



The Bilyaks

3rd Quarter Report, 2019

July

Hello, dear friends, coworkers in God's fields of ministry.

Now we are in the midst of the summer period of evangelistic projects. I enjoy the fact that this summer some of our youth could go and serve in small churches of our brotherhood.

In previous years we kept our eyes open and searched for an opportunity for how to invite young people to help us. I consider this to reflect a certain level of growth and blessing for our youth and church, that we can serve other churches with needs.

I've asked my daughter Karina to write her impressions about her participation in this project. Here is share her testimony with you:

The mission "Choose Life" is a ministry of Christian youth in small churches, through which participants in the program draw closer to God and grow spiritually.

This program exists in many countries of the world, including Ukraine, where it began its activity in 2007.



The whole point of the project is for youth from all over the country to gather together in order to serve churches in various populated areas. Primarily, the participants are young brothers and sisters from the churches of our fellowship.

Our New Life Church in Ternopil was exposed to this project when, over the course of 4 years teams, came to us and lived here for a week and labored to the glory of God. This year, 6 young people from our youth decided that we, too, would like to become part of this mission project. Therefore, we signed up to participate in the 2019 season.

Right before the outset of "Choose Life" I personally started to experience great doubts, fears and worries that robbed my heart of peace. All that I could do was to trust in God and simply to give everything into His powerful hands. When we go to the project, which lasts for about 20 days, we don't know who will be going where to serve, with which team, or whether we will know anyone there...

They sent me to 2 cities, to Zhitomir and to Lvov. In each one there was a new team, which also means their own interesting stories.

These two weeks were filled with blessings and various miracles, which it's not possible to share. From Monday to Saturday, each day had 3 important parts: Children's Day Camp, social service work, and an evening program.

For the Children's camp we gathered unbeliever children, with whom we played interesting games, did handcrafts, sang songs, and most importantly told them about Christ. Praise God, each week we had plenty of children for the locale we were in. The weather in Ukraine was chilly, so we consider it a blessing that we had 50 kids in Zhitomir and 40 in Lvov.

One day in Lvov clouds started to gather, so Pastor Yura Levtseniuk suggested to the children that they pray, explaining that their faith is strong and that God, through their prayers, can do a miracle and there wouldn't be any rain. In that moment, many children prayed for the first time ever; yet their fervent prayers and firm faith were heard by God sufficiently well, that not a single drop fell on us!

After lunch we performed service work. This meant painting the playground near the church, picking up bringing into order the territory of the city thus demonstrating that we are Christians, words, but in deeds as well.

Then in the evening our team went (near a park or to a main street) for which was conducted in a new, different the methods "Leave something bad; take good" and "Chair of miracles," and also passersby. Here we especially felt God's so that we participants were able to step out of our comfort zones and could witness to strangers about God. During this time God worked especially in my heart.



community children's trash, or church, not only in

out to the city evangelism, way. We used something simply sang to hand, so much

I know how to sing, so I had decided that I would join with several others from our team and draw the attention of pedestrians with pretty, Christian songs, but on the first evening I was somehow lacking something to do it. On the next evening I stood at the "Leave-Take" table, where I indeed felt God's presence. The point of this station was to invite people to write down something that they considered sinful or difficult in their life. Next, they were to burn that piece of paper and accept instead a piece of paper with a Bible text printed on it. During this time, we explained to them the Gospel and the principle that, in order to receive new life, it's necessary to leave behind the bad, old life. There were a lot of young people who came up to me in search of a meaning for life. Some of them were so disappointed in this world that they had basically stopped believing in God, and with these in particular it was easier and more interesting to talk.

All week I truly felt that I was in my proper place as I worked, using this way of explaining to people about Christ. But God continued to work in my own heart, and on the second week I understood that I was doing all of this out of habit. I no longer had that inner trembling when people would walk up to me, and I didn't feel any joy. Just the opposite, I was lacking something...

The group leader walked up to me and said that he would like to see me go to "the next level," at the "Chair of Miracles," where I should pray for the various needs of passersby who wished to pray. On the sidewalk stood a chair with a sign "Chair of Miracles." If someone expressed a desire for us to pray, then that one sat on the seat. Before praying we talked with him about God, asked which kinds of needs he had, and then prayed for him. For two days it was hard for me to overcome the fear inside of me, but thanks to the team's prayers, I took this step that had been so difficult for me!

