



SPRING 2021

MWBVoice





“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.”

Psalm 46 v1-3

PAGE 2

**MESSAGE FROM COUNTRY DIRECTOR
JOHN CHAMBERLAIN**

PAGE 3

JOURNEYS OF HOPE

PAGE 4 & 5

LETTERS THAT BRING GOD’S WORD ALIVE

PAGE 6

**TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH
PRACTICAL ACTION**

PAGE 7

THE NEXT GENERATION OF MWB

PAGE 8 & 9

**OVERCOMING POVERTY THROUGH
SPONSORSHIP**

PAGE 10

**BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES THROUGH
A LEGACY GIFT**

PAGE 12

YOUR IMPACT



MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS

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When life goes along as usual, we often don’t really think much about how vulnerable we are. We take so much for granted, even the chance to be together. Then a crisis hits such as COVID-19 and everything changes. The “trouble” that the Psalmist speaks of is the word for “tribulation” or “trial” or “distress”. Our encouragement is the reminder that the Lord is our ever-present helper, a source of strength and “power” and he is always near.

Many of us have experienced worry, loss and isolation, however through everything we know that our hope is found in the Lord. At Mission Without Borders we give thanks to God who has done immeasurably more than we could have asked or imagined in the last year.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you – our supporters, volunteers, friends and partner churches – for your wonderful faithfulness and continued support of our work. While we have not been able to do all we wanted in 2020 we have been able to sponsor nearly 12,000 children and families. With your incredible help we were also able to respond to the crisis and deliver 41,800 essential Operation Christmas Love food parcels to families in poverty, a much-needed increase on last year.

Our staff and volunteers in Eastern Europe have battled against changing pandemic situations, multiple and ever-changing instructions and restrictions and increasing poverty and isolation in our communities. They have gone above and beyond in their commitment and care for those living in desperate situations.

We step out in faith, hopeful and excited about what God wants us to do through us all – developing work in Eastern Ukraine and expanding our family to family care in Bulgaria – knowing God will guide us during 2021 in the same way he has throughout our Mission’s history.

We hope that this year we will inspire others to join with us through giving, through action and through prayer as we seek to continue to bring practical and spiritual support, enabling and encouraging people to lift themselves out of poverty, always sharing the hope that is found in Jesus Christ.

With every blessing



John Chamberlain
UK Country Director



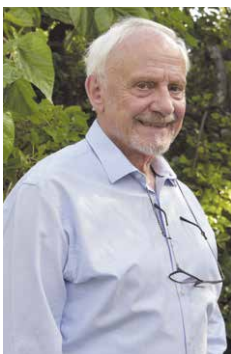
Ana, a scholarship student in Moldova.

JOURNEYS OF HOPE

At the heart of all we do are incredible people from all over the world and throughout our history. Ron and Ana, both from very different times in that history, talk about the impact the Mission has made in their lives.



“It was an ex-prisoner from Bulgaria who changed my life forever.” – Ron



Ron from South Africa.

One evening in the late 1970's, I listened to a man who had suffered for his faith in God for 13 years in a Bulgarian prison camp. What he said changed my life forever. I immediately offered to help Underground Evangelism, (later known as Mission Without Borders). At the time they were smuggling Bibles and Christian literature into the Soviet Union.

In 1982 I was invited to visit two churches in East Berlin. I asked how meetings were planned. The pastor told me, ‘Oh, there is no difficulty with that, my brother, I just inform the congregation that there will be a special meeting on a designated day, but I don't tell them at what time nor where it will be held, and the Holy Spirit leads all the people to the same venue at the precise time, all except the security police, that is!’

Here I experienced something that I'd often read about in the Bible but never really seen before – the church in dynamic action, as God always intended it to be! That has inspired me ever since, and I thank God for that man and his story.

“I missed my family so much...” – Ana

I went to live in a children's institution at the age of seven. My father died when I was little and my mother couldn't cope, she was too poor. But I was determined. I always wanted to keep learning and I did well in my exams at school. I realised that there were many circumstances that I couldn't change in my life, and I had a choice to either complain about it or value what I do have. Then Mission Without Borders provided me with a scholarship so I could study medicine at university.

While I was studying, I volunteered at a centre for children with Down's Syndrome. I was amazed and moved at the ways in which families with a struggling child could still know joy and happiness in their lives.

