



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL *Challenger*

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A First-Time Camp!

Below, BIEM missionary Pasha Usach shares about a brand-new camp on land purchased for ministry.

Dear friends, brothers and sisters. There's a war going on in our country, and many people wake up every morning to the sound of a siren warning of danger (the need to seek shelter). Many people don't wake up at all. Yet, amidst this difficult military and economic time, the Lord gave us a great blessing—an opportunity to hold a children's camp for five days. About eighty children attended. When the war began, our church had eighteen Sunday school teachers. That number dropped to three. The others left the country for their own safety, and this greatly affected the children's ministry.

However, the Lord made it so that there were no hostilities in our area. Many of the teachers even returned home, so we prayed about holding a children's camp. And God gave us such an opportunity. From July 19 to 24, we held a blessed time for the children, when they could get out of their homes and spend time in nature. There, instead of hearing sirens, they could forget about war and simply enjoy fellowship with other children.

This was the first time we've held such a camp on land we purchased for church use. Of course, the territory needed much preparation for camping. For example, we needed to equip this property with everything necessary (toilets, summer showers, a place for washing hands, a dining area, a place for tents, a sports field, a bonfire ring, benches for seating, etc.) We accomplished all this thanks to the sacrifice of brothers who worked tirelessly for nearly a month

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These kids from Zdolbuniv, Ukraine, looked forward to camp for a long time!



The prophet Elisha (BIEM's Pasha Usach) personally led the kids from the buses to the campground.



Preparations for camp started long before summertime.



Only after submitting their ID could camper enter.

Happenings in Central Asia

Freed from a Demon

In Central Asia, God continues to set captives free. Pastor Philip wrote to say last week his niece hit the lowest point in her life. She had been dabbling in the occult, Satan's traps. As a result, she had become demon possessed. Her Muslim mother took her to the village mullah (Islamic preacher) to have him cast out the demon. The mullah took their money for that service but could not do it and failed to help. In fear, he told them to leave.

Next, her mother took her to a witch, who also could not give relief from the control of this demon. Her cousin advised them to go to Philip, whose God answers his prayers. They went.

Philip and Pastor River prayed over this girl, asking that God would open her eyes spiritually and that she would trust Jesus as Savior. When they shared the Gospel message with her, she dropped to her knees and cried out, "I need freedom!"



These former Muslims have embraced Christ and desire to learn from God's Word.

She then called on Jesus Christ to save her. She confessed her sins and placed her trust in Christ. She was set free! She has been attending Christian services and reading the Bible daily. The Word of God is the power of God unto salvation!

Psychological Games

BIEM received this brief message from one of our missionaries in Central Asia, a predominantly Muslim area: "Azamat got called into the police again. Please have people praying for him." We quickly posted that prayer request on our Facebook page.

Later, we received this update: "I just heard from Azamat, He was questioned for an hour and a half as to why he is a Christian. For an hour of that time, he clearly shared the Gospel with them! They basically then laughed and said all their friends were in hell, and so that's where they want to go. Azamat told them he would pray for them. He was released and said he believes they will continue calling him in on a regular basis to try to play psychological games with him. He said, "I'll keep sharing Jesus with them."

Thank you for praying!

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"Reaching the world for Christ since 1981"

Dr. Peter Slobodian, Founder

Baptist International Evangelistic Ministries
121 Commerce Drive, Suite 50
Danville, Indiana 46122
317-718-1633

Missions@BaptistInternational.org
www.BaptistInternational.org

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What about the War?

Our two most recent *Challenger* newsletters focused especially on the war in Ukraine. That war remains hot and is a matter for daily prayer. However, because BIEM's workers are engaged in spiritual warfare on multiple fronts, we opted to broaden our perspective in this newsletter. By God's grace and with your support, BIEM was able to sponsor children's summer camps in various countries. In each of those lands, the Lord definitely worked in hearts, drawing some to salvation in Christ and deepening others' commitment and their understanding of His Word. Of course, evangelism and discipleship continue in restricted-access lands of Central and Western Asia even though prudence encourages us not to show

facial photos or supply names of those brothers and sisters in Christ.

For more information and inspiration concerning the war, please visit our website, BaptistInternational.org. By scrolling down the main page, you will see clickable links to read our *Weekly War Updates* and to watch *Video Updates*.



