



Grain of Wheat
INTERNATIONAL
75 Years

“Bringing hope
to children”



NEWS | Summer 2023

God's Faithfulness
in 75 years: PRESENT



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HOW TO SUPPORT US

To support our work among the children:

Switzerland: Wire your donation to this bank account (IBAN): CH72 0900 0000 1748 7675 5

... or send your cheque to:

USA: Grain of Wheat International,
P.O. Box 1125, Wheaton, IL 60187, USA.

UK: Grain of Wheat International,
HSBC, 21 King's Mall, King Street,
Hammersmith, London, W6 0QF, UK.

*Donations made to Grain of Wheat
International are tax deductible*

www.grainofwheat.org/donate/

EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

To reflect on memories of countless children who have embraced Jesus and become His faithful followers over the past 75 years, is indeed something to celebrate with great joy. Now as we move forward to our present day, it's remarkable to see how God continues to open doors in the most unexpected ways, that have enabled us to come alongside desperate children with the Good News of Jesus.

In this newsletter, you will read the real-life testimonies of children who live in places we would never dare to go, like Syria, Ukraine, Myanmar, and Lebanon. You will also learn how even in the darkest of times, God's light shines the brightest, giving hope where there is no hope, to children, their families and even their communities.

Did you know that by your partnership with us on this journey, you personally represent God's faithfulness to these children? That those on the front lines are strengthened by your commitment to pray and support them with your generous gifts? Needless to say, every time we think of you, we thank the Lord with a deeply grateful heart.

God Bless You Richly,

Rob Hondsmerk,

*CEO Grain of Wheat
International*





Ukraine

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JUST AN ORDINARY TEENAGER

Hello everyone, I'm Masha, and I am 15 years old. I'm just one ordinary teenager among thousands like me in Ukraine. I want to say a huge thank you for all the camps you have provided for us.

"I will never forget this year, as this is the year the war began. I myself am from the east of Ukraine, namely the Donetsk region. Our city began to be bombed from the first days of the war and we had to evacuate. It is very difficult to quickly collect your things, then run, and go.



During the first months of the war, we moved to three different cities, because it is very difficult for refugees to find a job. All this time, I constantly thought about why this had happened to us and cried almost every day. Then the news came that our house was gone, that our neighbors had died, and the city was destroyed. I became very scared, as I began to realize that you can't hide anywhere from the war. I was reminded of this every day when I heard the air raid alerts.

When I was invited to camp, I gladly agreed, because I was so tired of being afraid! At camp I felt free to pour my heart out to my leader about all of this.

The more I learned about God, the more my heart became at ease, but the most important thing was that I learned to pray! Now I always pray when I feel afraid.

It's a real treasure to know I can pray when I wake up afraid at night, because I hear an air raid alert.

After camp, I was invited to go to church and now I am helping the youth team know how to serve refugees like me and tell them about God!"

Even now, Grain of Wheat is actively expanding our leadership team by holding training seminars to reach an even greater number of teenagers like Masha in the upcoming camp season.

But that's not all, as the flow of refugees has increased, Grain of Wheat is there with supplies of food and clothing to support churches and those who have opened their homes to refugees in western Ukraine.

In southeastern Ukraine, an area of intense military operations, we are distributing food, while children prepare a theatrical performance for an evangelistic outreach to refugees.

We also made a trip to Chernobyl in north central Ukraine where many gave their heart to Jesus. It is our prayer that they will become a team that actively carries on the ministry.

To hear *"You are bringing us closer to God!"* is an answer to our heartfelt prayer, that all God has entrusted to us will be accomplished and that He will be greatly glorified.





Myanmar

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FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Myanmar has entered a violent new chapter in its history due to the military coup in 2021. Under the weight of moral corruption and lawlessness, the political, economic, and humanitarian crisis has only grown more dire. Yet, even in this dark and seemingly hopeless time, God is quietly and miraculously at work accomplishing His purposes.

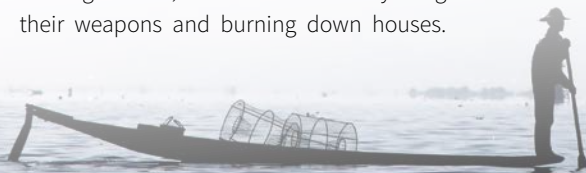
For example, when my team was on their way to hold a training seminar and a camp for refugee children, they took a back road because the main road is full of land mines. Suddenly, the road was blocked by a large group of youth that were being violently attacked by the military. In the nick of time, a driver came by and led the team safely to their destination. On the last day of our training session, we heard the military firing their weapons and burning down houses.

If not for God making a way where there was no way, we could have been arrested, tortured, or killed.

Another time, I was stopped and searched at gunpoint because the guard saw that I had boxes of books. When he began to cut them open, I said, "Sir, please stop cutting the boxes. You can take as many as you'd like to share with other military families." He smiled as he took two boxes of Bible story books.

Over and over, God's purposes have prevailed, as 1,200 leaders have been trained, and 12,000 children have clearly heard the Gospel at day camps.