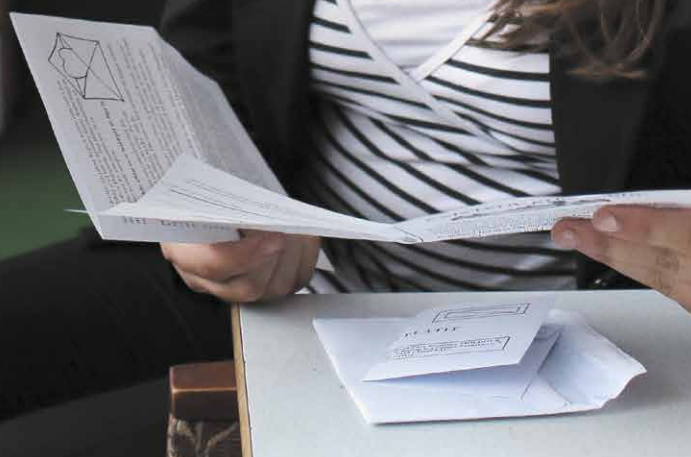
After volunteering here, my ambition is now to open a medical and educational centre for children with special needs. I want to give back and try to help these children and their families.

You can read more stories from 60 amazing people marking 60 years of work by Mission Without Borders by going to our website - www.mwbuk.org



LETTERS THAT BRING GOD'S WORD ALIVE

Sofia reading a handwritten letter from her Bible Correspondence Coordinator.



“Is this really your letter?” one of the boys asked. The children looked up from their desks where they were doing their homework as 15-year-old Sofia carefully opened the envelope in front of her. Excited murmurs filled the room, as other children talked about the letters they hoped to receive soon.

Sofia lives in a village in southern Moldova, where unemployment and alcoholism affect many families. She attends MWB's After-School centre in Palanca and receives help with her school work and a hot meal. Along with many other children Sofia signed up and enrolled in MWB's Bible Correspondence Course (BCC).

Sofia said, *“When I was doing my homework, I saw my enrolment letter in my bag – I had completely forgotten about it. So I wrote down my answers and left it at the post office and looked forward to hearing back.”*

Over the four courses, which each include ten lessons, the children learn from Scripture about who God is, what He's done for us and how they can have a living relationship with Him. They can write to a Christian volunteer and share their questions, their hopes and their concerns – and receive personal handwritten replies in return. Sofia adds, *“I love writing and receiving letters. I find it very interesting to discover new things, like how God created everything... to learn about how Jesus was born and many other things. Through these letters I can learn about all that God has done for us and live a life of joy.”*

Sofia has been able to share her thoughts and prayer needs with her correspondent – and she has found a safe place where she can speak freely and know that she will be listened to and understood.



BCC Bible Study.

Sofia and her sisters.



Any time the children see Oxana, a volunteer who helps run the Bible Correspondence Course in the village, they run to her and ask if she has a letter for them. It may look like a mere piece of paper, but every letter is so precious to these children. Oxana said, *“The children become really engaged in the Bible course – some instantly write an answer to the letter and give it back to me. God really uses this course in the children’s lives and on its completion they receive a diploma and a gift. Most of them complete the course in a year, but some like it so much that they finish it in three months.”*

Sofia adds, *“My father had problems with alcohol and it used to cause a lot of trouble. We suffered a lot and couldn’t even sleep at home. It broke my heart! We prayed for a long time for my family. Now my dad doesn’t drink anymore... I’m so happy about that... today we do everything together.”*



Oxana meeting with BCC students.

At the heart of all we do at Mission Without Borders is our vision of reaching people for Christ and transforming lives across generations. Those we serve are free to decide for themselves how to respond to the practical help we give and the spiritual hope we offer. However, hand in hand with our determination to help those living in poverty is our desire to partner with local churches and Christians and share the gospel.



In 2019, nearly 9,000 signed up to MWB’s Bible Correspondence Club and the number continues to grow each year.

We also held Christian meetings and events and distributed over 71,000 Bibles and Christian books.



Restrictions from the pandemic have made holding Christian meetings more difficult to organise over the last year, but wherever it is allowed in countries, gatherings continue in smaller numbers. We remain encouraged and inspired that people like Sofia are turning to the words of hope that are found in the Scriptures.

We believe regular prayer for our ministry, serving God in word and deed, is a practical way we can all contribute. If you are interested in making a difference in this way, please do ring the office on tel: 020 7940 1370, or complete the response coupon and we will add you to receive our bimonthly Prayer Diary.



TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH PRACTICAL ACTION



Nelya and Davyd Bobyk.

All of us at MWB have been overwhelmed by the generous support for our ministry in 2020, through prayers, and through your thoughtful concern for those in desperate poverty.

Despite pressures that COVID-19 placed on everyone, your kindness and that of other supporters and churches helped raise just over £87,000 towards our Operation Christmas Love (OCL) Appeal this year, enough to supply around 3,500 OCL boxes. Many also sent us lovely messages of encouragement that we placed in or on our OCL boxes to beneficiaries, reassuring them that there are people in a distant country who think about and care for them.

We know this winter has been a very anxious time for those struggling in extreme poverty in Eastern Europe, particularly after a pandemic that has seen job losses and loss of earnings. Our response as a Mission was to increase the number of OCL boxes distributed to 41,800, with supporters in the UK as well as in other countries all helping.

Particularly urgent was the extra help we gave in Eastern Ukraine that has struggled through six years of conflict. Here, COVID-19 price hikes have resulted in widespread hunger, medical shortages, and a lack of access to basic

services. OCL is part of our determined approach to bring lasting change to the lives of families like the Bobyks who have been deeply affected by the crisis. In the past, they earned a little money selling milk from their two cows in their local town. However, when Ukraine imposed strict restrictions in March to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the sale of agricultural goods was limited and for a long time, the Bobyks had no income at all.

This Christmas, the whole family was thrilled by the OCL parcels they received. Filled with food, treats and some Christian literature about the true meaning of Christmas, the parcels made it possible for them to eat well and have a festive celebration together.

“I’ve learned so much from our life experiences and I’ve learned to see how strong God’s grace and mercy is towards us,” said Nadiya, the mother in the family, *“One of His displays of love is the help provided by MWB”.*

Family-after-family shared similar stories with us over the Christmas period. Going forward, we hope to help more families, along with the elderly, the homeless and children – not only to provide them with hope at Christmas, but also to help them become more self-sufficient in their lives.

Restricted Summer Camps and One day Children's Days were still held in 2020.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF MWB

Throughout 60 years on the ground ministering to some of the poorest people in Eastern Europe, we have witnessed God do incredible things in the lives of thousands of people. Many have broken out of poverty and come to faith through the support of MWB. Nina and Matea are two young people whose lives have been transformed because of your support. Each of them is finding ways to give back, as they passionately continue the journey of reaching people for Christ.

Volodymyr Brychuk is Programme Manager of MWB Ukraine. He recently spoke on Premier Christian Radio and helps organise a Soup Kitchen in the Ukraine,



Volodymyr Brychuk.

"I'm thrilled to have young people serving together with me. What's amazing is that the volunteers visit even on their days off, often bringing home-cooked food and their friends from church."

Nina, Western Ukraine

Nina, a 17-year-old student at Sarny Vocational Training Centre run by the Mission, volunteers at MWB's Soup Kitchen in the town. It has been running for over 14 years, providing meals to the elderly. Meals are

delivered to people if they are housebound, and there are currently 35 homes who receive visits every weekday.

"When I first met elderly people and saw their living conditions, I was distressed. I couldn't believe this kind of poverty still exists in our age of comfort and opportunities. I saw people who stay at home for months and can't take care of even their most basic needs." Nina added, "I realised that God needs us to get involved, to help them practically and to care for them as people. We receive so much love in return! They call us their children and grandchildren."

Matea, Bosnia

Matea, 26, (top left) has started work in the MWB Field Office in Bosnia. Her family was sponsored by the Mission when she was nine years old.

"We had many struggles but MWB really helped us", she says. "Summer Camp probably impacted me the most. I started attending as a child and I go now as a volunteer. I felt God's love in so many ways and I want to give back all those memories to new kids and families who are struggling now." Matea went on to receive a Scholarship thanks to MWB supporters. "I just want to say you are doing an amazing job and I am so happy to be a part of this beautiful family."



Gotonoaga family very happy and thankful for the new tractor.



OVERCOMING POVERTY THROUGH SPONSORSHIP



Darren and Helen Robb first heard about the work of Mission Without Borders on Premier Christian Radio last autumn.



Darren and Helen Robb with children, Naomi and Jacob.

“The Lord had laid Moldova on my heart so when I heard about MWB’s work out there I went onto the website to find out more”, Darren says. “I am interested in Mission organisations. I helped in an orphanage in Kenya and know the difference they can make.”