Thank you so much for your prayers and financial support. We could not continue this ministry without you! ■

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BIEM Opens First Bible Institute for Afghan Believers

One year ago, we could not have imagined that God would give us the opportunity and resources to start a Bible Institute in Central Asia. This institute is especially for young Afghans who escaped the Taliban and have become believers in Christ through the evangelistic outreach of our Tajik team. This is a nearly unbelievable opportunity for them. They are Muslim refugees who heard the Gospel and became believers at great risk to their own safety.

The first session covered Christ in the Old Testament, Motivational Lessons from Joshua (taught by Tim* from

BIEM), and Biblical History by our national team leader, Evangelist Richard*. The students were a mix of men and women from three different Afghan groups. The women were delighted they had the freedom to participate as they added insight and laughter to the discussions. What a contrast to their former lives. When Tim was teaching about serving the Lord from the book of Joshua, the young men exclaimed, “We go, we go!” They were willing to become church planters among the refugees in Central Asia, or even go back to Afghanistan if God called them there. This willingness is courageous since Afghans (and particularly any who are Christian), once they are deported back to Afghanistan

are persecuted and most likely executed by the Taliban.

Classes will continue for eight months, and then they will receive a diploma. We hope to help the graduates get established in ministry. Only God could make all of this happen, and we know it is for His glory! If you would like to help support the Bible Institute with much needed financial assistance, please designate your gift to BIEM for “Afghan Bible Institute.” Most of all, please pray for the safety of students and teachers.

**For the sake of discretion, we often use pseudonyms without family names for our workers in restricted-access lands. ■*



Christian camps help young people to navigate God's Word for answers to crucial questions.



Kids were divided into teams for game time, Bible lessons, and other activities.



In addition to providing fun and exercise, games can teach honesty and sportsmanship.



No Christian camp would be complete without uplifting song times.

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to make this camp happen. So, in a rush right up to the appointed date of the camp, we labored to get ready for the children.

July 19 was the first day of camp. The children arrived by bus, and the teachers and camp organizers greeted them. So did someone else! Because all the Bible lessons

were on the life of Elisha, the children were first met by Elisha, who told them about an incredible experience—how God had taken Elijah to Himself, leaving Elisha alone. Next, Elisha invited the children to the city of Jericho. However, it was impossible simply to go there. First, they needed to receive a pass that the servants

issued to them. This pass contained written information about each child. With a pass in hand, they approached the gate. Soldiers checked this pass, and only then could the children enter the territory of the camp.

We immediately divided the campers into four teams, which they remained

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Quick Glimpses from the Fields

Once again, space considerations prevent us from writing articles on every event, but here are some quick insights into our various mission fields. Thank you for your prayers and support!



In Western Ukraine, a conference for women who had lost husbands or sons in the war ministered to these women's hearts.



Pastors in many Ukrainian towns report an increased number of souls coming to Christ during the war. These nine were baptized in Bilgorodka.



BIEM's Vitaly Bilyak ventures nearly to the front lines in eastern Ukraine to deliver food parcels and hope from God's Word.



At a camp in Tatarstan, these kids bonded with leaders and each other while learning God's ways.

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in throughout the camp's Bible lessons, games, clubs, and other activities. The children slept in tents all five nights. We had prepared a tent town for them in advance. We started each new day of camp with prayer, where we thanked God for His protection and asked for blessings on the new day. And every day, all adults and children saw this blessing sent to us by a loving Father. After prayer, we ate breakfast, then had a Bible study.

Every day, the children had time to use their own hands to make a clock, which they got to keep as a memento. On the clocks were written the wonderful words, "A time for everything."

The games we played each day were also important for the children. Gametime was a wonderful opportunity for them to exercise their physical, mental, and logical powers. Every day, the children learned Christian songs, and every evening we sang praise to God with them during the camp meeting.

Also, each child had opportunities throughout the day to earn points, which they could then exchange for virtual funds to spend on the last day in the store organized by the teachers. They could buy various books, hygiene products, stationery, toys, and other items that might interest them if they had enough funds. Every evening there was a meeting where the

children could praise God. They prepared in groups to participate in the meetings. Also, at each meeting they heard a sermon on the lesson topic that the teachers had taught in the morning. The camp was a wonderful, God-blessed time for the children, their parents, and all the camp organizers!

I would like to sincerely thank the BIEM mission, which has supported us financially during this difficult time. The mission provided us with help, thanks to which we were able to fulfill our desire of holding a camp, which glorified Our Lord and gave spiritual enrichment to the children. May God bless you. Thank you for your kind heart and open wallet. ■