

**“But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” ~ Romans 5:20,21**

## YOU DON'T KNOW ME, BUT...

Late at night, Lev – my interpreter – and I entered a scenic forested former communist campsite nestled in the rolling hills near the Finnish/Russian border, two hours north of St. Petersburg. I had not slept for 40 hours. We were served a warm dinner before bedding down for the night. I rested well. It helps to have hundreds of people praying. Thank you, my friends.

Saturday, February 3, I met the rest of the faculty for an orientation where we were given the schedule and our assignments for the CCI-Russia 25th Anniversary Conference. Three hours of interactive teaching each day was to be my contribution. During every meal I had scheduled interviews with camp leaders who had stories to tell. Lev interpreted while Julia (second interpreter) transcribed the stories into my journal.

In between classes and meetings, camp leaders, with **The Book for Counselors** and a pen in hand, asked for my signature. Alexander Kharitonov, CEO of CCI-Russia since its inception in 1993, informed me that the book is still the number one selling camping

book. Elfrieda and I authored the first edition of the book in 1994.

With all this interaction, I began to get a feel for what has developed in the Christian camping community in Russia since 1991. The average age of the 320 persons present at the conference was 32, much the same as the 310 camping leaders who attended the conference held in Kiev, Ukraine in November, which I also attended. The average age of the 134 leaders attending the CCI-Transcaucasus Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, in March was 35.

Over and over the conference attendees in Russia told me; **“you don't know me but I know you. I was a camper in your camp.”** They told me of their camp memories from their years of experience. They



*...cont'd page 2*



spoke of becoming helpers in their camps, working their way up the camp system from dishwasher to sports assistant to counselor's helper, to counselor. After directing program for a few years, many of them became directors of their camps.

This second generation camp leader is very different from the first generation leader. The first generation leaders could not lead from experience, only from cognitive knowledge. **The second generation leader leads with knowledge and experience.** He remembers well what camp meant to him and now he is engaged in camping to pay back the debt he feels he owes because of all that camp did for him. **He leads with heart and passion.** That is why the number of camps in the former Soviet Union is growing. I was told at the conference that the number of Christian camps in the FSU today is 1,530.



It was an absolute joy to teach these eager-to-learn camp directors. Our classes were filled with lively conversation, probing questions, laughter, and inspiration. The Holy Spirit's presence was evident. At the end of the conference I was given a handwritten sheet of 28 comments by my students. Here are a few of their comments:

- Thank you, Dave you came for me! The questions you asked made me change my ways and my ministry.
- You are special and, after listening to you, I want to love my team and my campers even more.
- Dave's seminar was very spiritual. It gave me the foundation every camp director should have. There was much to think about in spiritual preparation for the new camp season.
- You motivated us to memorize God's Word so that the Word would live inside us.

## ALMOST EVERYTHING CHANGED

Michael is second pastor of a 500 person church in Riga, Latvia. He was the general session speaker at



the CCI-Russia 25th Anniversary Conference. Our first meeting with Michael occurred at our model camp in Anapa, on the Black Sea, in 1994. Michael has been engaged in camping ever since.

“Almost everything changed in our church since we came in contact with Christian

Camping International (CCI)” said Michael. “The camp atmosphere is passed on to the church. Relationships are improved. Camp provides opportunity to develop skills and leadership abilities. Camp provides an opportunity for service. About 150 people from our church serve at camp every summer. Most of the commitments to Christ happen at camp.

“We do Fall, Christmas and Spring camps. Our camp is financially self-sufficient. It operates legally so parents who cannot pay the camp registration fee can apply to the government for a campership subsidy. Churches in Latvia are growing.”

## FINDING WAYS

Katya is the director of a camp in Crimea. “We cannot call it a Christian camp because we have to find a way to work within the 2016 Russian religious law. We cannot preach or invite children to church. But we invite them to ‘after camp activities’ such as Alpha Course.

Samaritan's Purse gift boxes are prohibited in the Crimea so we made our own Christmas gift boxes to give to needy families. The government liked that. We are learning to work under the religious law. Some camps have been closed but we have been given permission to operate our camp because we accept children from needy families. We are not “officially” Christian, but by God's grace we find ways to be Christian. Our camp is growing.”

Protestant Christians are not welcome in Russia. Camp workers and churches sending them are exercising great faith in continuing to operate camps. They appreciate our prayers.

# CAMP VERTICAL DEVELOPMENTS



Camp Vertical is a tent camp for teenage boys ages 13-18. It is located in Ukraine and began operating in 2011. The vision for Camp Vertical grew out of the need for responsible male leadership throughout Ukraine. Alcohol abuse has eroded the characters of husbands and fathers and families are in disarray. Unfortunately society has become used to this tragic situation and few, if any citizens or institutions, have the vision or will to address the problem. **Our Vertical team has heard and accepted God's call to change this paradigm.**

Every aspect of Camp Vertical is designed to develop character. The counselors are God-fearing men who model responsible living. Boys learn godly character traits from the study of Biblical characters like Abraham (faith), Daniel (prayer), David (delight in the Word), Joseph (purity), Jacob (tithing), Paul (servanthood), Jonathan (loyal friendship), Nehemiah (responsibility), 5th Commandment (Honor Parents). All recreation activities are designed to achieve cooperation and to shoulder responsibility. In the 10-month follow-up program the boys memorize scripture and do an in-depth study of the Bible characters they studied at camp.

