



## The Bilyaks

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Report, 2019

#### April

Greetings to you, dear brothers and sisters, co-workers with God.

I'm glad for this chance to share with you all some of the news from the ministry we have with you. This year, April was a very blessed month in which we were able to do several ministries for our Lord.

As you already know, our church took part in receiving and distributing a shipment of humanitarian aid. We received a container from the BIEM mission headquarters in Danville, Indiana. After completing the document work needed to clear the load through Customs, we distributed a great part of the shipment according to the schedule agreed upon with the mission. The biggest recipients were the missionaries of our mission, several orphanages, and local hospitals. But part of the shipment stayed here at the church. This is



important to us because, as a church, we strive to minister to people through good works.

This isn't a simple process. In order to maintain order and to make the process of receiving aid a blessing rather than a source of stress, the team overseeing this ministry must prepare everything in advance. The work of the guys in the Rehabilitation Center is always a huge help to us. They are very active in this ministry from the very beginning to the end. From unloading the container into the warehouse for Customs, they continue with sorting, counting the boxes by categories, then set apart the shipments for the larger recipients. Right to the very end, their help is greatly appreciated.

Our sisters open every box and resort all the things in them. Shorts, sweaters, blouses, skirts... everything must be in separate boxes. Women's things, men's things, children's, household items—all of them go into separate cartons. Then the guys from the Rehab Center prepare the auditorium by setting up tables, and the women of the church set out part of the things on these tables. When everything is ready, we invite people from the church; that is, those who need such assistance. First of all, the guys from the Rehabilitation Center have an opportunity to come and pick out things for themselves. Later we invite people from the city. We

phone the social service office, and then they bring over people who are in need. In April we began to work with the people from social services. This was a month when there were a lot of new people in the church. This was an important moment for many of them. After all, in the past they'd always had the impression that an evangelical church was something scary. Many were pleasantly surprised that we have such a pleasant atmosphere here. Normally when people come



for clothing, it's my wife Katya who spends most time with them. In the process of receiving things for their families, Katya can chat with them and listen to their stories about their lives and encourage them. To one side there is a little table with various free Christian literature, Christian magazines, booklets, children's Bibles, New Testaments—each can take something for their family. When quite a few of the things on the tables have been taken, the women from the church restock the tables from the boxes, and then more people can come.

Please pray that this ministry will

serve as salt and light for these people. And pray that there will be an opportunity to tell them about the Gospel, and for their salvation.

Besides that, another special aspect of April was that in this month we began preparations for the summer camps. In June we will have a Christian family camp, and we are expecting that, out of 80 people, over half of them will be people seeking God. Please pray for the preaching of the Gospel in this camp. For August we are planning an evangelistic youth extreme camp. Please pray for the Lord to send people in whom He is working, people with whom we will be able to work after camp.

## May

*[This month's report comes from the Bilyaks' daughter,  
Karina, who is active in their church's youth group.]*

“What to do, if youth don't come to youth meetings and don't want to hear the Gospel?”

*By Karina Bilyak*

“Most people live in a hurry; they are so distracted with the cares of the world, that they cannot find time to meditate, or scarcely ask their souls, how they do.”

*-Thomas Watson*

Nowadays youth in Ukraine, and particularly in Ternopil, are very hard for Christian youth to contact. They are not at all interested in spiritual things. Looking at my peers, it's hard to find hope for the future. They are interested only in worldly things, and this is the reason why the majority of them pay no attention when you invite them to a Christian youth meeting.

We have a youth ministry team. There are 8 of us: 5 girls and 3 guys. We are always searching for ways to reach young people in our city with the Gospel. We were quite concerned about this tendency in the youth ministry of our church. Young people didn't want to visit youth gatherings in the church. We made them good, quality meetings. There were lots of positive emotions and much fellowship. But there were no results.



We attempted other methods. We began to seek contact with them outside the church: we start up friendly conversations, we chat a lot about general topics on neutral territory. In the beginning we simply try to become friends, without emphasizing the church. Step by step, each of us transitioned to another level—suggesting spiritual topics or reading the New Testament together. And once again, everything came to a halt, and we had to begin all over again.

On the girls' side of things, this looked basically like this: Each of us chatted with several girls and made friends with them, spent time with them as we talked about general topics of life (things of interest to 16-18 year olds), and then, as conversation touched upon the Bible, they gradually pulled away.

And here's how it went for the guys: they started a group called "Trust," where they played various games together, watched good movies, spent a lot of time just talking. Once again, when conversations turned to spiritual things of the Bible, or specifically, to living according to the Bible, the visitor guys quickly disappeared. At the beginning of our youth season (September 2018) we had up to 30 people, but by the end of the school year we had only 15!