Darren and Helen have taken out both child and family sponsorships.

“Initially it was the kids we were most interested in helping, but then as we looked into it more we wanted to do a family sponsorship as well. It is great to see faces of the people you are helping. It’s like an extension of your family! You receive some personal information on the child and an insight into the lives they lead. It makes you realise how blessed we are in this country despite all that is going on at present.”

The Robb family see sponsorship as a practical way of helping. *“We live in Rotherham”, Darren comments, “so we see this as an affordable and cost effective way to make an impact on people, working through the MWB team out there who speak the same language and know the culture”.*

While Darren and Helen want to support the very practical needs of children and families living in desperate poverty in Moldova, they also see this very much as part of their Christian witness. *“We know how blessed we have been as a family. In Genesis the Lord says to Abraham, “I will bless you and you will be a blessing.” We want to do all we can to be a blessing to others and extend God’s kingdom”.* Darren adds, *“The greatest discovery you can make is to know the Lord. Our motivation is that the Mission continues to take Jesus to those in need”.*

It’s hard to overstate our gratitude for such support. In 2020 the Mission sponsored 2,376 families and 9,606 children in Eastern Europe and we are strongly committed to their long-term care. The practical work we do with those living in poverty forms an integral part of our Christian witness in Eastern Europe, and it’s the incredible generosity of our supporters that enables us to provide all the support we do. Our staff meet regularly with those on our sponsorship schemes, to listen, to pray, and to encourage them on their journey.

Two-thirds of Moldova’s population live in rural areas, the vast majority of whom are smallholders. Amongst them are Cristina Gotonoaga, with her husband and three children, who were so poor they couldn’t afford detergent to wash their clothing. Once enrolled on MWB’s family sponsorship programme, however, they began receiving parcels of food and hygiene items, as well as emotional and spiritual support.

“When I saw Serghei from MWB walking into our house with the things we needed, it was like seeing the bright sun after a cloudy and rainy day!” Cristina said. “He is like our brother – we can talk to him openly and freely about anything.”

Having journeyed with them now for some time, MWB provided them with a tractor to help them become self-sufficient in the future.

“Every time I see this tractor, I see how God smiles at us,” She said, “It is so wonderful to know that there are such kind people out there, who care about those who are less fortunate. Yes, we love to work, but with our own strength, maybe we would have been able to buy this tractor of our dreams after a few hundred years!”

Now, the Gotonoagas’ shelves are filled with jars of jam, salty pickles, and vegetables that have been stored up for winter.

Alexei, the MWB staff member coordinating self-sufficiency projects, said, *“These projects offer beneficiaries the opportunity to progress, to improve and change their conditions. The families receive a dose of enthusiasm and hope. I have personally met families who were dreaming and praying for these opportunities for many years.”*



Collecting apples from their orchard.

So many families in Moldova and across Eastern Europe struggle in poverty without job prospects and the tools or equipment to farm their land. Through family sponsorship, families can be equipped to become more self-sufficient. And, as Christina says, *“Seeing how God touches people’s lives through our Mission family makes me realise how great and good is our God who loves everyone equally.”*



Seedlings received from MWB.

There are currently 208 children and families in urgent need of sponsorship.

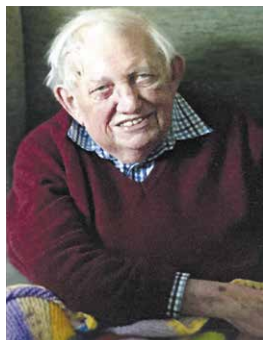
You can help a child or family begin a journey towards self-sufficiency by sponsoring them TODAY. To find out more or begin a sponsorship please use the response form.





BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES THROUGH A LEGACY GIFT

In 2020 Mission Without Borders celebrated 60 years of ministry in Eastern Europe. In that time the lives of many thousands of children and families have been transformed as we have helped them practically in breaking the cycle of poverty and pointing them to the transformative power of the Gospel. This journey we are on – both past, present and future – with those we serve can only be continued through the faithfulness and support you give.



David Beek.

One area the Mission Without Borders Team are extremely grateful for has been the provision friends have made in their will to our work. One of these recently was David Beek who passed away aged 89. As his wife Meryl says, *“he was a gracious, lovely man with a heart for the Lord”*. David had been a Methodist Minister for 40 years and his knowledge of the Bible was immense.