This is just a tiny bit of how God worked with me during my time with this project, and I believe that, through this ministry, God changed people's lives while also working in the hearts of us participants.

Over the course of 2 weeks, teams were in 16 different population centers. The ones who heard the Gospel were 217 young adults and teens, plus 107 adults and 878 children. Of these, 9 children and 3 adults prayed a prayer of repentance.

Praise God that young people in Ukraine can be tools in God's hands, and that through these tools more people learn about the true, loving God!

—Karina Bilyak, age 16

Please pray for the youth movement in our church. This is very difficult work. Right now our youth are preparing for the extreme youth camp. We greatly hope that through this camp many young guys and girls will hear the Gospel, will accept Christ, and will join the church. Of course, the camp itself is only part of the process. After camp it will be necessary to work and talk very much with each one.

Also pray for the people who could be baptized. There are those who have repented, but who are going slow with the decision to be baptized.

August

There is a song that has become my favorite song. It was the camp song of our extreme youth camp in the Carpathian Mountains. During the evenings in the mountains, we sang it each evening. The camp ended several days ago, but the emotions still remain for everyone who was there.

First of all I want to share some marvelous news. Five young people repented in that camp. These are those who publicly prayed and announced their decision to change their lives and to begin living with the God. I think that on the final evening there were many more who made an unspoken decision to follow the Lord. I'm especially joyful that among those five was my son, David. He's 14.

Dear brothers and sisters, coworkers with the BIEM mission, with this letter I want to express special gratitude for your support for operating camps in Ukraine, and particularly in Ternopil. For us, it's a great blessing to hold such camps in order to share the Gospel with young people.

In the last few years we've been holding such camps by using the energies of our youth team. Right from the beginning we set a goal—this camp should be evangelistic, which means that the main kind of people we want to take along is unchurched, unbelieving young people. Of the 40 people in camp, over half were non-Christian youth. We didn't advertise this camp on the Internet, but I repeatedly had to turn down youth who wanted to attend from other churches and even from other cities. We feared losing the evangelistic emphasis.

The youth ministry team held a number of planning meetings. Apparently they discussed everything down to the finest details. For each day, every point in the routine was written and the people responsible for it were named. But somewhere along the way I began to feel concern that not enough people were going to this camp. We began to pray about this, and the Lord began sending people to fill up our number.

There were moments when our list of people grew, but then shrank again when someone decided not to go. We ourselves didn't understand what was happening. One person decided not to go because, after thinking about it, he decided he didn't want to live in tents. With another person, some sort of family problem developed. Yet, instead of these people, new ones registered to go. Now I understand that the Lord gave us special people with whom he wanted to work in this camp. Right before the camp, we held a prayer time for it 2 times a week, on Wednesday and Saturday. Everyone felt responsibility for each young person in camp even before it started. We had an agreement that one of us would personally build a relationship with particular people in the camp so as to continue working with them after the camp.

The group that resulted was diverse. There were teens and slightly older young adults. There were more males than females. A group of sportsmen was especially lively. In our team we had Igor and his wife Yarina. Igor is a professional



among sportsmen. He invited 4 men who are There were also guys from the Social came. Somebody else's father is in the army Another person was a foster child.

sportsman, a trainer and sports rehabilitation masseur. In recent times he has spent much time in evangelism his coworkers. Services who at the war.

Right from the first minutes, there was a good and gracious atmosphere in camp. The program flowed according to the schedule. Games, an extreme 30-kilometer hike in the mountains, white-water rafting using catamarans on a mountain river, all-camp games... All of this worked to live up to the name of our camp—

“Extreme.” But our camp’s name also included another word. “Christian.” On the first morning there, we gave a New Testament to each person in the camp who didn’t have one, and our campers brought them to every morning and evening meeting.



“They don’t even realize that what’s happening with each of these young people will affect rest of their lives.” Not because we had such a cool camp, but because God is faithful promises. I believe that the Word of God—read and heard—and the prayers that they not remain empty, in vain.

