UKRAINIAN CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN FUND

(formerly PERSECUTED CHURCH FELLOWSHIP SOCIETY)

U.C.C.F. UPDATE

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"Oh how great is Thy goodness...which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!" Ps. 31:19

... And how very thankful we are for God's great goodness and all He did this summer for the work of the Gospel in Ukraine! Besides our usual **Junior Camp** on the Azov and **Teen Camp** in Poltava, there were **Vacation Bible Schools** in villages, and our UCCF co-workers were able to hold a day camp in Orlovka, a village in the **war zone**.

We were so glad to have a part in a very special camp held in Peaceful Haven Camp on the Azov Sea – the "Foster Family Camp." It was held from July 20 to August 9 and there were 550 people in all. All foster families and their children were welcome. Besides regular services, they had a lot of time for fellowship where they could share their blessings and hardships and encourage one another. Non-Christian families and their children were also invited and there was great joy when one couple repented during the camp.

Earlier, Bro. Igor the Director of the camp had sent us this letter inviting UCCF to share in this outreach: "We greet you! We are the parents of 6 children, 3 of whom we took from the orphanage into our family. In our church "House of the Gospel" we have 5 such families. During the year we held seminars for these families from the Zaporozhie region, but the main outreach is now the family camp on the Azov Sea. At the camp, parents and children hear the Gospel message and enjoy a wonderful time of rest and fellowship. We invite non-Christian families for evangelizing and spiritual help that they need to bring up their special children. We would be very grateful to the Lord and to you for anything you can do for this camp outreach. May God bless you!"

We were very glad to help! And this year on Sept. 2/16, UCCF received a note of thanks in which Bro. Igor also said how glad he was to have Victor and Svetlana Hanzhov and all the children from our "Christian Home Orphanage" come to this camp.

Let us remember to pray for the many orphans in Ukraine – some who have been orphaned by the war that has not ceased in eastern Ukraine. May the Lord bless the Christian homes that opened their doors and their hearts to these children.

I think when I read that sweet story of old, when Jesus was here among men,

How He called little children as lambs to His fold, I should like to have been with Him then.

I wish that His hands had been placed on my head, that His arms had been thrown around me;

PRAYING FOR THE LOST

Thoughts from the heart of Mark Michael Lapka, who with wife Tammy are members of UCCF Board.

Before our Lord Jesus died on the cross He prayed for those who had beaten, mocked, and laughed at Him. Even as He gasped for breath, Jesus prayed: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34). As foretold in Isaiah 53:12 – "He bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Do we have a heart to pray for the lost? Do we have the mind of Christ in us?

Martyr Stephen, even as he was being stoned to death, cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" (Acts 7:60) Standing in that crowd was a man named Saul of Tarsus giving approval to Stephen's murder (Acts 8:1). Little did Saul know that he was only a stone's throw away from his salvation! Who knows how faithful Stephen's prayer affected Saul, but he became Paul, a great man of God. Listen to the heart of Paul in Romans 9:2-3, 10:1, "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart that I could wish myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers...Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God...is that they may be saved." Do we feel great sorrow for the lost? Do we have anguish in our hearts knowing that people are going to Hell to suffer eternal torment – forever and ever. Should this not break our hearts and bring us to our knees to weep and pray that men might know there is salvation through Jesus Christ from God's eternal wrath.

In this last year God has placed on my heart a real burden for the lost and an urgency to take every opportunity to speak up as the Holy Spirit leads me. I also have a burden to pray and intercede on behalf of those who do not realize their peril. I have been told that I may be offensive when telling someone that by living a life apart from God, without repentance, results in death and eternal torment; but surely the real offence would be knowing the truth and not saying anything, remaining silent!

Men, women, boys and girls need to know the wonderful message that God loved them so much that He sent His only Son – Jesus – to die on a cross as payment for our sins (John 3:16). They need to know that if we repent and turn from sin, believe that Jesus is God and follow Him, He will give them eternal life with Him. But we also need to know that because God is perfect holiness, no sin can ever stand before Him. That is why Jesus, the sinless Son of God, willingly took our punishment on the cross in order to satisfy the perfect justice of God. On the other hand, we also need to know that "whoever rejects the Son will not see life for God's wrath remains on him." (John 3:36). Is it offensive to tell someone rejecting God they are destined for an eternal Hell? Sure, it would be – unless it is true! If we believe it is true, then the most offensive and hateful thing is to remain silent.

