

BCMWorld

An Inside Look at BCM Global Ministries





“WORK HARD-MAKE IT GOOD-FINISH STRONG”

By: Jeanette Windle with Sue Sanderson

When the 2016 Michigan-Seven team touched down in Bolivia’s lowland city of Santa Cruz on June 19th, it was hardly a first visit for team leader Sue Sanderson. Sue has taught BCM Bible clubs and ministered at BCM affiliate camp Pine Ridge Bible Camp (originally Jack and Jill Bible Club Camp) in Cedar Springs, MI, for more than 30 years. She first visited Bolivia in 1990, at which time she taught the first BCM children’s ministry leadership training course there.

That training course developed over the years to what is now a full-fledged BCM ministry in Bolivia with 13 missionaries involved in children’s outreaches, Bible clubs, camps, leadership training, and disaster relief. Sue Sanderson has returned many times over the last 25 years to hold teachers training, biblical counseling, and other courses.

This year’s Michigan-Seven team arrived in Santa Cruz with an exciting new focus. Its seven team members comprised two segments. Four teen members—Lydia Sanderson (17), Jenna Schupp (14), Isaac Couturier (17), Isaac Schupp (18)—made up the Basketball Discipleship team. This talented young team has put together a program using basketball as outreach to children, both at Pine Ridge Bible Camp and in area Michigan

churches, incorporating basketball techniques with biblical principles and devotional application. Their mission in Bolivia was to teach youth leadership there how to use the program as an evangelism outreach tool.

Team leader Sue Sanderson with two colleagues, Sheryl Alberta and Cindy Schupp, formed the second half of the team’s focus: “Survive and Thrive”. A ministry birthed from encountering God’s love and sovereign plan in the midst of their own life experiences of traumatic loss and grief, this outreach to other women emphasizes the biblical truth that God does not just want us to survive suffering, but to thrive, grow, find joy in Him, and become equipped through suffering to help and encourage others.

After a 5500-mile journey, the Michigan-Seven team arrived safely

in Santa Cruz with fourteen full-sized suitcases loaded with 800 counseling guides, 48 basketballs, and other ministry equipment. An immediate answer to prayer, both team and luggage were waived through Bolivian customs without a hassle—only to discover that back at their original departure point, US customs had confiscated all the team’s ball pumps from their checked luggage! This became just one more opportunity to practice the team’s motto: “Work Hard—Make it Good—Finish Strong.”

Thanks to the pre-planning and oversight of BCM Bolivia missionaries Roger and Cesia Espinoza, who are based in Santa Cruz, the Michigan-Bolivia team hit the ground running. Over the next two weeks they taught twenty-nine total workshops in the Bolivian cities and towns of Santa Cruz, Montero,



Mineros, Santa Fe, Chane, Yapacani, and Cochabamba. While in the lowlands, the team was hosted at a local church in Montero. When not teaching, they visited children's outreaches, taught Bible clubs, spent time with local Christian teens and children, and even learned to make Bolivian delicacies with the church women who were catering the team's meals. While none of the team members are fluent in Spanish, several bi-lingual Bolivian Christians graciously volunteered their time to translate for workshops and other speaking engagements.

The Basketball Discipleship team repeated their workshop nine times, each one a unique challenge. One afternoon in particular, they were scheduled at a basketball court belonging to a public high school. They arrived to find all 400 high school students waiting for them in the bleachers. The team had to quickly revise their usual discipleship training. Picking out four volunteer scrimmage teams from the students, they ran through their demonstrations and briefly shared the gospel. Their remaining workshops involved actually training Bolivian Christian teens in using basketball techniques with children and how to use the program for discipleship and evangelism by applying analogies of basketball and good sportsmanship to living for Jesus. Each of these new young ministry leaders also received a copy of the Basketball Discipleship ministry's program manual, translated into Spanish, for use in duplicating the program with their own children's outreaches.

Sue Sanderson, Sheryl Alberta, and Cindy Schupp taught their "Survive and Thrive" workshop a total of ten times to hundreds of women in different cities. These included Spanish, Quechua, and Guarani ethnic groups. Some audiences were women invited from area churches, but others involved entire local communities of unchurched women, including many young mothers.

Over and over, the "Survive and Thrive" team encountered open hearts and hurting women hungry to understand better how suffering could possibly be used by God in their lives and spiritual growth. One attending family was struggling with the loss of their father [and for the mother, her husband] to an influenza virus two weeks earlier. Team members who had also lost father and husband were able to minister personally to their grief. In another city, a presentation of John 3:16 and its message resulted in a dozen decisions to receive salvation.