Please pray concerning each guy and was in this camp. May the Lord continue the was begun in the camp. Pray that these youth but will come to youth meetings. In 2 days we meeting for everyone who was in the camp.

quest, followed by a picnic. Pray for the youth ministry team. They tried very hard to make this camp a success, and they are greatly concerned for each young person, that they will continue to come to church and fellowship.

Yet, every morning there was something that didn’t leave you apathetic. After the morning worship service, where everyone sang several songs together, all the campers and leaders dispersed around the area for prayer and Bible reading. It was specifically in these small groups of 3 to 6 people that the most amazing things happened. It was in these groups that some youth prayed aloud with their own words. It was in these groups that they read aloud the Scriptures for the first time and had opportunity to say which parts they understood and which parts they didn’t.

During one of those morning moments, I looked at these groups then proceeded to take a photo. I said to my



wife Katya, right now them for the organized to His which they voiced will

girl who work that not be lost, will have a We’ll have a

September

Hello, dear brothers and sisters and coworkers of BIEM!

I greet you with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for your partnership and active role in the ministry in Ternopil.

In autumn of each year, many churches observe a holiday we call Harvest. This holiday is somewhat similar to Thanksgiving in America. This holiday has several different roots.

It has a theological root, which is God’s command in the Old Testament to celebrate the harvest they had reaped.

In this holiday we also have a cultural root. For a very long time our people have held a celebration at the end of the harvest. This celebration was held was folk festivities, such as songs and dances... Even during the godless Soviet times they celebrated this. The atheists wanted to wean people off of God, and during the time of this harvest they praised the Communist Party, and very wise Lenin, and other leaders.

This holiday includes a certain sort of therefore, this is always a good opportunity for People can come to a church for such a holiday. usually try to use this opportunity to invite don't attend a church.

This year, our church decided to Harvest on the last Sunday of September. celebrate it much later. Personally, I don't like Maybe that's because for the past 15 years all organizing and most of the work in holding a fallen to our family to do. But this year was course, we took part in organizing it, but it was many people from the church divided up the responsibilities and we were able to celebrate along with everyone else.

Katya and Karina (my wife and daughter) organized the decorating. I was supposed to find for them some bales of straw and to bring various fruits and vegetables that the men in the Rehabilitation Center had prepared for the holiday.

At the worship service we had not only those people who normally come, but also some new people. The children from each age group (small, middle group, and teens) prepared programs. The youth also glorified God through songs and a short play. I presented a sermon about offerings to the Lord.

There was a special atmosphere of gratitude for the Word of God, for bread, water and salt, as symbols of God's blessings and His care. This was done by young brothers (future pastors and deacons of the church). The holiday's atmosphere was totally God-centered.



neutrality; evangelism. So, churches people who

celebrate Typically we holidays. the holiday has different. Of nice that



Following the service, we had a holiday meal, to which everyone who attended contributed. We have noticed that such holidays are especially appreciated by poor people. I suspect that these are the only holidays in their lives.

During this holiday there was an interesting incident. One member who works as a sports trainer brought along a friend who is also a trainer, but who doesn't attend any church. After the service they came to me and offered their assistance in the ministry to orphans, which a group of young people from our church oversees. It's possible that during our next trip out to the orphanage, they (a group of trainers) will go with us to help organize sports activities for the children. We understand that these men have their own interest and motivation in this,

but for us this is an opportunity to give the Gospel to sportsmen. It's an opportunity for evangelism.

Please pray for our upcoming baptism. This year a group of 5 people began visiting, but unfortunately only 1 young man from the youth group will be baptized. The others all said they want to prepare for the next baptism.

Also, please pray for resources for the ministry in the Rehabilitation Center. Winter is coming, but we have a whole list of material needs. (Right now, we have 6 men undergoing rehabilitation.) Some things that had been on the list of needs have already been answered by the Lord through Pastor Kevin Gaugler. He blessed us with a freezer unit for food.

Pray, please, concerning youth evangelism in our church. Our youth work hard at this, trying to take the Gospel to their friends. But this spiritual warfare is very complicated. There is a common problem. When they are simply making friends with people, everything goes well. Yet, the moment they begin talking about God or inviting people to youth meetings, people suddenly alienate them.

Thank you for your open hearts for evangelism in Ternopil!

Your brother,
Vitaly Bilyak