God has given each one of His children a job to do - and that is to pray. Pray to God like it matters! Pray passionately, with tears. Plead for the lost around us. God wills to work through faithful intercessors. Realize that from your prayer closet you enter into the presence of our almighty holy God who has no limits! Pray believing that people's eyes would be opened, that they would turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and their souls may be filled with God's love.

We ask also that you will pray with us for the work in Ukraine. As you read through this newsletter you will find there are many opportunities to pray for projects and needs that are presented to you. We especially want you to pray for our co-workers in Christ – Sunday School teachers, pastors, camp follow up meetings, the special Christmas programs coming up soon, and all who visit the many needy families especially during the cold days of winter. May God give them all needed strength as they continue to fearlessly make known our Lord Jesus Christ and His great salvation. May many find new life in Christ.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." 1 John 4:10-11

CAMP DIRECTOR TATIANA LEVCHUK GIVES US AN INTERESTING GLIMPSE INTO JUNIOR CAMP

Junior Camp, July 6-15, was so good. I want to tell you so much that I find it difficult to decide where to begin! This year we had more than 100 people. The children came from many different towns and villages. We also had a group of children who came from the Donetsk region (war zone). My team of volunteers was such a blessing! I thank God for everyone who left behind their jobs and homes and served God with such devotion.

Every day we had a morning service, where we sang a lot, listened to someone of the team reading from the Bible and prayed together. After having breakfast and tidying up the rooms, the children had Bible lessons in small groups. Our Bible lessons were based on stories about kings of Israel and Judah. The last lesson was about Jesus as our King. After the Bible lessons it was time for activities: games, swimming in the sea, and making crafts. Then it was lunch time and a nap. The children played some camp games and again had swimming time in the sea. After dinner we had a good evening service.

During the day the children had different creative tasks which helped them to remember the theme of the day. I would like to tell you more about them. On this day the lesson was about King David and how he kept his promise given to Jonathan. We tried to teach the children how important it is to keep the promises we make to people and especially to God. Election fever must have been in the air here too, because they decided to choose one person from each group who could be elected to be 'President' of our camp. So during the day the children made posters and gave away leaflets persuading other children to vote for them. Here is what 7-year-old Matvey promised to do if he were elected:

"I promise that the war will be over and there won't be a war ever again. Ukraine will be the richest country in the world. Our country will have more food than any other country in the world. I will take down all old buildings and build new ones. People of Ukraine will have the most beautiful clothes. I will build churches and make them beautiful."

This group of boys aged 5 – 7 was so interesting. Here are some of the answers they gave to the question: "How will you improve our world to have more Faith, Love, Peace, Wisdom, and Truth?" Here is how the boys said they would improve the world: "I would close all the companies that sell cigarettes and other bad things." "I would take everyone to church." "I would tell people to quit smoking, drinking and doing wars." "We have to destroy all the tanks." "I would calm everyone down and they will stop shooting." "I would pray for them." "We need to give everyone an encyclopedia to learn from and they have to study English." "I would send everyone to the University until they are clever." "I would ask God to talk to people." "I would give everyone an iPhone."

When I listened to their ideas, I thought what a big privilege and responsibility it is to teach these young children. They are still at an age when it is easy for them to believe and thanks to such camps and different other projects we can teach them real Bible truths.

I'm so thankful that we could bring children from the war area to camp. There were a lot of difficulties and transportation cost a lot, but it is so worth it! Some parents were afraid to let their children go, not because they did not trust us, but because they were afraid to part with their children even for a short time. The situation in the east is so unstable that they were afraid that something would happen and their children won't be able to come back home. Nevertheless, we had a good group of children from Donbass area. It breaks my heart to see how many scars they have inside, as well as outside. One little boy, Vadim, had a big scar on his arm. During the shelling a lamp post fell on their house. Thankfully everyone survived and only later when Vadim complained that his arm hurt, his mother took off his shirt and saw a shell fragment in his arm.