“He was incredibly well read and although he never went to Eastern Europe”, says Meryl, “it was his interest in Brother Andrew and the Missions’ early work smuggling Bibles behind the Iron Curtain that first prompted his support”.

David remained active in preaching until he was 80 and he was still leading Bible study meetings in the Care Home just three weeks before he passed away. He also remained a constant friend of the Mission over many years carefully reading the regular updates we sent out.

So, if you are kind enough to support our work in this most generous way, please do let us know. And if you want to know more about making a gift to the Mission please do contact us. Leaving a gift, however small, will help ensure future generations of children will have a better, brighter future.

If you would like to know more about leaving a legacy to MWB please do contact us or tick the response coupon on the back page.



CHILD SPONSORSHIP

£18
per month

Please fill in this form and return it to us if you would like to sponsor a child like Anastasia.



COUNTRY OF PREFERENCE:

Moldova Ukraine Romania

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Title: _____ First name: _____ Surname: _____

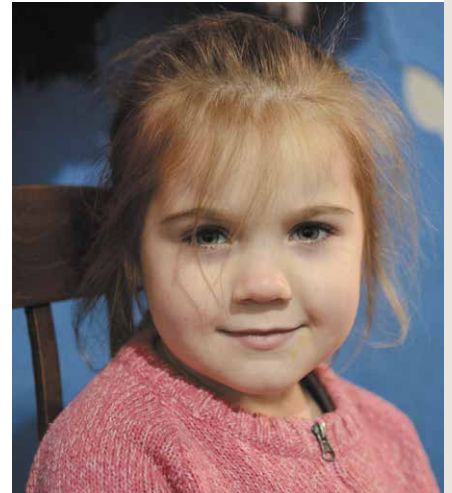
Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

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I would like to receive newsletters and bi-monthly Prayer Diary.



Thank you

Please complete this form and return it to:
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FAMILY SPONSORSHIP

£18
per month

Please fill in this form and return it to us if you would like to sponsor a family like Oxana's.



COUNTRY OF PREFERENCE:

Moldova Ukraine Romania Albania Bosnia Bulgaria

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Title: _____ First name: _____ Surname: _____

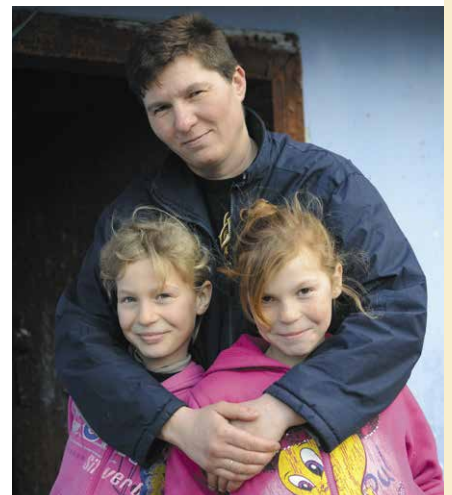
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YOUR IMPACT

TOGETHER, LIVES CAN BE TRANSFORMED AND HOPES FULFILLED.



178 Partner Churches



Street Mercy Meals



800 homeless helped through Street Mercy



9,604
CHILDREN
Sponsored



2,376
FAMILIES
Sponsored



Yes! I want to help strengthen Eastern Europe's poorest communities

YOUR DETAILS:

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Title: _____ First name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE:

£20 £50 £75 £100 Other £ _____ PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH

I enclose a cheque, made payable to **Mission Without Borders**. *OR*

I would like to make a donation by debit/credit card.

Please debit my: Visa Mastercard Charity Card Debit Card

Card number: _____

Valid from: ____ / ____ Expiry date: ____ / ____

Security number: _____ (Last three digits on the strip on the reverse of your card)

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Please provide a telephone number in case there is an issue processing your donation: _____

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You can also donate at
mwbuk.org/donate-appeal
or ring us on 020 7940 1370

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it to: **Freepost RRCC-LEJL-ELCH**
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Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by Mission Without Borders from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

giftaid it

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

I want to Gift Aid this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Mission Without Borders.

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. The Gift Aid claimed will be used to fund the whole of Mission Without Borders' work.

Please notify the charity if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income tax and/or capital gains tax. If you pay income tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Other ways you can help our work and get involved

(please tick all that apply)

- I would like to pray for your work and receive your bi-monthly Prayer Diary.
- I would like to receive more information about leaving a legacy.
- I would like to be contacted about Mission Without Borders giving a talk at my church.



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