Sue Sanderson also taught seven workshops on biblical counseling for youth, focused on training youth workers in applying Scripture to daily life



Pictures top to bottom:

Page 2: Basketball discipleship team and local Christian youth lead Bible club worship; 2016 Michigan seven Bolivia team

Page 3: Basketball discipleship ministry; Sue teaching Bible Club-Mineros; Survive & Thrive team with workshop attendees

and spiritual growth, as well as three additional workshops on biblical teaching, focused on increasing practical skills and personal commitment of Bible Club teachers.

The Michigan-Seven's first two weeks were spent in the Bolivian lowlands, a terrain that is largely flat scrub jungle, farmlands, and cattle ranches where cities have not pushed back tropical rainforests. Their last weekend was spent in Cochabamba, regional capital of Bolivia's dry, arid Andean highlands, with BCM Latin America director Daniel Ortiz, wife Sarvia, and family, including daughter and son-in-law Saul and Gladys Eschalar, newly appointed BCM missionaries. The team also presented their workshops one more time.

If the height of summer back in their home state, one thing the Michigan-Seven didn't encounter during their stay was tropical heat. Since Bolivia lies south of the equator, June is its coldest, wettest season of year, made even colder by a lack of any heating in most buildings. But the constant chill and damp, long trips on bumpy dirt roads, or arduous days of teaching and sharing were not the memories the Michigan-Seven took home seventeen days after their brief "immigration" to Bolivia.

The highlights expressed by team

members include singing with new friends accompanied by Bolivian pan flutes and charango [a four-stringed banjo-like instrument]. Wonderful meals generously provided by local Christians. A motorcycle tour [see photo]. Basketball scrimmages with Bolivian youth ministry counterparts. Praying with a sick, young boy and hurting women. And above all, fellowship with God's people that crosses national borders and language barriers.

Plans are already underway for the next Bolivia missions trip. Team leader Sue Sanders sums up why they are eager to return: "Though unique in so many ways, one thing

Bolivia has in common with every other nation in this world is that its children love to learn, and they love to be loved. This world will always have children to teach and to love. For the Christ-follower who has been called to assist in children's ministries [or women's ministries as well], Bolivia is an unending opportunity for investment and growth."

Pictures top to bottom:

Taking motorcycle tour of city;
Basketball discipleship ministry



If you are interested in learning more about Basketball Discipleship outreach, Survive and Thrive ministries, or service opportunities with BCM Bolivia, contact Sue Sanderson at susan.richie@yahoo.com



BRINGING HOME THE GOOD NEWS

By Lisa Biegert with Josphat and Emily Yego

A two-acre plot in the outskirts of Kapsabet, a town in western Kenya, holds just two lonely buildings, one constructed of wood and iron sheets, the other just wood. These small buildings stand vacant all week until Sunday morning when the quiet is shattered by Kenyan Christians gathering for church services, their songs of praise echoing off iron sheets and resounding through the surrounding countryside.

While the rest of the lot currently stands empty, BCM Kenya missionaries Josphat and Emily Yego expect to see it soon teeming with life as a longstanding dream comes to fruition—the construction of Neema (Swahili word for “grace”) Development Resource Center. The Yegos’ vision for Neema is to provide a “one-stop” center for counseling and rehabilitation, leadership training, a resource library, and a “rest and refreshment” retreat for Kenyan ministry leaders.

Looking back over decades of serving God, Josphat and Emily can see how God has guided them through every stage of their lives in preparation for this new endeavor. Josphat grew up in a non-Christian home near Kapsabet about 300 kilometers northwest of the Kenyan capital of Nairobi. He was 13 years old and going into 6th grade when the most educated person in their county, a recent Cambridge University graduate who had just returned home to Kapsabet, died in a car accident. Josphat shares the impact of this horrific event on his life:

“Shortly after [the accident], I was out in the countryside herding sheep when I was approached by three women. They referred to this tragedy and asked me if I would be ready when I died. They gave me Scripture verses to read, then left, telling me they would return and wanted my answer about where I would go when I die. I spent that week sick and tense, afraid I would die before the week was over. Exactly one week later, they returned and asked me the same questions, but I could not answer them. They recited Bible passages, which amazed me since I knew they were illiterate. That day of August 31, 1962, I gave my life to Christ.”



Pictures top to bottom:

Chapel on Neema property; Josphat and Emily Yego

The following Sunday, the three women took Josphat to church, where he gave his testimony. The impact of these illiterate women knowing so much Scripture by memory stuck with Josphat. He set himself to study hard and by the end of 6th grade had become a Sunday School teacher since he was among the few who could read the Bible. After high school graduation, Josphat attended Scott Theological College in Machakos, Kenya, then returned home to teach at Kapsabet Bible Institute.

