



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL *Challenger*

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More Hands for the Harvest!



The growing Second Baptist Church in Bilogorodka rejoiced to ordain their first assistant pastor plus four deacons.

In Matthew 9:38, the Lord Jesus says, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." In Bilogorodka, Ukraine, God sent an exciting answer to this prayer—more workers for God's spiritual harvest!

On February 4, the church in Bilogorodka, Ukraine, conducted an inspiring service—the ordination of an assistant pastor plus four deacons. In Ukraine, it's customary for pastors from multiple churches to participate in

an ordination service. So, in addition to the church's own pastor—BIEM missionary Eugene Buyko—the other preachers who participated included Vitaly Yurchenko from Chervona Sloboda, Anatoly Kosyanchuk from the mother church in Bilogorodka, Pastor Nikolai Rozhnyatovsky from Kyiv, Sergei Skripnik from Borschiv, and Sam Slobodian from BIEM.

What leads up to an ordination?

Half a year prior to this event, the congregation elected willing candidates for these roles. For the next six months,

the candidates went through a trial period. During this time, the candidates performed pastoral or deacon duties, including preaching in services. However, each candidate also went through examinations. One examination was a question/answer meeting, where any church member could ask the candidates any question concerning their views or lifestyle. In addition, the local pastor and a pastor from another church scheduled visits in each candidate's home, which gave them opportunities to explore in depth the candidates' theological

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Guest pastor Sergei Skripnik admonished the candidates from 2 Corinthians 6.



Angelica, eldest daughter of Pastor Eugene and Sofia Buyko, directed a visiting choir.

...**Hands for the Harvest** continued from page 1 understanding and gave the candidates opportunities to discuss any questions they might have. Also, to prepare his church members for the ordination, Pastor Buyko explained to them the Bible's qualifications and expectations for pastors and deacons. In this way, all church members appreciated the requirements and responsibilities of these roles.

During the ordination service

Although no two ordination services are identical, each one is a significant, memorable event in the life of a church. In Bilogorodka, the service included congregational singing, special musical numbers, and poetry readings geared to focus the listeners' thoughts. Also, a choir from another church sang several numbers with the Buykos' daughter Angelica directing. The guest pastors exhorted both the congregation and the candidates with God's Word.

The laying on of hands ceremony is a solemn and sacred event that begins with



For the first time, the new deacons served the Lord's Supper.

the candidates and their wives kneeling in front of the congregation. Here, Pastor Buyko and the visiting preachers stood behind these couples. After each candidate and his wife prayed, the pastors behind them prayed over them as well. At this point, the candidates are considered officially ordained. The local church presented the couples with gifts—the men received leather-bound Bibles, and the wives received bouquets of flowers. Following the service, the new assistant

pastor and deacons served communion to the congregation.

After this service concluded, the ladies of the church served everyone present an amazing sit-down dinner with a great variety of tasty dishes. Following that meal, Pastor Buyko announced that the new deacons were responsible for the clean-up. Everyone enthusiastically received that news—especially the ladies, who were quite weary from all the preparation and serving! ■

Wounded and Bleeding

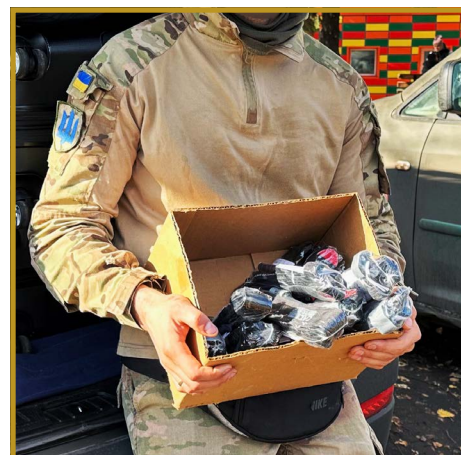
In Ukraine, a BIEM missionary shared the following war-time experience.

“God has opened doors for the Gospel at a hospital where military wounded are lying, wounded, without limbs... This is a terrible sight. One army commander rejected the psychologists who came to talk to him. He didn't want to listen to them. But he opened up to me.

“This commander told me that every day the wives of dead men phone him and curse him, saying he is the one who should've died, not their husbands, and so on. He himself was wounded by a sniper who shot his legs. This man didn't want to endanger his comrades. If he had called out to them for aid, the snipers would have killed them all. The snipers were waiting for that. So, this man applied a tourniquet to himself to stop the bleeding and waited.

“Once again, thank you very much for the high-quality tourniquets that you provide for our defenders. They really do save lives. The military is very grateful.”

Although you may not see Russia's war in Ukraine on your evening news, battles in the south and east are continuing. Please pray for BIEM personnel who are taking the Good News of Jesus Christ and humanitarian aid to both civilian and military victims. BIEM has donated over 400 American-made tourniquets. If you would like to give toward that need, please designate your gift “Tourniquets.” ■



A Ukrainian soldier displays tourniquets received from BIEM.

