



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL *Challenger*

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New Missionaries in the Fields!

Jesus instructed His followers to pray for more workers for God's harvest fields. We still do it. Here, BIEM's newest missionary, Yura Levtseniuk, introduces himself.

Greetings, dear brothers and sisters of the BIEM mission!

This is my first letter to you, and I take it very seriously. I sense my responsibility before God and you to share about our blessings and about our family, which consists of Yura, Violetta, Aaron, Benjamin, and Elizabeth.

God has called our family to ministry in the city of Lvov [western Ukraine], where I have accepted responsibility for Salvation Baptist Church.

Before telling about the ministry in Lvov, I'll share how the Lord called us here. God called me to serious ministry to unbelievers, to people seeking God, and to church members. I began with

ministry to children and teens, then to youth and adults. I've been serving thus for some years already. I'd recognized my great need for understanding theology and practical disciplines. I saw my lack of knowledge of the Bible despite the fact that I'd been reading and studying it since childhood.

For these specific reasons, I enrolled in Bible college. Praise God, for the theological education I received. As a family, we were invited to join a short-term mission trip to the Far East of Russia, with the goal of revitalizing a church that had sunk into spiritual weakness. God granted

us success in that mission, for which we are very thankful to Him. As a result of that, we felt God's calling to establish a new church for Christ.

The members and deacons of a small congregation named "Salvation" invited us to Lvov. We began to pray concerning this ministry. As a family, we traveled

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Not only does Yura preach, but he and Violetta take active roles in the church's music ministry, both with voice and guitar.



BIEM welcomes Yura and Violetta Levtseniuk, our newest missionaries in Ukraine.



Visitation is a wonderful way to encourage the sick. Such expressions of care are multiplied when church members come along.

Eighteen Years of Prayer—Answered!

Have you ever prayed for someone for a long time? BIEM missionary Igor Fomichov shares how God answered his prayers after eighteen years.

For a long time I prayed for my parents to come to God, and eighteen years of prayers have not passed in vain. In recent years my prayer was basically, “Lord, don’t take my parents until they are reconciled with You.” My father repented a month before his death, and this touched me to the depth of my soul.

After my father’s death, Mom began to drink. She didn’t want to talk with anyone and didn’t want to listen to anyone. We repeatedly tried to speak with her, but she just drank and drank. We brought her to our home, but she would come off her alcoholic binge, and then return home and resume drinking. We didn’t know what to do, except to continue in fervent prayers for her.



After countless prayers, Igor’s mother has also become his sister in Christ.

Then came a special project organized by the BIEM mission—an evening for widows. We invited my mother to it. She promised to come, but several hours before it began she telephoned, already drunk, and said she wouldn’t be coming.

A couple weeks passed. Mom came out of her alcoholic stupor, and we invited her to a church service. She promised to come. She attended, and the sermon was evangelistic. Other women who had attended the special service for widows also came.

After that service, we invited Mom, my sister, and her husband home for supper. We had a serious talk. I raised the question of the meaning of life, and I saw how this touched Mom. She barely restrained herself from crying, then got up and walked to the restroom so no one would see. When she came back, it was as if nothing had happened. But I’d noticed that moment, and I couldn’t forget it. Later I mentioned it to my wife Sasha, who said she hadn’t noticed. I suggested that Sasha and I pray. After that prayer I felt an urging to go visit my mother, so I did.

Mom rejoiced that I had come to see her, but she was guarded because it was already late. We sat in her kitchen and

began to talk. I reminded her that Papa had repented and that she needed to reconcile with God.

I said, “You were upset at my home today. You almost cried.”

She admitted that she felt uneasy during the sermon. Something had started to happen in her soul.

“God is knocking to come in. You have to open your heart to Christ. You see there’s no point in this world, and that death is next, but the Lord offers eternal life.”

With tears in her eyes she said, “I see that there’s no meaning in life. What’s next, I don’t know.”