His studies continued when he received a scholarship to Washington Bible College (WBC) in Washington, DC. It was here Josphat's life crossed paths with Dr. Bob Evans, at that time WBC's Public Relations director and later BCM president. Josphat went on to Wheaton graduate school before returning to Kenya in 1975.

Three years younger than Josphat, Emily Yego was raised in a Christian home, the second of nine children. But it wasn't until she read a tract entitled "God Has No Grandchildren" that she received Jesus as her Savior. She explains: "I used to think because I was born into a Christian family, I would automatically become a Christian. I accepted Jesus in an evening Bible study in the village."

Josphat was attending the same church by the time they were both baptized in the same service on December 29, 1963. Both served in the church and as youth leaders. By the time Josphat traveled to North America, they were dating. Emily attended teacher's college while Josphat was at WBC and Wheaton.

"She waited seven years for me," shares Josphat with a smile.

Shortly after Josphat returned to Kenya, in 1976, Josphat and Emily were married. Joseph returned to teaching at Kapsabet Bible Institute. Near their home was a boarding school for deaf children, who frequently visited the Yegos and attended a Sunday School class Emily taught.

"I felt so inadequate when dealing with them since I could not communicate in sign language," says Emily. "These shortcomings made me desire to further my studies in special education in order to help the deaf children."

At this same time, church leadership asked Josphat to obtain additional schooling in order to become head of his alma mater, Scott Theological College. The Yegos returned to the U.S., where Josphat received his MA in Education, an MA in Systematic Theology, and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration. Not to be outdone, Emily returned to school herself, training in deaf education. While in the U.S., she gave birth to two of the Yegos' four children.

The Yegos returned to Kenya in 1981. Over almost two decades, Josphat held a variety of positions in African universities, including as dean of Daystar Communications (now Daystar University, Kenya's first Christian university) and as missionary chaplain to the University of Nairobi. Emily worked with hearing-impaired children at Nairobi's Kenyatta Hospital as well as the Kenya Institute of Special Education. Josphat also served as country director for Compassion International.

Then in 1998, Compassion International and World Vision together asked Josphat to head up their global

leadership training program, based out of Eastern University (EU) in Philadelphia, PA. The Yegos moved to the United States where for the next fifteen years Josphat headed up the leadership training program at EU. While raising four children, Emily pursued an MA in counseling.

But their hearts were still in Kenya. They remained close friends with Dr. Bob Evans, now president of BCM. With the blessing of Eastern University, the Yegos became BCM missionaries in 2000, which permitted them to return to Kenya for three months each year to preach, hold seminars, and lead conferences. While Josphat trained leadership, Emily offered Christian counseling. In 2001, the Yegos donated the two-acre plot of land and small church building outside Kapsabet that today is the beginning of the Neema Center.

But it was clear far more needs existed in their home country than could be met by volunteering a few months a year. One great need was the countless Kenyans who did not own a Bible and could not afford one. In 2012, the Yegos founded an organization called Developmentia. Among its top focuses has been the need for Bibles.

That same year the Yegos met Dr. René Freret, director of Bible Education and Missionary Services (BEAM), whose mission is to publish Bibles around the world. The Yegos approached Dr. Freret about the possibility of a revised version of the Bible in Nandi, the dialect spoken by more than two million people in the Kapsabet region. The original Nandi Bible had been published in 1939 and not revised since.



Three years later on October 24, 2015, more than three thousand pastors, bishops, and Kenyan Christians from fourteen denominations came together to celebrate the new revised version. By this time the Yegos' four biological and three more adopted children were all grown and living in the US. With their blessing and support, Josphat and Emily made the decision to take early retirement from EU and return full-time to Kenya.

Josphat explains: "Our children and their families have encouraged us to go and serve God, now that they are all grown up and working. They contributed towards the publication of the Nandi Bibles and unanimously supported us in giving the [Kapsabet] property for God's service."

For Josphat and Emily, they have now come full circle. The Yegos share: "We have been overwhelmed by the warm welcome from our church and other evangelical denominations who have welcomed us back home, starting from the presiding bishop to the local pastors in our village. Our local church, who raised Josphat from age 13, has invited him to be their volunteer pastor at large when he is home. Emily is involved

in counseling and working with the women."

