



TERNOPIL, UKRAINE 2nd Quarter 2011 Report

April 2011

Peace to you, dear members of God's family!

In this letter, I want to tell a little about one of the ministries in which I participate. About a year ago, several of your church's young people suggested that we produce an evangelistic newspaper for young people in the city of Ternopil. At the present, this ministry is coming along well enough. Now we are printing and distributing our "Icthus" newspaper about once every 3 months. It is usually a printing of 2,000 newspapers. This newspaper is handed out for free to young people near the city schools. In each issue, we raise some topic. In April, we put out an issue on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In that issue, included the testimony of Eugene. He is currently working with drug addicts and alcoholics But that has not always been the case. Here is his testimony below. This was prepared and written by two of our sisters in Christ, Julia and Julia ☺. It was written in the Ukrainian language, as is the entire newspaper.

Please pray about the ministry of evangelism through the newspaper.

Vitaly Bilyak

[Vitaly included a lengthy article that is the story of how, as a boy, Zhenya made friends with other boys who were smoking and drinking. He didn't like the smell of cigarettes, but to be like the other boys, he kept smoking. Late they discovered some marijuana plants growing wild, and they cut and dried them and smoked that. Time passed. The other boys showed him how to buy drugs and inject them to get a high feeling, and Zhenya went along. But he never considered himself an addict until the day when another boy didn't show up and he couldn't get his daily drugs. He felt the terrible hunger and anguish that comes from being addicted but not getting his fix and finally realized he needed help. His grieved mother took him to clinic after clinic, but none of them provided long-term solutions. They kept him away from drugs for a time, but he always fell back into using them. When he despaired of ever having a normal life again, his mother encountered former addicts who had come clean through the Christian Rehab Center in Ternopil. Zhenya agreed to go there. He found Christ there and has been drug-free for 7 years now!]

May, 2011

There was a time in our ministry when we wondered, what we could do for the Lord. That is, we looked for special opportunities to serve the people, people with whom to share the Gospel. And, of course, God showed us such opportunities. One of the truly good ways to hold evangelistic services is to use holidays. For example, in May we have just recently begun to celebrate "Mother's Day." Previously, in the Soviet Union, we did not celebrate such a holiday. Now, this has become a popular holiday. We constantly pray and think about how to start relationships with parents of the children and adolescents that attend our children's and teen meeting.

Very often, parents drop off their kids to us to keep their children from spending all their time at the computer, or so that they won't be hanging out on the street with friends. Most parents also believe that they, the parents are doing just fine in life. They don't intend to change anything at all about themselves. It's as if they say, "Here are the children, but we don't need this for ourselves." Except for the fact that we get to meet with parents of children before camps, it is very difficult to attract them to attend any kind of meetings. And using holidays is a good opportunity that we try not to miss. Christmas and Easter – these are only 2 times per year. Therefore, we decided to celebrate holidays for mothers and fathers.

For the dinner for mothers, children prepared for the program. They talked about their wonderful moms. Not a lot of mothers attended, but all the same, we had some. And I think that not none of them regretted it. The children sang, recited poems and performed skits, and they prepared home-made cards for their beloved mothers. I think this was a good testimony that the church won't try to steal away their children, as some parents sometimes fear.

Even more than that, it seems to me that such meetings uplift the authority of the church. Not long ago, we had a woman named Maria (whose daughter comes to our services) attend one of our regular meetings. Her older daughter actively attends our teen meetings and the little one the children's meetings. It turned out that she had an argument with her elder daughter. She came to use for advice and support. She said, "For me it was very hard, I got angry, but I recalled that today at 11 o'clock you have worship. I decided to come and pray for my family, for my daughters... I understand, that it's very hard for me to raise a teenage daughter. May you could tell me what to do; perhaps, I'm doing something wrong.... " We talked a bit about it and prayed together. From time to time she comes here to church. But before, she came only on holidays ...

Pray, please, for the parents of the children, adolescents and young people who come to church and for different meetings. Unfortunately not very many parents allow their children. Some parents, they say, "You're be better off going dancing that to that cult..." Some teenagers say at home that they're going out with friends, but then they come to our meetings.

With best wishes, your brother in Christ,
Vitaly Bilyak

June 2011

This summer has been particularly "hot." Not so much in terms of weather, but more with respect to activity in the ministry. In June and July were for us times to hold camps. During these six weeks, God has blessed us with the opportunity to conduct four camps. Two camps were for children, and two for adolescents and young adults. For several years we have practiced such a scheme for holding camps: first, we conduct Day Camp in Ternopil. To it, we invite as many new children or adolescents as we can. Afterwards, we hold a stationary camp. From the day camps, we expect to make new contacts, new friends; we are look for interested children and offer to take them to a stationary camp. Along the same lines, we hold a camp for teenagers. Only the teenage camps in Ternopil aren't held so much in the daytime as in the evening. In all, we had about 120 children and adolescents in the day camps, and 100 children and young people attended the stationary camp in the Carpathian Mountains.



A great blessing this summer was the arrival of teams of young people from Maranatha Baptist Bible College (USA). For us, their arrival was a great support in the ministry. Our little church would never be able to conduct so many ministries without the help of other children of God. All camps were blessed and beautiful. Our members are very tired, especially those who were involved in all 4 camps.

In the stationary teen-youth camp in the Carpathian Mountains we had 40 youth and 10 leaders. Most of the adolescents who attended were not saved people. We were very concerned about how things would turn out. We prepared a program, prepared sermons, and prayed. The most foundational service, which was to be the culmination of the camp, was scheduled for Thursday. On that day we wanted to give a call to repentance and salvation.

Then dinner time came and passed. I went into the auditorium, where the worship would be. There was one group was preparing for a drama presentation for the worship service. The essence of the scene was that God made man happy, the Devil led mankind into sin, sin makes man a slave, but God returns freedom to people. It was a very good scene, good music, the actors played their roles very well. I was looking forward to, as will be great to see this scene a short time to worship. I was already thinking ahead to how great it would be to put this scene right before the sermon.

Lilia, a 15-year-old girl, played the major role. I heard her say, when we finished the rehearsal: "I'm going to run and change clothes" She quickly ran out of room. Literally half a minute later, someone ran into the hall and said, "Lilia is lying in the courtyard. She did something to her foot. "As it turned out, she somehow twisted her leg and hurt her knee. The pain was unbearable. With difficulty, we carried her to her room. What to do next, what to do? We were living on a mountain, where an ambulance won't even come. I stepped outdoors to make a phone call and saw an amazing sight. I saw how our youth leaders had organized the youth into small groups and they were praying about this problem.

A little while later, I was standing near the hospital room where Lilia was lying under general anesthesia so they could treat her knee dislocation, and was thinking about how it was already time for the worship service, how we had prepared songs, sermons, skits, and prayed about it. And here I stood, not preaching, no altar call, we weren't singing songs ... WHY?? I understand that God controls everything, I understand that there can be no mistakes, but I didn't like all of this ...

When we returned to camp, I had the impression that the whole camp had repented while we were at the hospital. As the leaders told me later, truly a lot of young people prayed about themselves, about their relationship with God, and of course about Lilia and her recovery.

Now when I look back, I understand God's plan. After all that happened, we see a group of young people who want to serve the Lord. We see how they became friends with each other. Please pray for the development of youth ministry at our church. We need a youth leader, a youth pastor who loves God and young people.

With best wishes,
Vitaly Bilyak