God blessed us with wonderful weather, and the three last days were very hot. So it was excellent for the children to swim in the sea. By the way, the children from Donbass were really excited because they saw the sea for the first time in their lives.

DAY CAMP FOR CHILDREN IN ORLOVKA VILLAGE IN THE WAR ZONE

Our UCCF co-workers continue travelling into a number of villages in the war areas of eastern Ukraine taking much-needed food, bedding, clothing, and Christian literature. They also hold special children's meetings. What a joy this brings to the kids who have seen so much sadness and the fearful devastation of a war that is still far from over.

This summer, Tatiana Levchuk writes, we had special day camps for the children in Orlovka village. We were glad to be allowed to use the local school, where we had the use of the gym, a big hall, and the playground. Also the school bus brought the children – the first group came at 9am and a second group at 10am.

I'm not sure what I expected from this camp, but I felt it was going to be very different from any camp we had before. The reality exceeded all my expectations. The children were so enthusiastic and grateful for everything we planned for them that I was just amazed. The first day our memory verse was Jer. 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." We wondered if perhaps this verse was too hard for them to learn and we should have found a shorter one. But the next day I saw several girls telling each other the verse they had already learned.

We did not have the use of any cooking facilities at the school, so we could only provide a quick lunch of sandwiches and a drink. On our last day, June 28, one of the children's Moms wanted to say a couple of words to our team. When she was expressing her gratitude on behalf of all the parents, she could hardly speak because of tears. It was so touching that we could not hold back our tears too. She said, "Thank you for what you did for our children! We have never seen anything like this before. You have made their life a little bit brighter. I wish you could stay longer."

As I listened to her, I thought that the camp did not really require so much effort to make, but it meant so much for the children and their parents who feel they are abandoned and no one cares about them. My team and I feel honored to participate in this project and make life for the children who live so close to the battle front a little easier; but our greatest joy was to be able to tell them about God and His saving love.

CO-WORKER LYUBA KUVANCHENKO, WROTE AN OUTLINE ABOUT HER WORK IN MOLOCHANSK

I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Thank God all is well. We are very busy in the work.

- *Our campers, who just returned home, are telling us all how much they enjoyed their time at camp.
- *We let you know that all the much-needed repairs to our Sunday School room are now done. We have a NEW classroom now it is so cosy and comfortable! Thank you so much for helping us with this.
- *We had a wedding in our church the young couple were my former S.S. students. They love the Lord and gladly help at church.
- *We had a very good Harvest Festival (Thanksgiving). We expected about 120 people but 200 came to hear the Word of God some came to church for the first time in their lives. God gave us wonderful weather so we held the service outdoors. Our Sunday School children participated.
- *The next Sunday we had our annual day of prayer when we thank God for all our children at the start of another school year. We pray for each child so that we may not lose any of them.
- *Sometimes I get a call from our local pediatrician. She asks me to buy medicine if a child is in urgent need and the parents can't afford to buy it. In such cases I help the family with medicine.
- *The weather is getting colder. Some children don't have warm footwear or jackets. This month we received a parcel from Sabine Besmehn in Germany there was footwear in it. It was so timely!

OUR DEAR CO-WORKER, ANDREI OLAYNIK, NOW REJOICING WITH THE LORD

We will miss our dear brother Andrei so very much! He served the Lord faithfully in a steadfast, humble way quietly helping needy families and bringing the good news of salvation into many homes of the surrounding villages.

In 2003, <u>UCCF UKRAINE</u> Director, Andrei Levchuk, invited his good friend of many years to join in the outreach of this Mission. Soon the two Andrei's were again working together. They had permission to go into hospitals to preach and sing the Gospel and visit with patients, many of whom came to faith in Christ.

Andrei had a very old little car that he used to drive into villages to visit families and tell them about the Lord. Sometimes he took his wife and family with him and people enjoyed the hymns they sang together. (Later, the Lord provided so that UCCF was able to replace his 33-year-old car with a newer more reliable one.)