Vertical is expanding to two 12-day sessions in 2018. In future we hope to operate the entire summer. Viktor K, our energetic Vertical Camp director, is passionate about developing teenage boys into men who will live up to their divine calling of being the Priests

of their families and pillars in their churches and communities. Viktor and his team are working with determination to bring all staff, campers and logistics together for a successful camp this summer.

Finding a permanent home for the tent camp is a huge task. Rural land ownership in Ukraine is not possible. So we are in search of recreational land with field, forest, and lake or river that can be leased long-term. We believe God has reserved this parcel of land for Vertical somewhere near Kiev. Being centrally located is important for a project like Vertical. Pray for God's will to be done.

## VIKA – GOD'S MIRACLE

Victoria (Vika) was teaching in the classroom next door to me. Her class was very lively – much activity and laughter. She was teaching the program leaders how to create and operate successful camp programs. I wondered what made this short, cheerful 38 year-old instructor tick, so I invited her to join me for lunch. Lev was interpreting while Julia was filling page after page in my journal as fast as she could write.

Vika's story was almost unbelievable: "I ran away from home at age 14 with seven broken ribs after having been beaten by my brother and father. I told God, "You aren't just and I don't want to know you!" Offended, I formed a gang of 18 rebellious street boys and we became criminals...until I was invited to a camp."



Today, Vika is the director of Camp Joy, a camp for street kids. If you are interested in her story of how God rescued this 14 year old angry gang leader and transformed her into a passionate camp director and 'sought after' instructor, send us an email [deloewen@kvicanada.org](mailto:deloewen@kvicanada.org) or call us 204-224-4175 and ask for **Vika-God's Miracle**.

## “REVEREND MATVEY”



It was Matvey's first camp. His father, a drug addict, was in prison so this seven year old was in the care of his mother and grandparents. Tatiana, the camp director, noticed that Matvey was very kind and intelligent. He engaged in all camp activities and made many friends.

During camp, Matvey received several phone

calls from his mother and grandfather. His reply was always the same: “I'm very busy and have no time to talk.” One day during a phone call, his grandfather asked Matvey, “What are you so busy with that you

don't have time to talk?” “We sing and pray,” was the reply. There was no mention of all the games, swimming, crafts and so on that Matvey was enjoying. He only told what was impacting him.

A week after camp, the director received a phone call from Matvey's Sunday School teacher saying, “Matvey's mother told me that he told his family to pray before meals. Surprisingly the family agreed. Now this seven year old boy leads the family in prayer before every meal. His grandfather began to call him ‘Reverend Matvey’. Matvey is counting the days until summer camp.” **The power of camp...it changes families through children.**

**“IT IS BETTER TO BUILD CHARACTER IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH THAN TO REPAIR THE BROKEN LIVES OF ADULTS.”**

## FOR THOSE WHO LOVE TO GIVE

We thank all our faithful donors. Your gifts have provided the funding for creating valuable program resources and for developing dynamic leaders. The effects are evident across the entire former Soviet Empire. Churches have grown. Christian families have sprung up everywhere among whom hope and optimism is on the rise. **1,530 Christian camps in operation led by thousands of dedicated staff impact society.**

We are in a growth period with unprecedented opportunity and need. During the annual evaluation and goal setting week in January, our staff identified twelve urgently needed projects to be worked on. Upgrading and republishing textbooks, creating online resources, National Conferences, Camping research, professional development for staff – these are a few of them. The estimated cost is in excess of \$135,000 over and above the 2018 budget. Borrowing is not an option. **Our leaders need to be equipped at three levels – introductory, advanced, and instructor.** We have the expertise to do the job but the financial support is not in place. Small and large gifts are needed. Please help us keep our faithful leaders equipped and inspired so that the millions of youth in the former Soviet Union have the opportunity to embrace Jesus as Lord.



**Instructors and administrators at the Transcaucasus ReCamp Conference, March 5-8**

Make cheque payable to:  
**Kingdom Ventures Inc.**  
**PO Box 38144,**  
**East St. Paul, MB R2E 1H3**

Donation Policy: Spending of funds is confined to KVI Board approved projects. Gifts designated towards approved projects are used as designated with the understanding that when the need for a project has been met, or the project cannot be completed for any reason determined by the Board, designated gifts will be used where needed most. Gifts are acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes.