Along with the development of Neema DRC, Josphat and Emily continue holding counseling, leadership, and Bible conferences throughout Kenya. The Bible project remains a priority. Among continuing goals is creating an app for the Nandi Revised Bible, since use of smart phones and other electronic devices is widespread in Kenya. But the need for print Bibles remains just as urgent. In 2015, Emily spent four days speaking at a women's conference in Kapsabet, where she promised to provide a Bible to any who needed one. At sunrise that Sunday morning, the Yegos heard a knock at their bedroom window.

Emily shares: "A lady who attended the conference had walked four miles to our home, which meant she left her own home before 5am. She asked for a Bible, which we readily gave her. She then walked another eight miles to an 11am church service. She was so thankful to have a Bible of her own!"

Josphat tells of another Bible he gave a Kenyan pastor for delivery to a young Christian who didn't have one. When the young man didn't show

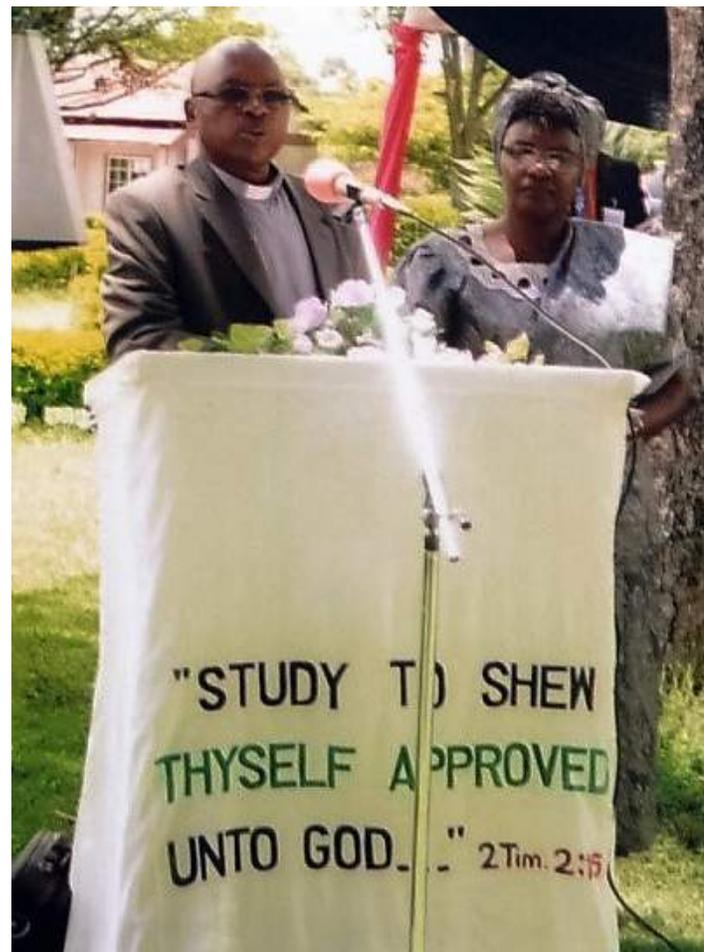
up that Sunday, the pastor lent the Bible to a 72-year-old man. When the service concluded, the pastor asked the gentleman to return the Bible. Josphat relates: "The old man pleaded to keep the Bible so he could keep on reading. The pastor gave it to him, then returned to ask us for another Bible for the young Christian to whom it had been promised. This taught us to always have a Bible ready to give away to those who need one."

BCM International leadership is excited to partner with Neema Center. BCM will specifically be involved in providing Sunday School curriculum and *In Step with the Master Teacher* (ISMT) children's ministry training course. A local Kenyan advisory board has also been formed to oversee the center.

"This team has mapped out the future plans for Neema," Josphat concludes. "We have seen God work in the past, and we are stepping forward by faith and trust for His provision. BCM readers can specifically help by praying for the projects. They can also participate in giving to any one of these projects through BCM."

Pictures left to right:

Chapel and kitchen building on Neema property; 14 denominations kneel in praise for new Nandi Bible; Josphat and Emily handing out new Nandi Bibles; Josphat and Emily urging people to read through Bible Nandi dedication



PARTNERING FOR CHILDREN IN CUBA



By: Shantal Artieda

The church in Cuba is alive and vibrant!” expressed a previous BCM World article ([Cuba: Wide Horizons in the Pearl of the Caribbean, BCM World, Spring, 2014](#)), and a recent BCM Peru ministry team to Cuba can testify to that truth.