Today, both Andrei's are together in the glorious presence of our Lord Jesus Christ – we're pretty sure they are singing His praises with voices that are even clearer and stronger!

Nadezhda Levchuk sent us this write-up about Bro. Andrei Levchuk:

Andrei Olaynik was born on January 24, 1937. His parents were Orthodox Christians. Andrei repented in 1972.

God gave him a beautiful voice and as soon as he joined the church Andrei began to sing in a church choir. When religious freedom came to our country Andrei Olaynik, his wife Nadezhda and his friend Andrei Levchuk visited a lot of villages in Zaporozhie area with evangelism.

Starting from 1990 they regularly visited a large regional hospital, preaching the Gospel, singing Christian songs and giving out Christian literature. This ministry continued for seven years. It did not matter if the weather was good or nasty. Andrei and his family came to the hospital every Sunday evening.

When Peaceful Haven Camp was bought, the territory of which had been neglected for more than ten years, Andrei Olaynik was one of those who volunteered to come and work for free to make the camp comfortable for children.

He was also a member of "Voice of Eternity" mission. When the mission was closed, Andrei Levchuk invited him to work in UCCF mission.

Andrei Olaynik worked with families in Vasilievka region. He visited needy families where he not only helped with food and spoke about Christ, he also did any manual work that had to be done. I remember when he visited a family where there were 10 children and a sick father. He looked around, saw the broken glass in the windows and a stove that wouldn't heat the house. He went back home, took necessary tools, went to the market to buy materials and drove to that family again to replace the windows, to repair the stove, etc. He had a real gift to be able to see those who needed his help and I don't remember him ever saying that he was too busy for anyone. Perhaps the only thing that I heard him say he could not do was to write a good report about his work! It was much easier for him to do the job than to talk about it. He lived a beautiful life leaving a lot of grateful people behind.

His last days were calm and quiet. The doctors were amazed that having such a diagnosis he did not feel much pain. It was a miracle, a gift from God for His faithful servant.



THIS YEAR OUR TEEN CAMP WAS A REAL TEST OF FAITH

Here are excerpts from Camp Director Tatiana Levchuk's report about the Teen Camp, which was held August 2 – 11 in the Poltava area, and how they faced a number of varied unexpected problems!

...Today I want to share my impressions about our teen camp. Our first concern was when some people found they could not come to help at camp, but as usual God blessed and provided our camp with a great team of very devoted volunteers. There were some people whom I never met before and we prayed that God would help us to have good relationships. One of the most valuable things about our camps for me is fellowship with the co-workers. We may not have expensive entertainments, but I believe that what makes Christian camps so special is having co-workers who display Christ-centered relationships; that's what shows the children Christian life in practice and that's what they will remember for years to come.

So every day, while the teens were at hobby classes, we met with their counsellors to discuss Bible lessons, to ask for prayer requests, and to share our blessings and difficulties. It was a special time where we could see how God was working in the hearts of the teens.

This year we prepared Bible lessons (or rather discussions) on different problems that kings of Judea faced. Each day we introduced one king, and on the last day we talked about Jesus as the King of kings. I think the themes were very relevant to the lives of teenagers. I share some with you.

Day 1 – we discussed Solomon at the point where he had to decide what to ask for when God told him to ask for anything. The idea in this lesson was that sometimes we have to choose, not simply between good and evil, but between 'good and better'. Our choices determine our lives.

Day 2 – we read about Josiah and the scroll found in the temple. Josiah took responsibility for all the nation and they turned back to God. So the teenagers were encouraged to take responsibility for God's message, especially today when there is so much indifference we need to step forward.

Day 3 – was the life of Rohoboam and how he let his friends influence his decision. Whether we want it or not there is such a thing as peer pressure. We need to make sure our decisions don't contradict what God says in the Bible.

Day 4 – King Jehoash – the problem he faced was that after the priest died, Jehoash stopped following God's law. We taught the teenagers that it is most important to have a personal faith. To have Christian parents and friends is a good thing – but what happens when they are not around.