The KVI Newsletter is written and edited by Dave & Elfrieda Loewen. We distribute it by email and post mail and on our website [www.kvicanada.org](http://www.kvicanada.org) If you want to receive the Prayer Partner or would like to change method by which you are receiving it, email [kingdomventures@msn.com](mailto:kingdomventures@msn.com) or call **204-224-4175** or post mail: **Kingdom Ventures Inc. PO Box 38144, East St. Paul MB R2E 1H3**

## FOR THOSE WHO LOVE TO PRAY



### SPRING LEADERSHIP TRAINING EVENTS

Thank God for the freedom to have leadership training events, for the interest in them, and for the instructors who teach. Ask for wisdom to teach with authority and grace. Ask for hunger and insight to learn.

March 16 – 18	Instructor Training Course, Kiev
March 23 – 24	Association of Word of Life Churches – Alexandria, Ukraine
April 19 – 22	Yekaterinburg, Russia
April 28 – May 2	Lipetsk, Central Russia
May 6 – 9	Boguslav, Ukraine
May, tba	Armenia
May 21+	Tokmak, Central Asia
May, tba	Country X
May 24 – 27	Beltsy, Moldova
June 21 – 28	Country Y



Alexander receives congratulations from KVI on 25th anniversary of CCI-Russia



CCI-Russia Conference and has encouraging stories to tell. Please pray God's protection and rich blessings on Andrey and country W camps.



### COUNTRY W

Christian camps are prohibited in country W. Despite this prohibition which is carefully monitored, God gives faith and courage to many churches and leaders to operate camps. Many run their camps in



secret spots deep in the woods. Others transport their campers to neighboring countries to operate their camps. Andrey is in charge of CCI camps in country W. He taught with Dave at the recent



### ALEXEY AND IRINA

Alexey left his high-paying job in the technology industry 18 months ago because God called him to join our Kiev staff. His gifts, expertise, gentle spirit and cheerful disposition have increased our team's efficiency and effectiveness significantly. An untreated childhood injury is causing physical attacks that incapacitate him and put his life at risk. These attacks come on without warning. Thank God for this deeply committed couple and their ministry. They also own and operate a youth camp. Pray God's protection upon Alexey and ask God for His healing miracle.



## FOR THOSE WHO LOVE TO PRAY CONT'D



### COUNTRY Y

Our staff has been teaching STWs in Country Y since 2012. Churches and parents are not permitted to teach children; only government agencies have permission. To prevent the STW from being cancelled in 2017, KVI called for 10,000 prayer partners to ask God for a miracle. The miracle happened! The situation has not changed for the June 2018 STW. Please ask your family, friends and churches to pray for Country Y. Help us to inspire 10,000 prayer partners. If you will be one of them and you want updates, please contact us.



### STAFF RECRUITING

Camp leaders are praying fervently and investing much time and effort into staff recruiting. Camp staff and leaders are making many personal sacrifices to serve in summer camps; loss of salary, getting leave of absence from work, domestic responsibilities, etc. Ask the Lord of the harvest to call, equip and send the tens of thousands of summer staff needed in the 1530 camps in the former Soviet Union.



### “REVEREND MATVEY”

Some day Matvey will be a Third Generation Camp Director who will lead his staff and campers with a double passion for spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Tens of thousands of potential “Reverend Matveys” will be in the 1530 Christian youth camps in the FSU this summer. Pray that God would open their hearts so they confess their sins and become His faithful disciples. Ask God to remove every obstacle for children who want to attend a Christian camp and enable them to go to camp. Ask God to fill every camp.



### CAMP VERTICAL

Viktor K and his team have already recruited 52 teenage boys towards the 120 spots for the two

sessions of camp this summer. Thank God for this progress and ask Him to call and send the remaining 68 boys who want to become God-honoring husbands, fathers and “salt of the earth”. Eight of the 24 counselors are recruited. Ask God to send the remaining 16 and to bless the Staff Training Workshop to be held June 2-3.

Vertical needs a larger and more centrally located campsite. This is difficult to find in Ukraine where there is no private rural land. Several people are searching. Ask God to lead them to the territory He has chosen, that it would become available, and that all funds needed for Vertical to operate this summer would be supplied.



### TRANSCAUCASUS CAMPS

Valeri is encouraging us to continue to thank God for the blessings that churches, families and individuals have experienced as a result of the camps. However, after 20 years, as a result of wars and other hardships, camps are struggling. Pray for a renewed vision for youth camps in the churches. Ask for faith to move forward in the midst of a host of obstacles. Churches need courage to take risks even though religious freedom is restricted. They need to recognize the need for training and support and send their people for training. Ask God to provide all staff and campers and fill every camp with the Joy of the Lord this summer.



### WATER SAFETY

Gerald and Bev Huebner from Arborg, Manitoba, are joining us to teach water safety to our camp leaders at the May National Camp Leaders Training Camp in Ukraine. They will also teach a four level canoeing instructor's course. Gerald and Bev are veteran camp leaders and are skilled at modeling the heart of the gospel message in their teaching style. Thank God for this devoted volunteer couple and support them with prayer. Water safety is essential in every camp.