BCM missionaries Marion Odico, Jonatan Odico and Francisco Barnuevo first traveled from Peru to Cuba in 2014 to hold children’s ministry training in a town called Moa. Among approximately forty trainees was the children’s pastor of the host church in Moa, Cecilio Rodriguez. Since then he has been motivating his staff and congregation to work among Cuba’s children, and in 2016, Pastor Cecilio invited BCM Peru to bring another team to Cuba to partner together in children’s ministry.

The 2016 team, composed of Jonatan and Shantal Odico, David and Katty Paima, Daniel and Joan Irrazabal, and Guillermo Odico, traveled to Cuba from July 5-16, 2016. Their two ministry objectives were a VBS at the church in Moa and a children’s camp. Arriving in Moa for the Vacation Bible School, the team was delighted to discover that more than forty local Christian youth and adults had volunteered to help. Which was a blessing since more than 500 children attended the three days of VBS. Four local Cuban children’s ministry trainees had been studying the VBS materials beforehand and did an outstanding job of teaching Bible lessons.

After the VBS, the team traveled to the camp facility in Nibujon, a tropical paradise where river and ocean meet. Almost a hundred children along with adult and teen volunteers were in attendance. The cost per camper was only \$3USD, but in Cuba where a medical professional makes less than \$100USD monthly salary, even this was a financial hardship for many children. To supplement, along with their

bedding and backpacks, each child arrived with small sacks of uncooked rice or beans to contribute for meals. Due to high transportation costs, Cuban children have few opportunities to travel, so they greatly enjoyed God’s wonderful works of nature from the beach to the beautiful countryside around the camp.

More importantly, campers learned more about God and were challenged to make God-honoring decisions for their lives. By the end of the closing bonfire, a majority of the campers had stood to their feet to declare their trust in Jesus for salvation or to commit themselves to be “living sacrifices” (Romans 12:2) to bring glory and honor to their Lord Jesus Christ.

Saying goodbyes was one of the most difficult parts of the whole trip. The hosting Cuban ministry leaders and volunteers expressed how much the BCM team’s visit had encouraged them and above all their desire to put all they’d learned over the past ten days into practice to continue reaching more Cuban children for Christ.



Pictures top to bottom:

Children’s VBS Moa, Cuba; Campers head for beach outing, Cuba

BULLETS STILL CAN'T STOP GOD'S WORD IN INNER PHILLY



A *BCM World* article last summer shared the exciting summer Bible club outreach in some of Philadelphia's more difficult neighborhoods (see [Neither Rain nor Heat nor Flying Bullets, BCM World, Fall, 2015](#)). A recent update from BCM missionary Lorraine Stirneman, who directs this ministry, offers a reminder to continue praying for the safety and impact of the young volunteer teams who have again dedicated their summer to reaching inner-city Philly children.

17-year-old Mark grew up in one of the Philly building projects where BCM has held annual summer clubs and was among many Bible club children who also attended BCM's Camp Streamside over the years. He accepted Christ as Savior while attending Camp Streamside. For the past two summers, he has volunteered as a counselor in training at the camp. Visiting friends recently in his old neighborhood, Mark was playing basketball at an outdoor recreation center court when gunshots rang out. Everyone on the street began to run, including Mark. As he ran, Mark grabbed at a pain in his side. Then he saw the blood. He'd been shot!

Thankfully, the police arrived in time to rush Mark to the hospital. Surgery revealed that the bullet had entered his abdomen and exited his back, but had struck no vital organs. The doctors explained that if the bullet had been just two inches to the right, it would likely have been fatal. God was there that day and spared Mark's life. Today Mark is back at home and slowly healing.

Detectives later shared that there had been seven shootings within three days in that location. This was the same neighborhood that just a few weeks earlier had hosted a total of five Bible clubs. Despite ongoing dangers, four youth teams participated in BCM's five-day Bible club program in inner-city Philly this summer, reaching a total of seventeen neighborhoods with hundreds of children in attendance.

Lorraine Stirneman asks for continued prayer, for Mark's full healing, for volunteers, and for the children attending summer Bible clubs who live daily in these neighborhoods: "Pray for the salvation of children and adults in this area. Pray that those who are shooting will be apprehended. Pray for their salvation also. Please pray too that God will send us someone with a love for the Lord and a heart for the inner-city to work full-time in this ministry. There is still much work to be done, but I am not quite as strong as I used to be [Lorraine has served in Philly since 1980 and in Africa for more than a decade prior], and I would like to be training someone to do it."



Pictures top to bottom:

Closing bonfire, Philly Bible Club kids leading song;
2016 Philly outdoor Bible Club



RAISING UP NEXT-GEN LEADERS

IN POLAND

By John Abramovich with Jeanette Windle

How to find godly, committed counselors and staff for the next generation of camp ministry? Simple for BCM Poland missionaries John and Dasia Abramovich. You raise them.