Day 5 – King Absalom and his desire to be popular. We need to understand our calling, what God wants you to be and to do. This way you will be happy no matter if you are popular or not.

Day 6 – King David and his promise to Jonathan. It is vital for us to keep our promises to God and to people.

Day 7 – King Saul – he started out well enough but later everything changed. The Bible says that we need to stay faithful until the end.

Day 8 – we talked about Christ and His personality. During His life on earth He showed the perfect example. The Bible says: "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John 2:6)

So we had these Bible discussions every morning and then in the evening we listened to the Gospel message on the same themes. I was especially pleased to see the teenagers talking to our preacher Ilya (pastor of a Berdyansk church).

We had a group of four boys who came to our camp for the first time. They were from foster families; two of them had moved to Zaporozhie from the war zone. On the first day I welcomed them and from the first minute of our conversation I felt negativity coming from them. They came to camp being sure that it was going to be very boring. They told me that they were not going to do anything unless they liked it. And they didn't like anything! We prayed for those boys — and for their counsellor

too. And day by day I witnessed changes in their attitude. At the evening services we had different members of our team share their testimonies. Some of our leaders also grew up either in foster families or in the orphanages and they shared their experiences how God changed their lives. So one day Alexey (one of those 4 boys) asked if he could say something at the evening service. I knew he was not a Christian, but he wanted to just tell us about his life. His first memories as a child was of a father who beat him. Later, he was taken to an orphanage and then to a foster family. It was a Christian family and his foster father was a very good man. Alexey learnt to trust and love him very much, but then his foster father died. When the war started they had to leave Donetsk. Now, Alexey lives with his foster mom and other children. His life story touched me very much. What impressed me the most was that a 15-year-old boy was willing to share such details of his life. When we were saying goodbye and Alexey gave me a big hug, I thought how different his attitude was from what I saw on the first day. Sadly, Alexey did not repent in the camp — I think perhaps he still has to learn to trust God as his Father — but he gave me his promise to come to our Camp Follow-up meetings.

There is something special about our camp atmosphere. I believe that in His time God is changing the hearts and lives of our children and teenagers who come. How very much we thank everyone who makes such camps possible.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE PROBLEMS YOU SAID YOU ENCOUNTERED? We will let Tatiana tell you.... It was on the day we were leaving to go to the camp. Our team left two days before camp to get everything ready for the children. Soon after they left from Zaporozhie, my brother Andrei's bus broke down. He tried to fix it, but we decided it was too risky to drive it such a long way. The bus was full of our personal things and kitchen utensils etc. We decided we would get Andrei Dvoretsky to come back with his bus for my brother and all the things. Our team went ahead in my car and arrived in Poltava o.k. Then I had to go to the city bus station to pick up one of our counsellors. On the way back to camp I heard a strange noise in my car. Thankfully, when I stopped to have a look under the hood, I met Andrei Dvoretsky setting out on his way to pick up my brother. He looked at my car and said that the oil had been leaking and it damaged the belt. That belt could split at any time and the car would not go anywhere! So we decided I should find a place in Poltava to fix my car, but it would take several days and we needed it to pick up the fresh meat, milk etc. every day. However, I thought, at least we will soon have Andrei Dvoretsky's bus. A few hours later I got a call from my brother Andrei. As soon as I saw who was calling, I knew something had happened again. When Andrei D. was about half way to Zaporozhie, the turbine in his bus broke down - even though at the garage they said they could see no reason why it broke down! So there we were: no car except Nina Dvoretsky's little one, most of the things we needed for camp still in Zaporozhie, and now Andrei D.'s bus also broken down!

Usually, I take it to heart when something does not go the way it should. But this time I was sure that God was going to bless our camp greatly! We gathered together with our team and prayed asking God to help us trust Him in any and all circumstances. It was already late, but my brother Andrei managed to find a man who agreed to transport all our things to the camp. He even lowered his price and we only paid \$25, which is very cheap for such a distance. So, about 1:30am both Andrei's and our things finally arrived at camp. I must mention that all three vehicles were in good enough condition before camp. It seemed unreal that all three of them broke down on the same day! Thank God for His care, for safety from accidents. We rejoice that the teenagers heard the Gospel!