We analyzed everything and came to a conclusion: If young people won't come to us, then we will go to the young people. We swung into action. We gathered in the city park near the lake, where we played volleyball. We would invite other young people to play with us. By the end of the evening we again had a group of 25 open, cheerful, easy-to-approach young people. Two weeks later, we gathered again, and the result was positive again: more new faces!



Because it's summer and

many from our team are serving in various projects and camps, not everyone can come to such unplanned get-togethers, but praise God, He works even through a small portion of the youth in our church!

Beginning in autumn, we will start a new season of youth ministry, where we get together and get active in this way. We try to go beyond the walls of the church to find young people in parks, in cafes, in ball courts, and in many other places where we can probably find such youth, in whose hearts God will work through us. We will be friends with them, so that by wintertime we'll be able to invite them to our meetings, which we will try to make interesting and, first of all, useful.

We know this will not be easy. But we also know that this is worthwhile. We see and believe that Christ's words are true today: "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few..." (Luke 10:2).

We also understand that, without prayer and fasting, our ministry can have no results. Therefore, we ask that you remember our youth in your prayers. Pray, please, for our youth ministry. In August we will have an extreme youth camp in the mountains. Pray that the Lord will send us young people who are open and receptive to the Gospel.

## June

Friends, coworkers in the Lord, I'm glad for the chance to write you again with our news.

As it turns out, all of our physical and spiritual life is connected to our children. We come into this world through our parents. Our first steps and understanding of the world happen thanks to the family around us. Spiritual life is also connected to family. This truth is special; yet it is not always understood. God is presented as the Father, Jesus Christ as His Son. We are brothers and sisters to each other. They say that if people grew up in a broken home, and particularly without an earthly father, then it's hard for them to understand God as a father. Or if their earthly father was very cruel or evil, then it's difficult for them to understand that God the Father is identified by love and mercy.



Nevertheless, the family was established by the Creator prior to governments and the church. This is a special institution established by God. From the very first pages in the Bible we read that the family was smitten by sin. Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel, all collided with sin's call. These calls still exist for every modern family. Like before, the Devil tries to destroy family harmony, which God created. In recent years, our church has emphasized working with families. According to statistics, every other marriage in Ternopil ends in divorce.

This is saddening, because even Christian families have problems, and some end in divorce. In addition to various meetings with families, in recent years we've begun to hold family seminars.

Family seminars—these are always opportunities to gather together families that are interested in working on their marriage and relationships. For us, this is a special opportunity to invite people with whom we fellowship over the course of the year.

This was a difficult camp from the standpoint of preparing and organizing. Most places aren't prepared to receive many families. It is complicated, because it's very important who will be the speaker and which kinds of topics he will raise, and

what is said must be biblical and simultaneously rich and practical for implementing. This is financially complex, because we can help families with up to 70% of the finances, but they themselves must pay for the rest, and for many families, this is very big money. It's also complicated because husbands often don't care to travel to such camps. They aren't ready to solve problems. They don't even recognize that there are problems.

This camp took place, thanks to your prayers, and your support has been a big blessing. For 6 days and 5 nights we had 70 people, 15 families, plus the team for working with children and teens. We had families from the church, and we also had families that do not go to church. Some of these families are currently going through great troubles in their relationships.

From the very beginning, we decided that we would like parents and children to spend the maximum amount of time together. If we played a game, then it would be a game for the whole family. If we took a hike, then it would be a family hike. Our extreme rafting was also for families (with the exception of little children). This gave the desired result—everyone felt their role in camp as being part of a family.

For the speaker, we invited Pastor Lyubomir Turchak from the city of Rovno. His lessons were very current. He spoke very directly and without compromise. I was glad to see everyone

understood him as would those who know the Scriptures, including those who are unacquainted with the Bible.

Our program was called "The Harmony of Love." Each day after breakfast we held a lesson time on that theme, and the children's team gathered all the kids for a children's meeting and held a kids program with them. We always held an evening program. It would begin with



contests, cheerful skits, and then the kids would recite or sing what they had prepared. After that we would sing worship songs to God and heard a short sermon.

When the parents put their kids to sleep and quietness blanketed the camp, we invited the parents to a free time. This late evening meeting was voluntary, but each evening after lights out every adult in camp came for fellowship. This was a special time of drinking tea, having snacks, hearing testimonies, asking questions and discussing things.

As a result of this camp, several families decided to build relationships within their family on the basis of the Bible. One family talked about their desire to get involved in family ministry in the church. There were some who said they will start coming to the church.

Please pray for the family ministry in our church. Pray that those families that have still not reconciled with the Lord will take that step. Pray that whole families will join the church. It often so happens that only a husband or the wife will come. We have noticed that if a whole family turns to the Lord, then this is simply happiness for the family and promising for the church.

Please also pray for the extreme youth camp, which will be in August.

Thank you for your involvement in evangelism in Ukraine! Thank you for your prayers!

Your brother and co-worker,  
Vitaly Bilyak from Ternopil.