BCM International partners in Poland with a children's ministry organization, *Miłość Edukacja Dojrzałość* (English translation: Love, Education, Maturity, or MED). Dasia has served with MED since its founding in 1990, just months after the fall of communism. She currently oversees MED's ten Polish workers while John heads up other BCM ministries there (see [To Poland With Love, BCM World, Summer 2010](#)).

An integral part of their ministry are the annual summer camps, which reach campers from a gamut of age groups and backgrounds. This summer saw a total of six camps held between June 30-August 6, 2016. Three camps ministered to children ages 8-12. Two teen camps offered English immersion and rock climbing courses. The sixth camp ministers to mentally handicapped young people, the only such Christian camp in Poland.

All of which requires a sizeable roster of volunteers willing to sacrifice vacation days, hard work, a good night's sleep, while demonstrating God's love to large groups of active, energetic, and occasionally unruly children and adolescents. Finding adequate camp staff has been a challenge since MED's first children's camp in 1994. But this year John and Dasia have noted an exciting pattern. A growing percentage of camp staff have themselves come up through the ranks as campers. Half the counselors at this year's climbing camp and three-fourths of those at English camp were prior campers with up to 60% at other camps as well.

CHILDREN'S CAMPS

MED sponsored three children's camps this summer with a total of 117 campers in attendance. MED does not have its own camp facilities. During the communist era, summer camps and retreats were routinely held in public school buildings, and some of those schools still host groups during the summer, MED children's camps among them. Classroom chairs and desks are replaced with beds, while the bathrooms have limited, but adequate shower facilities.

This summer's Bible teaching program for children covered "Trees of the Bible", including such as the Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Campers also enjoyed group games, sport activities, walks in the local area, and a trip to the swimming pool (or the beach at the northern camp).

While a majority of campers come from Christian/church families, many come from non-Christian families as well. Each year these include children from orphanages and other government social services, an indication of MED's

top reputation with the government education ministry that oversees all summer camp programs in Poland. Government programs cover half of costs for these campers while MED scholarships cover the remainder.

This year ten children accepted Christ as Savior. Nor does MED ministry with them end when camp does. Dasia Abramovich spearheads a follow-up outreach with campers, including inviting children to take part in a Bible correspondence course.

John Abramovich shares about one such camper: "Last year one girl at our children's camp trusted Jesus Christ for her salvation. She went home to a non-Christian family. There was no discipleship and no growth. This year she came again to camp, where she excelled in her Christian growth. Another girl from her area trusted Christ at the same camp this summer. When they went home, they both contacted a lady who leads a Bible Club for children and expressed their desire to attend her (evangelical) church. Praise God!"



CLIMBING CAMP

MED's teen climbing camp began in 2001 with the help of the Abernathy Trust in Scotland, which is a member of Christian Camping International. Since then, the Abernathy Trust has sent climbing instructors to Poland each summer. This summer's camp was housed in a hotel near a 50-foot rock outcrop at the top of a local foothill. The outcrop offers climbing for different skill levels, and the surrounding foothills have many hiking trails. This summer's forty campers also enjoyed other sport activities, games, and arts and crafts.

But the week wasn't just about climbing activities. Along with helping lead the worship music, John Abramovich taught key Christian doctrines, relating them to mountains mentioned in Scripture that provided the historical setting for the doctrines. Campers also

learned about persecuted Christians from the director of Open Doors ministries in Poland. For one activity, the teens made cards for mailing to refugee Christians to let them know that they and other Polish Christians were praying for them. By the end of climbing camp, at least three campers had accepted Christ as Savior.



ENGLISH CAMP

MED's annual English camp was birthed in 2007 for teens who wanted to attend a Christian camp, but with less strenuous physical activity than the climbing camp. This summer a team of American English instructors joined local Polish staff to minister to thirty-four Polish campers along with 13 teens and 6 adults who joined them from Belarus.

This year's Bible teacher was an evangelist from England, while John Abramovich helped with worship music and led devotions for camp staff from the book of Isaiah. Along with English immersion classes, campers played whiffle ball, softball, basketball, volleyball, soccer, and other sports. A talent night, trip to the local water park, arts and crafts, and a kielbasa roast over a camp fire rounded off the week.

The Belarus participation was both a blessing and challenge. Their language is a variant of Russian, while American instructors spoke only English, so the entire week became a round-robin of translation between Polish, English, and Russian. The cooperation with Belarus began eighteen years ago with their first visit to an MED camp. One of the Belarusians who attended then was an orphan. Since then he gave his life to Jesus Christ and eventually established a non-profit organization for training

Belarus Christians to mentor orphans and prepare them for life beyond the orphanage, including getting a university education.

