

# International Prayer Update



*January – March 2012*



## Africa Region

**South Africa:** Pray for SU South Coast as they go about forming new partnerships with churches in the region. Pray also for many more volunteers to offer their time for the ministry.

**Swaziland:** Pray for improvement on the country's economy and for more financial support towards the children's camps and office running costs. Pray too for the success of the ministry.

**Uganda:** Scripture Union of Uganda is in partnership with the Bible Society of Uganda in promoting the ministry to the people with visual impairment in schools, churches and in the communities. This sensitization was done in the districts of Mbarara and Kabale. Thank God for this partnership and pray for its value and a lasting impact.

**Kenya:** We continue thank God for His love, mercies and provisions for our ministry. Please pray for the on- going programs for children & youth and families across the nation. Pray too for more open doors to reach out the unreached.

**Zambia:** We have been praying to God for provision of adequate transport for our operations which was very critical. We thank God that He has come through in answer to prayer. A couple gave to Scripture Union Zambia a good second hand mini-bus with a capacity of 18 seats.

**Regional Office:** Mike Smallbones, Ministry Training Consultant, will retire in March 2012. Thank God for his faithful and fruitful ministry for many years and pray for his replacement.

**Regional Office:** The Regional Council has made changes in matters relating to the coordination of the core ministries. Pray for the team tasked with the implementation of the changes and for the needed resources.

## Americas Region

**Canada:** SU Canada's vision for 2012 is to: strengthen the SU leadership training and sports ministry apprenticeship for University students, to develop and initiate a Leader in Training program for High School students, to increase the number of partnering churches that host summer sports camps, to expand the publication and distribution of Bible engagement resources and to increase the ministry reach with a special focus on the poor and marginalised. Please pray for these initiatives.

**Costa Rica:** The children feeding program continues to grow. Please pray about the need for a new and larger facility to run the program. Please pray for Carolina and Arturo as they make plans for these coming months and for the volunteers sharing the Bible stories with the children and their mothers. Please also pray that the Lord will provide a new couple to lead the campsite on the Damas Island.

**Ecuador:** There are growing pressures from the government to prohibit any sort of Christian education in the country, and also the work of volunteers. As more and more public schools are requesting the values-based program run by SU, Tim Pawson and the volunteers serving in schools need to find new strategies to accomplish the mission of sharing the Good News. They are planning to start camping ministry during 2012, so please pray for volunteers and leaders and for the children who will attend.

**Bolivia:** God has blessed the school ministry this year in the city of La Paz. We are now working on a new opportunity to extend the ministry to the rural area in cooperation with the Methodist Church and with a Swiss mission. Join us in prayer of gratitude and praise to the Lord and for wisdom as we prepare resources and train workers.

**United States:** Last September, we implemented the E100 Every Pastor Project. A packet of information about the E100 Challenge was mailed to 150,000 pastors, followed by a second mailing to 50,000 of the original group. Now, we are processing and following up on the responses. Please pray for efficient and effective follow-up, that pastors will continue to respond, that many new churches will take the Challenge and that God will use it to spark a Bible reading revival across the entire country.

**Honduras:** Honduras has more violent deaths than any other country in the world. The world death rate is 8.2 per 100,000 persons, Latin America's average is 15 and Honduras' is 82. Family disintegration and unemployment produce socially excluded young people who join gangs, the drug cartels' main allies. Please pray for our workers and volunteers developing the values-based programmes in Public Schools. Also pray for the finances needed to keep this programme alive and responding to the growing demand.

**Guatemala:** Recently the son of our schools worker Sandra Ochoa was shot dead on the street while talking to his father in the city of Huehuetenango. Mexican drug cartels operating on the borders randomly kill people on the streets to create chaos and terror. This is the social climate in which our workers and volunteers serve. Sandra and the volunteers did not interrupt the classes and, firmly convinced of the Lord's calling, share the Good News of hope and love. Please pray for Sandra, her family and the volunteers.

## Britain and Ireland Region

**January 3-6:** The Novosibirsk team (Siberia, Russia) is running a camp this week. Other Former Soviet Republics

teams also have camps and holiday clubs during the Christmas-New Year holidays. Please pray for the planning of these activities which also include a holiday club in Shakhtyor (Novosibirsk team and local volunteers – January 8-9), youth and children's camps in Moscow and St Petersburg and holiday clubs in Kiev, Torez, Simferopol and elsewhere in Ukraine.

**January 6-8:** the Northern Ireland Camps and Mission Leaders event takes place this weekend, a time for refreshing, equipping and inspiring. Pray too for similar events in Scotland (January 13-15) and England (January 13-14, January 20-21 and February 24-26).

**Scotland:** Give thanks for the appointment of John Nonhebel as Urban Ministries leader and pray for him as he seeks to grow SU's ministry among disadvantaged and vulnerable young people. There are two key training events related to this work happening in February – pray for those leading and those attending.

**England and Wales:** Following the positive response in churches to last year's Bible initiatives including *Essential 100*, we have a new year marketing campaign encouraging people to take up a good habit in the new year - to read the Bible on a regular basis. This includes promoting the new look *Closer to God* Bible guide for adults and *Snapshots through the Year* for children. Pray too for our leadership team and board as they finalise the strategic plan for the next few years.

**Northern Ireland:** We are really encouraged by the growth and development of the staff team, including new E3 local schools workers. Please pray in particular for the new staff as they establish their work.

**Republic of Ireland:** SU staff worker Jonny Somerville has started a very exciting new outreach using the Youth Alpha course in secondary schools. Already there are eight

secondary schools committed to running this 10 week Youth Alpha course in their schools. Please pray for Jonny in this new and exciting role.

**Scotland:** SU Scotland's strategy puts renewed emphasis on working with the church. Please pray that our links with churches will grow and develop and that partnerships will develop which will make for even more effective missions and holidays.

## East/West Asia Region

**Region:** Please pray that our new structure will be launched into orbit as soon as possible! It consists of Tadashi Oyamada, new CEO, and eight EXCO and four Team members. Please also continue to pray for the health of our accountant, Mr. Chan Wah See. He has not been well, and is weak with very poor appetite. Pray for the Lord's healing.

**Peninsular Malaysia:** Christopher Cheah has been the new General Secretary since January 2011. Please pray for him as he bears the heavy responsibilities of leading SU Peninsular Malaysia. Many young people have been involved in camps during the long school holidays in November and December. Pray that the seed sown in their lives will continue to grow.

**Thailand:** Severe floods affected Thailand including the capital Bangkok from last July onwards and hundreds of people lost their lives. Pray that there will be a good recovery. SU Thailand was planning to celebrate its 40th anniversary in October but has postponed it until January. Please pray that this celebration will also lead to progress in the development of the ministry.

**Hong Kong:** Praise God for the Bible Reading Campaign which started in October and runs for a year. Already it is affecting many churches and Christian organisations. The next Regional Council

meeting will take place in Hong Kong in April. SU Hong Kong will celebrate their 50th anniversary during it. Congratulations and Praise the Lord!

**Indonesia:** Last November there was a training course for pastors on using SU Bible reading methods. Please pray that this will have a significant impact on the churches through their ministry. Pray too for the impact of SMART, Gen-M, Superkidz and Specialkidz. These are Bible notes for students in secondary and primary schools.

**Finance:** There are huge needs and opportunities in this region. Please continue to pray that the Lord will bless us with more financial donations so that we can meet all our commitments for the year 2012. Our need is getting bigger and bigger!!

**Development:** Let's pray for the salvation of the people in China, North Korea, Timor Leste, Brunei and West Asia, that the Lord will open wide door to do SU ministry in these countries. Tadashi is planning to visit Brunei sometime next year.

## Europe Region

**Bulgaria:** We are preparing our second Bible Knowledge Competition for 14-18s! We have some financial problems, but we know that God is faithful and He will answer all our prayers. We are very excited about this competition. Many teenagers have been inquiring about it and it is an inspiration to see their desire to read and explore the Holy Bible! Pray for us for God's wisdom and that He will take care of our needs for this activity for His glory!

**France:** SU France has not had a Director General since the end of August 2011. The Board have decided not to recruit a new Director straightaway, but want to allow time to reflect on the possible evolution of this role and to ensure that the right person is selected. So both Board and team members have taken on more

responsibility. Please pray for each person involved in this transitional phase.

**Germany:** We are taking part in Faith on Monday, a new initiative which begins on January 2 in various churches and Christian organisations. This initiative seeks to encourage people to live out their faith in their daily routine throughout the whole year – authentic, naturally, credibly. Please pray that many Christians will rise to the challenge and use our new tools for Faith on Monday.

**Greece:** The Economic Crisis in Greece is out of control and there are dramatic effects in the everyday lives of thousands of people. The Church needs your prayers in order to stand near the families and the people that are affected from the crisis. We run a project for homeless and poor people in Athens. Every week, on our premises we prepare 120 meals that are distributed to the poor people. During the meal, our volunteers present a spiritual program with worship and Bible Study for the people. Please pray for this project as every day more and more people come in need our practical and spiritual help.

**Latvia:** At the beginning of January we will have our winter camp. So please pray for a good team and good activities, but most of all – that God will open the participants' hearts to hear his message. Please pray for God's guidance through every day in camp.

**Sweden:** In Sweden we are in the final steps of releasing a new Bible Guide for groups and individuals. It's written by young writers (under 35 years) and will be published twice a year. A new generation wants to say that they believe in the Bible as God's word and that it has a lot to tell us in our lives today!

**Denmark:** We are happy that Carsten Riis Jensen has taken over as chairperson of our council. He is already involved in SU-Denmark in various ways. So we are thankful that he agreed to take this

challenge. Pray for Carsten, his leadership and for all the other projects he is doing for SU-Denmark such as new material for confirmation candidates, mobile app for BRN for adults.

## Pacific Region

**Australia:** In November the final pieces in the restructure of SU Australia were put in place. The National Director role has now been replaced by an Executive Officer to oversee the administration tasks that remain. After a period of transition through to March, Lloyd Carter will step down and concentrate on his role as Regional Director. Please pray that the transition goes smoothly and with great wisdom.

**Queensland:** The first ever Father/Son GENTS camp is happening January 6-10. Please pray for these fathers and young men to be impacted by the gospel message over the weekend. There will be awesome bonding activities such as quad biking, billy cart building, beach trips, theme park visits, sports galore, etc plus looking at the big questions about God and the universe.

**Pacific Executive:** Will meet February 8-10 in Brisbane. Pray for the Chair, Wayne Fraser, Regional Director, Lloyd Carter, and Pacific Islands Coordinator, Sam Emery in all elements of this meeting. Pray for great outcomes that will benefit SU in the whole region.

**Western Australia:** January is the busiest month. Hundreds of volunteers will be running camps and missions with 1000's of young people. Pray that many lives will be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

**Solomon Islands:** Sam Emery has recently returned from a visit. A new Operational Team has been put in place and staff have been challenged to build on the great work done by Wendy Rayner in translating Sunday School curricula into Pijin from Bislama (Vanuatu). The hundreds of

different islands and the difficulties with travel make this a challenge. Pray for wide distribution and effective training.

**Victoria:** Biblical Turning Points Program DVD is now in production. Pray that this 8 session Bible Overview project will go national, in partnership with the Bible Society, and will encourage many groups to engage with the themes and stories of the Old and New Testaments.

**E100 Challenge:** The E100 Challenge continues to roll out across Australia with the focus at this time being on Queensland and New South Wales. Pray for Dan Hardy as he works with local people and assists churches to commence the Challenge. Also for the roll out of the E100 Big Bible Challenge for children and the iPhone App.

## South Asia Region

**Pakistan:** Thank God for the success of the visit of the Regional Director to Pakistan in November last year. Pray for security and courage for SU Pakistan as they carry out their field ministries. Pray too for SU promotional visits to churches in the first quarter of the year and for National Director Danishmand as he visits SU offices in Karachi, Rawalpindi and Peshawar.

**Sri Lanka:** Pray for the new staff who have taken responsibilities since the resignation of National Director Julia Kassimatis at the end of October 2011. Pray for Russel, Manori and Imanka.

**Nepal:** Pray for National Director Dhruba and his new staff member Arjun as they minister to children in Kathmandu. Pray for the proposed visit of the Regional Director and SU International Staff Clayton Fergie in the first week of February.

**India:** General Secretary Pankaj Sahu retires this year. Pray for him as he adjusts to this new life and also for the new

General Secretary who will assume duties in April this year.

**Bangladesh:** Please pray for the writers workshop planned for early February in Dhaka leading to the writing of Bangala Daily Bread Notes. Thank God for the successful visit of the Regional Director in Dhaka to initiate children and youth ministries. Pray for the Youth Leaders and Youth leadership programmes planned for early February in Dhaka.

**Region:** Thank and praise God for the successful completion of the Shaping for Service (SfS) training course held for the South Asia Region in India last November. Pray for Ravi Navaratnam, Regional Director as he travels to the different movements to give them help and support.

**India:** Every day, 330 children come to five Suhasya ('joyful laughter') centres run by SU's Ministry to Children in Crisis department. They receive educational help and participate in various spiritual programmes and community development initiatives. Pray for the long term impact of this ministry on these children's lives.

## Scripture Union International

**January 13–15:** Wendy Strachan will be at SU Scotland's Team Leaders Conference this weekend. She will stay on for children's ministry consultations with SU and church leaders. Pray that SU staff and volunteers in particular will be stimulated and encouraged by this time.

**January 26–February 4:** Clayton Fergie and Ravi Navaratnam will be visiting Nepal and Bangladesh to explore the development of SU youth ministry in each of these countries. Pray especially for fruitful relationship building with key people and the ability to identify pathways forward.

**February 5–10:** Please pray for the SU International staff as they meet this week in Australia to work on international initiatives, issues related to children, youth, and Bible ministry, and supporting policies, guidelines and protocols. Pray also that it will be a time of refreshment and fellowship as they share God's word together.

**February 20–23:** Living Hope is an international initiative that includes a gathering of SU leaders in Malaysia in November 2012. Ruth Pinkerton, the chair of the planning group will be visiting Malaysia this week with Remo Paul, SU International Executive Member, Janet Morgan, SU International Director, and Jenny Stewart, SU International Business & Development Manager. Please pray for them and for SU Peninsular Malaysia as they work through the practical arrangements for the gathering.

**March 11–15:** Last year, a small international group met to begin to consider how SU Movements around the world might collaborate in their fundraising efforts. This week the group will meet again to work further on plans. Please pray for this group as they seek to address issues related to funding SU work and managing SU's God given resources.

**A1Admin:** Please pray for Sue Stott and Ruth McIntosh as they support the extensive preparations for Living Hope, especially as they attend to the production, translation and distribution of monthly communications to the movements.

**Wendy Strachan:** KidsHubs, Advocacy Toolkits, Collaborative Training Programs, Children's Bible Engagement Websites - these are just a few of the ongoing Action Groups of the Global Children's Forum. Thank you for your prayers for GCF 4 in Manila in October. We are now in the early stages of planning for GCF 4.1 in April.

**Clayton Fergie:** Pray for Clayton as he focuses on a range of details related to Living Hope communications, the development of the E100 resource for youth, an International Forum of Bible Agencies workshop and Shaping for Service course in North America.

## Ecuador

Tim and Elsa Pawson

## Bangladesh

Youth leaders' brainstorm session in Dhaka



Ecuador



Bangladesh

# FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS RUSSIA

*\*UKRAINE \*ARMENIA \*BELARUS \*TAJKISTAN*

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Kiev children's club





Tajikistan teenagers club

In the FSR movements the school year from September to May is when the primary focus is on Bible and activity clubs for children and teenagers. It is also a time for providing training for these activities and recruiting and training volunteers for camps in the summer.

Praise God for the continuing children's clubs in Moscow and the growing number of children who are second generation in SU, as their parents were campers and volunteers. We give thanks for Liza's gift for working with children and the energy that she is putting into her part time work for SU. There was a good turnout of volunteers for a weekend training course led by Oksana Khimich, FSR training coordinator from Kiev, at the end of October.

Give thanks also for the extensive programme of clubs in Ukraine - as well as clubs run by staff and volunteers in Kiev, many of the churches who run day

camps (holiday clubs) during the summer are able to hold weekly or monthly clubs during the year. In Kiev the staff were as usual involved in the annual exhibition Equipping Children's Workers where they met the director of a community centre who invited them to start an Open Bible club. Please pray for volunteers to help with the running of this club. All the clubs in Kiev took part in the Exhibition of Children's Creativity. Clubs coordinator Andrei writes:

**'Each club decorated a piece of a jigsaw puzzle on coloured paper. At the exhibition we put all the pieces together and displayed the completed picture. This symbolises that wherever we are, we are a small part of God's big picture. Jesus unites us!'**

Regular meetings are held in the office in Kiev for volunteers to share news and craft ideas and encourage one another.

In Torez, east Ukraine, the Christian club continues at the day centre for young people with special needs and Valentina still has good contact with the school where she used to teach – meeting regularly with teachers and pupils and providing materials for the personal development curriculum. Please pray for plans to begin a family club in the nearby town of Snezhnoe.

Please pray for the clubs in Tajikistan where Christians are a minority in a nominally Muslim nation. Mahbuba writes:

**'The first time the club met in Gissar we had new young people aged 15-16. There were 8 girls and two boys. This was just the beginning and I am glad that they came and liked our club. I am grateful for our new volunteer, Masha, who will help me with this club. As well as this club we also started a new club in the city - they are also 15-16 year olds, but they are Christian young people who want to get to know the Bible more deeply and we also hope to attract Muslim young people**

**who cannot come to church. Katya and Masha are responsible for this club and I will support them. It is good to see young leaders growing and to be able to step back and give them support and sometimes put them on the right track.'**

Please pray especially for one of the volunteers, Umeda, whose mother is not happy that she has become a Christian. In Tajik culture even grown up girls are expected to obey their parents until they leave home to get married. Please pray that Dima and Mahbuba will have the wisdom to know how to support Umeda without antagonising her mother.

**Siberian conference** – the annual conference in Siberia was held near Novosibirsk 4-6 November, with altogether 45 participants from West and Central Siberia, with a mixture of old friends and new contacts. Both old and new found plenty of ideas to take away. The theme of 'Like children...', was reflected not only in the morning Bible studies and talks, but also in playing



West Ukraine holiday club

games and making crafts. As well as the Siberian staff and the invited speakers, Andrei Cherniak and Oksana Khimich, several volunteers led workshops. Yekaterina from Novosibirsk commented:

'I really valued that I felt as though I was in a different world: where the Lord Himself was present. It was very comfortable, interesting and informative. I was able to reevaluate many things relating to my ministry and my calling. It was very important that the Bible was opened in a completely new way: as a gripping and interesting story that I want to read again and again. And the ways of reading it can be so interesting and lively! I would like to keep this feeling in church, in ministry and at work!'

Natalya, also from Novosibirsk, added:

'I really liked the conference! There was lots of practical information which I can apply immediately. The information was well presented and easy to absorb. It was great that we not only listened, but we played together too.'

On 27 November the Novosibirsk team held a workshop in the office on the theme of Advent. Tanya writes:

'We spoke about how to make the period of anticipation of Christmas a special time in family, church and Sunday school, shared ideas on celebrating Christmas with children, made Advent calendars, Christmas wreaths and many other Christmas crafts. Afterwards I was invited to speak to the parents at the Baptist church and to present our Christmas family calendar and to encourage families to read the Bible together every day for the four weeks before Christmas and to prepare for Christmas together. Our calendar is very helpful for families who want to do this. I was very encouraged by this invitation!'

**Winter events** – many of the teams hold camps and/or holiday clubs during the Christmas-New Year holidays. Please pray for these activities: Novosibirsk camp 3-6 January, Shakhtyor holiday club (Novosibirsk team and local volunteers) 8-9 January; youth and children's camps in Moscow 2-6 January, St Petersburg and Belarus; holiday clubs in Tajikistan and in Kiev, Torez, Simferopol and elsewhere in Ukraine. Please also pray for special events during the holidays, which end after Christmas in the Eastern calendar on 7 January, when the Christmas story can be presented to wider audiences of children in community centres and children's institutions. Please pray also for camps being held in the school spring holidays at the end of March, in particular the adventure camp in the mountains of Shoriya (Altai region) led by Kostya from Novosibirsk 24-31 March.

**Support for FSR** – The SU movements in Britain and Ireland have undertaken to support the movements in the Former Soviet Republics (FSR) until they are strong enough to become autonomous.

As well as giving prayer support we aim to raise £140,000 every year to cover staff salaries, training events, travel and office expenses, and camp bursaries. If you can help to further the work of opening up the Bible with children, young people and their families in the FSR by making a donation, please send it to your national movement (marked 'for Former Soviet Republics').

This letter is produced by Supporter Relations, England and Wales and is distributed by national movements. If your address has changed, or you no longer wish to receive this Prayer Update, please inform the movement who sent it to you.

Scripture Union in England and Wales  
207–209 Queensway, Bletchley, MK2 2EB  
[www.scriptureunion.org.uk](http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk)

01908 856000  
Registered charity no 213422

Scripture Union Scotland  
70 Milton Street Glasgow G4 0HR  
[www.suscotland.org.uk](http://www.suscotland.org.uk)

0141 332 1162  
Registered charity no SCO11222