"Let all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because Thou defendest them: let them also that love Thy name be joyful in Thee." (Psalms 5:11)



All counsellors, staff, kitchen helpers, speakers, at Poltava Teen Camp 2016 – all are volunteers



Every day while campers did arts and crafts, the counsellors met for prayer and tea



Our team of kitchen helpers Chef Lyuba Levchuk (centre)



Group of camp workers going to the war zone



Prayer time with children in Donetsk area

Kids enjoying Christian literature and treats

Children in war zone loved Bible Camp



Happy campers running into the Azov Sea



Couple of Juniors enjoying great swimming



Tatiana teaching a Bible lesson



Small groups have Bible studies outdoors



Molochansk Sunday School classroom needed major repairs...



Now their Sunday School room is warm & beautiful - Lyuba Kuvanchenko is so happy

WARMEST GREETINGS TO ALL OUR READERS AT THIS SPECIAL TIME WHEN WITH JOY AND AWE WE THINK ONCE AGAIN OF THE ONE WHOSE CRADLE WAS A HUMBLE MANGER IN BETHLEHEM. ALL HEAVEN PARTICIPATED, SENDING A MULTITUDE OF ANGELS PRAISING GOD. HOW MUCH MORE WE HAVE CAUSE TO THANK AND PRAISE GOD FOR HIS BELOVED SON WHO WILLINGLY CAME AND AT SUCH A TERRIBLE COST BROUGHT US THE GIFT OF FULL AND FREE SALVATION.

Sing of love to you so precious, tell in song how Jesus died; Let sweet music draw the millions to the dear Redeemer's side.

PRAYER....PRAISE....PROJECTS....PRAYER....PROJECTS....PRAYER....PRAISE....PROJECTS

*PRAISE God for His protection of our teams as they went into the war zone where we held day Bible Camps for children in Tonenkoye, Adveevka, and Orlovka villages.

*PRAY for all the children/teenagers who came to camps and DVBS this summer and for those who attend Camp Follow-up Meetings – may many repent and live for Christ.

*PRAISE God for Tatiana Levchuk and all the co-workers, also the helpers who gave up work days and gladly volunteered their time to serve the Lord at camp.

*PRAY for all our co-workers as they prepare special Christmas programs, for the children taking part, and for the parents who will hear the Gospel perhaps for the first time.

*PROJECT – Many families suffer during cold winters from lack of fuel, warm clothing and footwear, etc. May God make provision and give us wisdom to help as much as possible.

*PRAY for Nadezhda Olaynik and family - they are missing their much-loved father, Andrei. Also pray for co-workers: Barbara Levchuk due to have lazer surgery on a rupture. Andrei Dvoretsky is now recovering from his surgery to remove an inflamed cyst on his tailbone. Special note: Please continue to pray for Natasha (Vins) Velichkin as she faces treatment for cancer. Natasha had planned to help in our Teen Camp this summer. Let us pray that the Lord

will be pleased to heal her so she and husband Alexander may continue their good ministry.

*PROJECT – House in Tonenkoye (war area) bought for children's work and a Prayer House. In the basement of this house is a place where a terrorist sniper hid – clearly he had to leave in a hurry as he left some personal items. Broken windows need replacing etc. Lord helping, we look to complete repairs in Spring. We believe God will use this house to His glory.

*PRAISE God we could help with Foster Family Camp. We trust we will help again next year.

*PROJECT – Our vehicles now need much servicing, which they have done themselves so far. However, it is necessary we buy something more reliable before next camp season. They suggest, and we agree they look for another car and a utility trailer for hauling camp needs.

*PRAISE & PRAYER – The 'manse' we purchased for assistant pastor Andrei Dvoretsky, wife Nina and 2 (soon 3) children, was in need of winterizing. Andrei does this himself. The main floor is now warm and useable, but the upstairs where the bedrooms are needs much work.

"UCCF UPDATE" newsletters are available free of charge to all interested in praying for child & family evangelism in Ukraine.

UCCF PROVIDES CANADIAN TAX RECEIPTS FOR DONATIONS