I said, “Will you agree to pray?”
“Yes.”

There in the kitchen we prayed. She repeated a prayer of repentance after me. Following the prayer, she felt ill and began to breathe heavily. I didn’t lose my head. I told her I would pray for her. During my prayer, her tears flowed. After the word “Amen,” she calmed down and said she felt better already. She and I talked a while longer. When I left, she was already happy about life.

Since that prayer, Mom hasn’t missed a service. She’s been going to church for over a month. She’s met many people, and they have accepted her. She feels loved there. ■

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“Reaching the world for Christ since 1981”

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A Christmas fair in Kyiv, Ukraine, gave BIEM's Vitaly Keller and friends a (free!) chance to set up an exhibition of paintings. The collection portrays the life of Jesus from birth to ascension. "There were a lot of visitors, hundreds. We could preach the Gospel freely, beginning with any painting that was of interest to the visitors." What a wonderful, natural way to share God's Word!



In Yucay, Peru, the church led by Juan Bautist Huilca also used the Christmas season to share the Gospel, individually and in groups.



Before snow fell, believers from Europe helped apply insulation to the Rehabilitation Center near Ternopil. Now the building is snug and more energy efficient.



In Belarus, Nikolai Ryzhuk demonstrates the ministry of chopping wood. Because villagers use wood-burning stoves, widows of the church need such help for heating and cooking.

More Souls for Jesus

A BIEM missionary couple in a Muslim land decided to hold a holiday gathering for friends and new acquaintances. The goal was to acquaint them with the Gospel. Here's part of what happened...

With God's help we rented a location to hold it. We prepared a program filled with the Word of God, praise, and a children's performance. We invited newcomers to attend. There were [national] guests and many others. In all, there were seventy people. Praise the Lord, new people listened to the Word of God and heard about Christ the Savior. For many, it was the first time they had ever ... considered the fact that everything they have comes from the Lord, and the first time they heard of the loving Savior, who shed His innocent blood for us, for our sins.

After the service, one of them—a local woman—called and asked if she could come to see us. She told us that her soul had been languishing and that she understands there's no life without the Lord. But until this holiday, she'd never seen a living example of fellowship with God. That's despite the fact she had been born and raised in a Muslim family, and her brother is a mullah in the mosque. After hearing about Christ the Savior, she repented with tears in her eyes and placed her faith in Christ. That day, yet another soul found salvation. Praise God!

Two days later, at a business meeting with fifteen Muslims, this woman read to them from the Bible about how Jesus forgives. She spoke about forgiveness and the merciful Savior Jesus. We request prayer for her.

When we plant the seed of God's Word, we never know what fruit may spring from it. Will you pause and pray for this new sister in Christ, and for the others mentioned in this newsletter who learned what Christianity is really about? ■



A presentation by these kids was just one of the methods used to introduce and explain the Gospel.

...New Missionaries continued from page 1 from Dubno, Ukraine, to Lvov to hold a service. This church invited us to come, and this is where we have been ministering for the past three months. The Lord has blessed us with new people, who have received Jesus Christ into their hearts and are now preparing for baptism. This is a great joy for us.

I urge you to pray for sister Lena, who is in a wheelchair and recently learned that she also has cancer. She very much wants to live and serve the Lord! She has a strong desire to be baptized. So, pray dear brothers and sisters, concerning her health. And if it will be pleasing to the

Lord, may Lena be able to be baptized by faith.

Thank you very much for your support, both prayerful and financial! Thank you for your co-laboring. By your prayers, we sense God's great influence and especially His presence. In my next letter I will share some special blessings with you.

We feel a critical need to increase the effectiveness of our ministry. Pray that we will be able to procure a video projector and computer, and to buy an electric heater for our church building.

We thank the Lord for you. We pray for you!

May God bless you! ■



Under Yura's leadership, Salvation Baptist Church has already begun to grow. May the ministry extend far beyond these four walls.