children are now in intensive care. But, light will remove this evil darkness. Our teams have helped more than 200 refugees (i.e. children, families, old people, and disabled people) with humanitarian aid as well as spiritual guidance. God will overcome this malicious war. God is alive, He is near. In Romans, Paul describes God by exclaiming: *"Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways!"* (Romans 11:33) Thanks to everyone who prays and supports us!

"I delight to do thy will. O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8) Veniamin Makarov, Andreopoli, Russia
God wants us to see and then seize the opportunities He places within our reach. I received a phone call from an unknown number. I called back; it turned out that the caller was a woman (Maya) from a neighboring town where I had preached two years ago. She had kept our church brochure. Maya has four children and nine grandchildren. Subsequent to reading her Bible, she wanted to talk about God and His promises. After several daily conversations, I turned the phone over to my wife, Valentina. Being married for so long, I know that there are times when speaking woman-to-woman is in God's plan. Nowadays, we have an on-going phone ministry with her and her family. We have become fellow companions in Christ and share the catalysts of joy with each other. The grace of God has bound us together like nothing else.

Ukraine Update

I do not understand how such cruelty and lawlessness can take place in the modern civilized world. This war is a big event that demands we pay attention with respect to the Word of God and a sobriety regarding the awful human impact. More than 5 million Ukrainians have been displaced from their homes because of escalation conflict. Men under age 60 are not allowed to leave their communities as they are expected to defend their country. Masses of refugees have been taken in by neighboring Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary, as well as points further west. A small number did not leave due to economic reasons or family ties. Most of the Ukrainians who have fled Russia's invasion want to return to where they lived before the conflict. These people are suffering, their lives upended or, in some cases, suddenly and tragically ended. Russian forces have even attacked defenseless civilian areas, striking apartment buildings, schools and hospitals. After each strike on a civilian target, Russia has denied or deflected responsibility..



We have all been inspired by the courage of the people of Ukraine as they defend their nation. Billboards across Ukraine are displaying patriotic messaging even as their economy dries up and the war grinds on. "God is with us, We will win." "I want my future in the Ukraine." "God, save us and humble those who are too proud." "Glory to the Armed Forces" "We will rebuild." Personal Victory Gardens are further evidence of their undaunted conviction and expectation that life will return to normal. They plant crops and grow Victory Gardens in challenging conditions. They recognize that they may benefit little from their labor. The Russian military may still confiscate their harvest.

In addition to thousands of deaths and the destruction of crucial infrastructure, another, more invisible, crisis tied to Russia's invasion could haunt Ukraine for years: environmental damage. From shelled chemical plants to forests scorched by missiles, the consequences will be felt not only by Ukraine's ecosystem but also by its people.

We are too far away from the war and the consequences to really fully grasp and understand how great the need is and even more important, how great the opportunity is to show Jesus to a nation of hurting and attentive souls. The two overall categories of serving the Ukrainian are (1) helping the refugees that have left Ukraine and need almost everything just to do life, and (2) helping those that remain in Ukraine, either because they cannot leave or want to stay in effort to save their home and community. If you are moved to help, I can assure you that your sacrificial gifts will go directly to those people and places that are most needy. We have partnered to empower only those who have proven their love for the Lord and their love for those that He loves dearly. God has provided us with this opportunity to share His love, His truth, and His hope. God bless all of you who have helped us to this point. Will you ask the Lord if He is leading you to trust Him to step out and again care for our brothers and sisters who are on the frontline of this tragic war? Thank you.