John Abramovich elaborates: "Since that first camp, Belarusians have attended other MED camps for teenagers in Poland. MED also sends their workers to the church in Belarus to do teacher training for Sunday School teachers and youth workers. We [John and Dasia] thank God for how He

multiplies the blessings of our camp ministry."

Which highlights camp's true importance, which isn't climbing, English, or other fun activities, but its spiritual impact. During this summer's English camp alone, some thirty teenagers expressed some type of renewed commitment in their spiritual life, and at least one teenager took her first step in trusting Jesus Christ for her salvation and eternal life.



HANDI-CAMP

MED held its first camp for mentally handicapped young people in 2004, made possible in part by previous training through BCM's Handi-Camp program. Directed by Dasia Abramovich, this year's camp was held in the same school building as the two southern children's camps with a total of 23 campers. Campers enjoyed Bible lessons, Christian songs, arts and crafts, games, and sport activities. Varying mental disabilities make it a challenge to keep campers focused on an activity, and each camper needs round the clock supervision. Once again, former MED campers have stepped up to the challenge.

John Abramovich shares, "This

year at camp, we saw tall, young men taking care of and playing with the handicapped campers. A few years ago they were little campers at our camps

for children. One of these young men remarked, 'I am paying back my debt. For many years I came to your camp, and now I can help others!'"



Which comes back to the ultimate purpose of BCM ministry in Poland: to raise up the next generation of Christians trained in God's Word and committed to serving in God's kingdom. John Abramovich sees their summer camp program as a ministry for next-gen Christian leaders as well as an outreach to young people. In fact, many of today's camp staff came to Christ themselves through hearing the Gospel at camp as children and teens. Pre-camp training sessions, staff devotional teaching times, and mentoring by older leaders minister to young staff even as they in turn minister to campers.

John explains, "Some counselors come from churches where they are not being spiritually fed adequately. They look to camp as a place to learn God's Word and fellowship with other believers. This year one young counselor shared how camp helped her be assured of her salvation. And even if all do not become camp counselors, we see former campers getting involved in church or para-church ministries. This is very encouraging to us."

So what lies in the future for this exciting camping program? John Abramovich sums up, "We would like to expand our camp program. We are the only Christian camp in Poland for the mentally handicapped. Older teenagers would like a camp with more Bible teaching and training for ministry. Perhaps we could run a camp exclusively for children from dysfunctional families. Many potential campers also need financial help, especially handi-campers and those from orphanages or government social programs. Expansion requires more resources, so we ask believers to pray and consider what they can do to help us reach more young people for Jesus Christ through our Polish camp ministry."

If interested in learning more about how you can get involved,
contact John and Dasia Abramovich at jdabra@gmail.com



CAMP SANKANAC CELEBRATES ITS PLATINUM JUBILEE



By: Jeanette Windle

Several hundred former and present campers, counselors, and staff filled Camp Sankanac grounds on Saturday, September 3, 2016, to celebrate 75 years of God’s working in the lives of children and adults through this ministry. Established in 1941, Sankanac was the Bible Club Movement’s (now BCM International) first permanent camp facility (see [Setting Captives Free at BCM’s Camp Sankanac, BCM World, Summer, 2015](#)). Today BCM hosts camping programs in more than 25 countries, including 9 camp facilities across North America.

The day’s celebration kicked off with a sit-down lunch in Sankanac’s dining hall, where a historical overview and challenge for the future was offered by the most senior camper present, Dr. Dave Haas. Dave remembers well arriving at Camp Sankanac as a very homesick 9-year-old in 1942, the camp’s second summer in operation. By the end of that week, he’d accepted Jesus as his Savior. Dave and his wife Lois went on to become career BCM missionaries, including serving at Camp Sankanac for 13 summers.

Sankanac executive director Roy Schell and camping program director Josh Brackbill and his wife Becky also gave updates on Sankanac’s most recent summer program. 1294 campers attended Sankanac this past summer. 100 children accepted Christ as Savior, and 50 more rededicated their lives to serve God. Becky Brackbill sums up: “When I look at these numbers and think about the last 75 years, I am blown away by how many campers have walked through these [dining hall] doors, have climbed those chapel steps, have sat on the Pine Site benches, and have heard the Gospel because of their time at camp. I have seen kids come as 7-year-old campers, then come on staff as counselors. I have seen families come

to camp for two and three generations—people who loved camp so much that they sent their children and now their grandchildren. The things that God has done here and continues to do here amazes me.”