Churches are being planted, new believers are being disciplined and great numbers of Buddhists are turning to Jesus. Because even in the darkest of times God's purposes always prevail.





Lebanon

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MOBILE COUNSELING UNIT

If there's one thing we can all relate to it's Jesus' words that, "Here on this earth you will have many trials and sorrows." (John 16:33). And life in Lebanon has proven this true.

As with so many other countries, the economy is in crisis and the political unrest has no end in sight. But to add to this, on August 4th, 2020, the largest non-nuclear explosion in history took place in Beirut. Over half the city was pulverized leaving 80,000 children homeless and deeply traumatized psychologically. It is for this reason that we launched a Mobile Counseling Unit to provide trauma counseling with a special focus on children that have been the most deeply impacted and are the most likely to benefit from our help. For Rana, our Mobile Counseling Unit has been a safe and private place for her to receive life-changing counseling. Due to the overwhelming trauma Rana had experienced, she couldn't speak

around people or in various situations. Her mother saw that this was causing substantial damage in her child's life, so she brought her in for counseling. At first, Rana did not communicate verbally or nonverbally with her counselor. However, after four sessions we began to see progress as Rana gradually began to smile when she shared her thoughts and feelings with her counselor. This is when we knew that with the Lord's help, Rana was well on her way to recovery.

As counselors, we know that we can listen, empathize, and give our best advice, but only the Lord can bring true help and healing to a broken heart like Rana's.





Syria

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PHYSICALLY TIRED BUT OVERWHELMED WITH GRATITUDE AND JOY

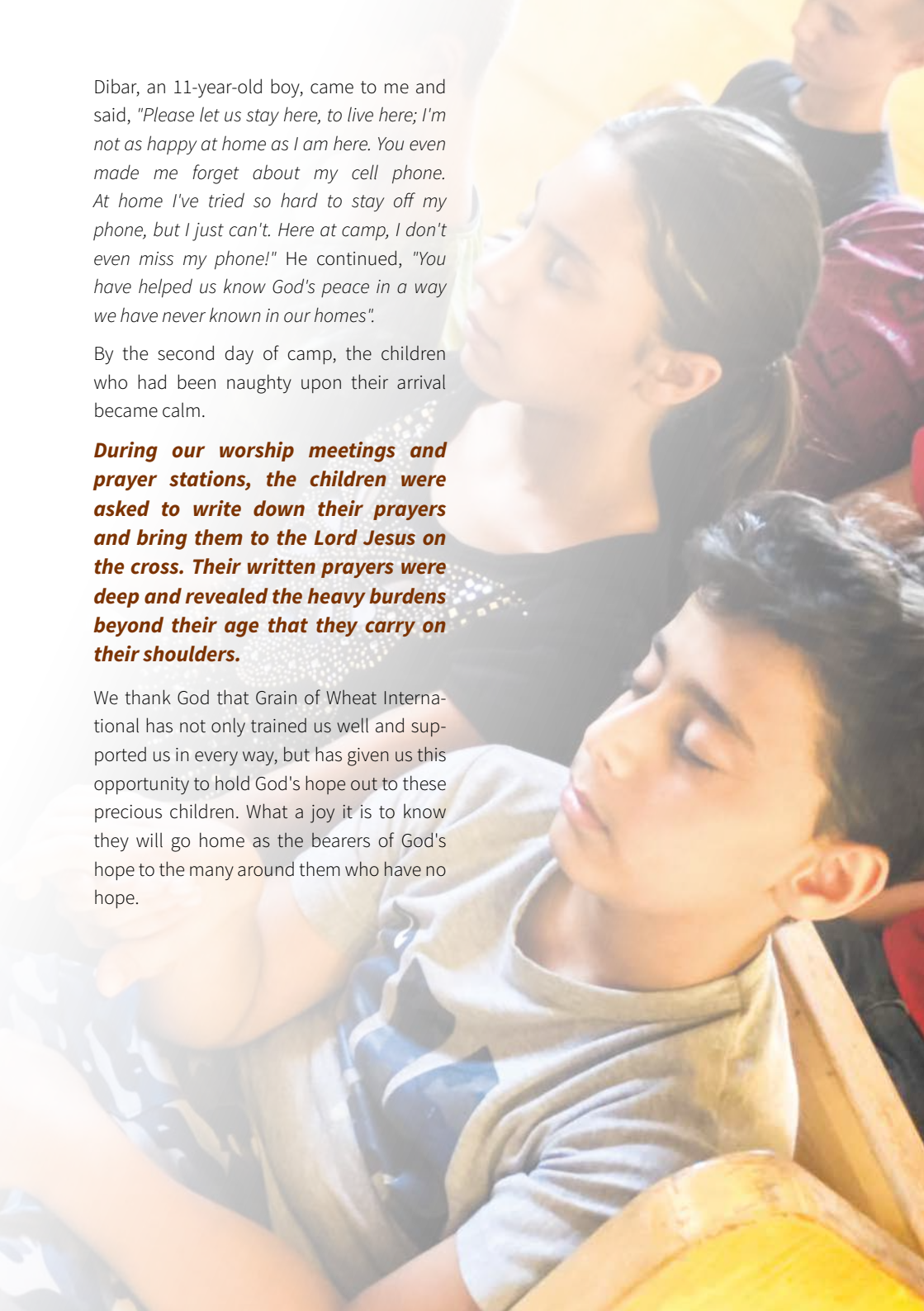
For most of us, Syria is not a place we would choose to live, much less raise a family. No matter how hard we try, I don't think we can even come close to imagining what life is like for families who have no choice but to stay and live in fear and survival mode.