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“Reaching the world for Christ since 1981”
Dr. Peter Slobodian, Founder

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The Incredible Founding of a Church

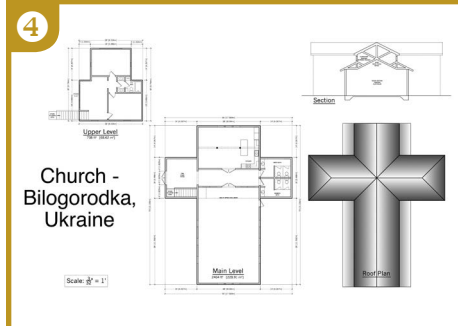
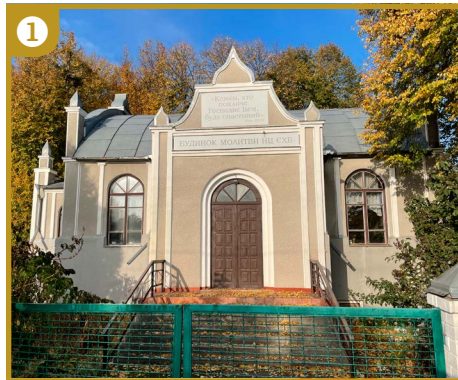
The Second Baptist Church in Bilgorodka has a unique history of God using various people in remarkable ways to build His church. Bilgorodka (on the western outskirts of Kyiv) was the location of the first Baptist church in that region during the tsars' times. However, under the reign of Stalin, the authorities shut down the church and executed the pastor and some others. For over 50 years, no Baptist church existed in Bilgorodka...

tians a plot of ground that pleased the believers far more than the first two! This third site was a superior location for a church because it is in the center of a large tract of land that the city slated for the construction of homes, apartment buildings, and townhouses that would boost the local population from 30,000 to 120,000! The men shown here used axes, saws, and shovels to clear the land for construction.

4 A Christian builder in Michigan made a major financial donation for the project and even sent his building planner to Bilgorodka. That man developed the church's blueprint, which is shaped like a cross from an aerial view. The decision to include a full basement brought the building to 4 levels, providing space to lodge seminary students and visiting mission groups.

5 Today, you can look out the church windows and see new homes, apartments, and townhouses in every direction. Praise God, through this new church's evangelism many residents have accepted Christ, including two of the four deacons — Sergei and Vitaly (kneeling) — whose homes are literally next door to the church!

Praise God for shining His grace on Bilgorodka and blessing it with not one but two amazing churches that are boldly and compassionately declaring the Gospel. We at BIEM thank God for each of you who pray for and support this ministry since you are the ones God uses to make such blessings possible.



Even before its completion, the Second Baptist Church building hosted children's camps.

1 When the Soviet Union collapsed, believers around Bilgorodka desired to restart the church. With BIEM's aid, they constructed a house of worship in the 1990's. Before long, the church was thriving.

2 Then something unexpected happened. One Sunday, the mayor attended the morning service. Afterward, he approached the pastor — BIEM missionary Anatoly Kosyanchuk — with an offer: "If you start another Baptist church on the opposite side of town, I'll give you the land to build on!" His proposal was surprising for two reasons. First, plots of land in that growing Kyiv suburb were quite valuable. Second, the mayor wasn't even religious, let alone Baptist. But when Anatoly shared this amazing conversation of free land for a church, BIEM embraced the opportunity and scheduled this project as our next church-building project.

3 But political opposition arose when the mayor tried to gift the church some land beside a local monument. As an alternative, the mayor offered the church a second parcel, which the believers liked even better. However, political opponents once again objected to a church existing on the second site. At last, though, the mayor succeeded in giving the Chris-

“Summer Camp? Let’s Go!”



Incredible though it seems, summer camp season begins in just three months. Because operating all our camps in multiple countries will require about \$50,000, we want to mention it now so we can begin setting aside donations to make 2024 camps possible.

What happens in these Christian summer camps? A lot! Each camp is chock full of silly games, singing, laughter, motivating handcrafts, nourishing food, opportunities to make new friends, and lots of fun! However, the crucial core of these camps is the daily focus on the Word of God. Kids who have never heard of Jesus Christ before will learn who He is, what sin is, and how Christ wants to save them from the consequences of sin. They will learn how to pray and glorify God in song. And each summer, kids who already know the Lord benefit as the lessons teach them more of God’s Word and encourage them to deepen their knowledge of Scripture as they strengthen their commitment to the Lord.

Not every child puts faith in Christ in camp. But, praise God, many do! For others, camp becomes a first steppingstone toward trust in the Lord. Each summer, many camp workers are young people who embraced Christ through the camp ministry.

Right now, we have \$1,600 designated for summer camps, so we clearly need much more. If the Lord is prompting you to support this cause, please designate your gift “Summer Camps.” Blessings to you! ■

What’s the value of a wheelchair?

BIEM missionary Anatoly Kosyanchuk shared the following story from this past Fall:

“When we were in Radinka [a village close to the Chernobyl Zone], we served communion to the local congregation. During that trip, we learned about a man in a wheelchair who had a need. So he could attend church, the brethren took turns driving him and the wheelchair to church. But the problem was that the man did not own the wheelchair. He had borrowed it and needed to give it back.

“We had a wheelchair in our church, but we didn’t know if the size would work for him. We drove that wheelchair to Radinka, but unfortunately, it didn’t work for him.

“This man started weeping, because his only comfort in life was the church service, and he didn’t know what to do when his neighbors took back the borrowed wheelchair. The church prayed about this situation.

“Praise the Lord, when we looked at the humanitarian aid items from BIEM in storage, we found exactly what this man needed. This month we took that wheelchair to the man. We

cannot express what joy shone in his eyes when he realized he could attend church again.

“Such a thing might be insignificant in the eyes of some, but for this man it was a cause for incredible joy. Praise the Lord for whoever’s heart decided to offer this wheelchair to BIEM!” ■