The rest of the day included a “blast from the past” of memorable activities for former campers of all ages, including hay rides, swimming, boating, disc golf, black-light dodgeball, arrow tag, and more. A picnic dinner of barbecued chicken and brisket was catered by Stampede Smokin’ BBQ. The celebration finished in true Sankanac tradition with a campfire worship service as well as a look ahead to what God has in store for Camp Sankanac over the next 75 years or until Christ’s return.



Pictures top to bottom:

Dr. Dave Haas shares historical overview at 75th kickoff lunch; Blast from the past hayride

“WHOEVER RECEIVES ONE SUCH CHILD IN MY NAME . . .”



By Jeanette Windle with Ratovohery Jean Aimé

BCM’s newest ministry field, Madagascar (see [Sharing “FIHAVANANA” With Madagascar’s Most Vulnerable, BCM World, Summer, 2016](#)) has used school-end vacation to expand their children’s outreach, holding five-day Bible clubs in some of the poorest neighborhoods. Over 70 children attended one such Bible club on the bank of a municipal dump where many families subsist by sorting through garbage for recyclables. Few of these children have opportunity for schooling or even daily food.

Even at their young age, the life stories of many Bible Club attendees are heart-wrenching. Six-year old Volanirina’s father died some years ago. Her mother supports them collecting garbage. 11-year-old Jessica’s father is also dead, her mother crippled. Her 16-year-old sister supports them washing clothes. Vanilla and Omega’s parents are both alive, but spend most of the money they make collecting garbage on alcohol, leaving their children abandoned and living in misery. 14-year-old Tahiry is so stunted by malnutrition he looks closer to 10. 8-year-old Fano’s parents long to send him and their other children to school, but proceeds of recycled bottles and cans barely feed the family.

During the week of Bible club, the BCM Madagascar team provided lunch, for many children their only meal of the day. More than half the children received Christ as their Savior by end of the week. The BCM Madagascar team’s intent is to continue this outreach through the school year, including provision of meals, school supplies, and clothing. And this group of needy children is just one of countless more across Madagascar.

BCM Madagascar director Ratovohery Jean Aimé shares, “Our own efforts will not be able to accomplish it so we invite brothers and sisters in the Lord to join us. Remember that having given their lives to Christ, these little ones become our younger brothers and sisters in the Lord, our coheirs of eternal life and part of our ministry.”

To sponsor one of these children or get involved in this ministry, contact us at giving@bcmintl.org.



Pictures top to bottom:

Bible club families sorting recyclables in front of makeshift homes; Bible Club at Garbage Dump with BCM leaders Sahondrah and Rotovohery

SENDING NEW WORKERS INTO UKRAINE'S HARVEST



By: Joe Dukes, BCM VP of Personnel

Amidst continued trauma of a border war that is now dragging into its third year, BCM Ukraine held its 2016 missionary candidate orientation in the capital city of Kiev with 12 new missionary candidates in attendance. The orientation took place from August 17-24 in Kiev's Central Baptist Church, where BCM Ukraine director Dr. Igor Kotenko serves as one of five pastors. Among international BCM leadership participating were Dr. Marty Windle, President; Richard Thompson, European Director; Sam Hanchett, former Ukraine missionary and regional director; Dr. Bob Evans, International Representative; and Joe Dukes, VP of Personnel.

Of the twelve candidates, a majority will be serving with BCM Ukraine's extensive handi-camps and other handicapped ministry in the Zhitomir region where BCM missionaries Sasha & Svetlana Tomnytski currently serve. Upwards of 12% of Ukraine's population suffers from some aspect of physical or mental handicap, and there are few resources available to handicapped citizens, much less their families. Among other candidates, one is a medical doctor who has been involved in BCM children's and youth camps outreach while another has served as lead program leader for those same camp ministries. One young woman is actually from neighboring Russia. A graduate from a Canadian Bible college, her goal is to serve in her homeland, reaching children for Christ and training other leaders across Russia in effective children's ministry.

For a full overview of BCM Ukraine ministries, see [Speaking Unchanging Truth to an Ever-changing Nation, BCM World, Spring, 2016](#).



Pictures top to bottom:

Ukraine BCM Candidate School 2016; Ukraine military convoy; Ukraine military tank

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The sun never sets on BCM's ministry of reaching children with the love and message of the Gospel!

Check out this and other issues of the *BCM World Magazine* to see how God is using the ministries of BCM around the world.



Photos featured above are from BCM's ministry in Madagascar - see page 15

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