



## The Bilyaks in Ternopil, Ukraine

### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report, 2021

#### January

Dear brothers and sisters, coworkers of God,  
I'm glad to be greeting you in the new year of 2021. It's nice to recognize that in this year the unchanging Lord is with us. He is here, and His work is continuing. And if He is working, then we should be co-laboring.

Thank you for likewise being with us in the new year of 2021. The world around us is changing quickly, but our fellowship with you is very precious to us.

For our family, January has been special. On the one hand it's been joyful, but at the same time it has been sad and anxious. Our daughter Karina got engaged to a fine young man, Sergei. They (and us along with them) are preparing for the wedding, which has been scheduled for July 30. Sergei has lived in Ternopil for several years already. He loves God and His church. He's very active in the church: he preaches, sings, conducts ministries, and leads catechism lessons. But the main thing is that his ministry is to youth. He is the leader (coordinator) of the youth ministry in our church. All of the youth team is geared toward ministry to unbelievers.

Karina still studies in the university to become an interpreter with a major in the English language and with French as her second. Sergei and Karina are already discussing missionary ministry. They see their future in ministry to the Lord. They could hardly leave for ministry soon because of Karina's studies, but that is what they are praying about.



For us, this event is also a big wakeup call. To us it seems hardly possible that our daughter has grown up and is ready to establish her own family. It was just yesterday that she was tiny and came with us to Ternopil. We are thankful to God that, from her youngest years, she trusted in Christ and sees her life only in Him. It's comforting to us that her fiancé loves the Lord very much.

But we are anxious. We are concerned about their future. We are concerned and want them to hold firmly to the Bible's teaching in life. And we are concerned about the wedding. Normally, when we think about summer we think about evangelistic camps. This summer should be special.

And we are concerned for our ministry. In one of my letters, I wrote that we had decided to complete the ministry of organizing this church in order to start a new ministry. But the church did not endorse the brother on whom we had pinned our hopes as minister. