



The Buykos

1st Quarter Report, 2018

January

Our most recent visit to Veliko Polovetskoe took place on the eve of the holidays. I'd like to express appreciation once again for the container. When Zhenya and Misha drove there, the number of kids there was small. Right before holidays, extended family members (or official guardians, such as grandmothers) try to pick up the kids and take them home so that the kids can go caroling. (By tradition, the owners of homes give money or sweets to carolers.) But the kids who remained in the orphanage were indescribably happy, when they learned that a container of goods had arrived. They immediately understood that this meant they would be receiving something nice.

The director of the orphanage asked Zhenya whether he happened to know the woman who many years ago constantly came to the orphanage and brought with her Christian literature. Zhenya answered that this was his own sister. The director—practically on the verge of tears of thankfulness—replied that she had grown up spiritually on this literature, and that she couldn't imagine where she would be today if not for those books.

Praise God for showing His mercy and giving the opportunity to send a container of goods from another continent. Thank you to all the people who had a part in this, whether materially or prayerfully. Praise the Lord.

We ask that you join us in praying about the next trip to that same orphanage-boarding school, and especially for these children, their families, and their futures. Praise God!

In our church we had a Children's Christmas celebration. We made invitations and right from the start intended to invite those who live near the church building, so that in the future the kids who attended would already know the church's location and how to get there. We pray that more children from the village of Bilgorodka will come to the Sunday school.





We created homemade gifts. For the gifts, we ordered little boxes with Christmas illustrations on them. In them we put greeting booklets with the Bible verse Luke 2:11, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," and on the reverse side we had an invitation to the Sunday school.

We had a play. Everyone who attended saw a very interesting Christmas theme. There was a lot of music and singing of Christmas songs. We distributed the paper copies of the words to the songs, and many people sang along with us.

Over 160 gifts were given out. We request prayer for each person who attended this holiday service and heard of the birth of our Savior.

We also have a special prayer request for one family with a daughter whose name is Luda. She is 18. She was with her two younger brothers. Their mother is an alcoholic. From an early age this young lady has also used alcohol. (In the photo, she's wearing a light-blue sweater.) Pray for this family, especially for the boys, that they would not start down the same path. The family lives not far from the church.



Thank you very much for the financial assistance to hold this children's holiday!



February

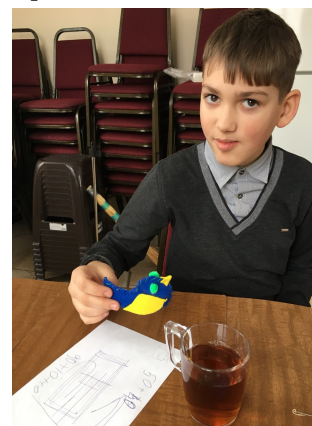
In February there were a lot of various events in the Second Baptist Church in Bilogorodka. We had a choir visit from the neighboring village of Boyarka, and their singing pleased everyone. And when we sang congregational songs, brother Valera (to whom we had given the violin), stood and played along, picking up the melody by ear. After the service he said that the musical ministry especially touches him and he greatly enjoys it. That day there were a lot of children in the Sunday school, and some of them recited verses during the services. There were also a lot of singing and testimonies.



When the Seminary was in session and the students were staying in the living quarters of the Bilogorodka 2 church, they too visited us. These young brothers preached and shared testimonies and participated in the music ministry. The students are thankful that they can live in a place with such nice conditions during their times of studies in the Seminary.

The boy named Vadim continues to attend Sunday school regularly. He always listens attentively and is learning the stories of the Bible, does the crafts, and sometimes plays songs to God's praise on the accordion.

We ask that you pray for him and for his brother Valera, that he would regularly come to church and turn to God. Thank you for the material and spiritual aid. Praise God!



March

“Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” John 9:1-3

Svetlana is a 38-year-old smiling blonde young woman whom we met in church in the village of Bilogorodka. At first glance, you would never guess what kind of difficult trial had fallen onto her fragile shoulders. Fourteen years ago, she bore a long-awaited son, Yaroslav. The pregnancy had been without the slightest complications. Therefore, when the postnatal examination gave her son a diagnosis of infantile cerebral palsy, she didn't want to believe it. In her mind she immediately wondered, “Why my son? Why has this happened to me? How am I to live now?”

But, taking the baby by the hand, Svetlana understood – this little son needed love, affection, care. Time passed. When other children began to speak their first words, Yaroslav simply mumbled. He couldn't express his needs. Likewise, he had no strength to hold his own spoon in his hands. Before he reached age 10, those brief moments when the boy stood upright and held onto a wall were a great joy. Each day, he slept only a couple of hours. All the rest of the time his mother Svetlana or grandmother needed to be with Yaroslav. The father of the child worked hard to provide for the family.

Around age 10, the boy began a growth spurt. His body could not cope with the strain. His bones and joints were too weak. He needed an expensive operation. Svetlana sold her car to pay for the treatment. Unfortunately, the doctors only did harm. The sharp part of a cut bone touched a nerve in the muscle tissue. The boy suffered from severe pains. Painkillers did not help. He screamed for hours, especially at night. In a short time, Yaroslav lost 10 kg, so that on the bed there lay a small body, just bones covered with skin.

“For weeks I scarcely slept. My son cried from pain, and I couldn't help. Due to nervous overworking and lack of rest, I sometimes felt sick,” Svetlana remembers. “Sometimes I simply ran outside to cry and scream. I was so sick physically and morally that I just caved in.

After consultations with other doctors, it became clear that the boy needed two more complicated operations. Otherwise, the child would always remain bedridden and couldn't even sit in a wheelchair. But the family had no money left. What could be sold had already been sold to pay for the first operation.

Svetlana's friend Maria didn't abandon her in this distress. She suggested appealing to people for help. By God's mercy, funds came in, and the boy successfully underwent an operation. Today, Yaroslav can sit up by himself. He can pick up a piece of gingerbread from the table, and can rejoice at a new haircut and nice-looking clothes.

“A Place in the Sun – You're Not Alone.”

Three operations, plus caring daily for her sick helpless child did not break Svetlana, but only reinforced in her the thought that, for her son and for similar children, there is a place under the sun. Like no one else, she understood the feelings and needs of families that are rearing children with disabilities. It should be noted that there are 40 such families in the village of Bilogorodka.

Svetlana says, “Two years ago, I firmly decided to create a charity fund for disabled children in Bilogorodka in order to inform the public about us, to look for sponsors for surgeries, to purchase medical equipment, hygiene products, groceries, and also to provide emotional and psychological support.”

The name of this charity, “A Place in the Sun – You're Not Alone,” gives deep recognition to the value of each child. To date, the charity assists 17 families with disabled children in the village of Bilogorodka.

However, the fact is that the population's attitude towards people with disabilities in Ukraine is quite low. Starting with the infrastructure – the lack of opportunities for mobility, especially in small population centers – as well as lack of education and medical care and ending with the human factor – there is a disapproving perception. So, you rarely see people with disabilities on the streets of our country. They just sit at home. Their world is limited to four walls.

It's the same in Bilgorodka. Several families don't wish for society – including their neighbors – to know that they have an invalid child. They don't care for the unfavorable judgments and the talking behind their backs.

People fear coming into contact, and so such families are left entirely alone...

A New Year's gift

In December of last year, BIEM's director in Ukraine, Pastor Eugene Buyko, learned about the Bilgorodka's children with disabilities and about the charity, "A Place in the Sun – You're Not Alone."

Eugene says, "We had received a container with humanitarian aid for Ukraine: medical products, wheelchairs, bathing chairs for the washroom, and much more. Wishing to help the residents of Bilgorodka, I visited the district administration to find out about people in need. They gave me contact information for Svetlana and told me about disabled children living in this town."

Before the New Year, families in Bilgorodka who had disabled children received children's wheelchairs, special medical equipment, blankets, bed linens, and attractive quality clothing for kids and adults.

Near the Christmas tree, Svetlana's 14-year-old Yaroslav sat in a new wheelchair, dressed in new clothes. The boy's face beamed with contentment and a smile.

"I hadn't even dreamed of a new wheelchair for my son, something that would let him easily and comfortably move around," Svetlana said with joy. "We couldn't afford to buy one. For me, as the mother of a disabled child and the director of the foundation, getting acquainted with the BIEM mission has become a New Year's miracle and a blessing. When I delivered things received from Eugene to various families, one mother burst into tears of happiness and asked, 'Where did you get such beautiful things for my little girl? Now she will be a real princess.'"

After learning about Bilgorodka's disabled children, BIEM's president Sam Slobodian was deeply moved by their problems, feelings, and needs. The mission prayerfully decided to support these families, so that the message of the salvation and love of the Lord could penetrate every needy heart and fill them with peace and hope for eternal joy with Christ. In addition, material assistance will be provided to cover the most serious needs.

We ask you to pray with us for the village of Bilgorodka, where 40 families with disabled children live. Most of them have no personal relationship with the Creator. Their lives continue in spiritual and physical darkness. But we believe that the fervent prayers of the righteous can accomplish much!

God bless and strengthen you all.

Eugene and Sofia Buyko