The war that has been ongoing for 12 years, has not only devastated the country but has left over 4 million homeless and displaced. Families have lost everything, including those they love. All of this coupled by a recent earthquake that caused 46,000 deaths, and left 400,000+ children homeless or in squatter camps. Everyday life is now basically at a stand-still and the Syrian people are exhausted as they try to hold on to their last drops of hope. This is the only kind of life the children who came to a recent Grain of Wheat camp have ever known.

Julie, a camp leader from the Armenian Orthodox Brotherhood in Aleppo shares: "We are physically tired, but we have unspeakable joy and are overwhelmed with gratitude to our Lord and God.

I never expected to experience the wonderful presence of the Lord during camp or see Him work so powerfully in the lives of the children. By the time camp ended, none of them wanted to leave and almost begged us to stay!"





Dibar, an 11-year-old boy, came to me and said, "Please let us stay here, to live here; I'm not as happy at home as I am here. You even made me forget about my cell phone. At home I've tried so hard to stay off my phone, but I just can't. Here at camp, I don't even miss my phone!" He continued, "You have helped us know God's peace in a way we have never known in our homes".

By the second day of camp, the children who had been naughty upon their arrival became calm.

During our worship meetings and prayer stations, the children were asked to write down their prayers and bring them to the Lord Jesus on the cross. Their written prayers were deep and revealed the heavy burdens beyond their age that they carry on their shoulders.

We thank God that Grain of Wheat International has not only trained us well and supported us in every way, but has given us this opportunity to hold God's hope out to these precious children. What a joy it is to know they will go home as the bearers of God's hope to the many around them who have no hope.



Belarus

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DISCOVERING THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Lena, 9 and Masha, 11

This is the story of two young girls who didn't know each other when they came to camp. Even though their personalities were completely different, they had one thing in common; they knew nothing of a father's love.

Lena is 9 years old, and a third grader in school. She lives with her single mother and has never known anything about her father. She is quiet like a little mouse. It's easy to see that deep down, she wants to make friends and have fun with the other kids, but she is very shy and afraid.

Masha, age 11, is a cheerful and outgoing fifth grader whose father has abandoned his family. This left her mom with no option but to work long hours to provide for her 5 children. Young Masha has willingly stepped in to help her mom by taking care of her brothers and sisters.

When both of these sweet girls arrived at camp, they never dreamed they were about to meet their true Father in heaven.

At our meeting we taught the children about the great love God our Father has for us. That He is a Father who sees us, hears our prayers, and promises to be right there to help us in the good times and in the darkest of times.

As these two young girls who are so very different heard about the best daddy ever, a daddy who loves them deeply and will take care of them forever, their hearts were both burning to accept the love He offers through faith in His Son Jesus.

Now, they can be found every week at our club meetings eager to truly know their Heavenly Father and grow deeper in their faith.

PRAY FOR THE CHILDREN

In this newsletter you have read the true-life stories of children who live amid war and violence, and the heartache parents face when they have nothing left to give their children physically or emotionally. This often leaves us wishing there was something more we could do to help them.

We know our prayers are important, but we can sometimes feel it just isn't enough. Yet, the Lord reminds us not to give up in prayer as, *"The heartfelt and persistent prayer of a believer can accomplish much when put into action and made effective by God — it is dynamic and can have tremendous power."* (James 5:16 AMP)

Now that we know more about the personal lives of these families, we can pray for their specific needs. But here are some requests that are a good place to begin...

Dear Lord Jesus, please:

- bring Believers together as a community that encourages each other to stand strong in hope and grow deeper in faith;
- cause Your light to shine through parents and children in such a way that others are drawn to put their trust in You;
- give families confidence that You see and hear their cries for help and will provide for their needs in a way they could never imagine.



The Family Corner

Choose a country in crisis that you and your family would like to pray for. As you explain to your children what families in that country are facing, help them imagine what it might be like for them to be in this situation. Then have each child choose a need to pray for and know with confidence that God is listening and will answer.



Acknowledgments & Contact



SPORTS



ARTS



CAMPS



TRAINING



CLUBS



HUMANITARIAN



PRAYER

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Vision

We see every child becoming an **ambassador of hope** through Jesus Christ.

Mission

Grain of Wheat is an international Christian organization. Its mission is to encourage and equip the maximum number of children in need, to develop their potential and help them become **agents of transformation** in their community through the message of God's love.

Strategy

Grain of Wheat engages with children regularly throughout the year. We partner with local churches to train leaders, hold weekly children's clubs, camps and events. Through this, children grow morally, socially and spiritually through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

GRAIN OF WHEAT INTERNATIONAL

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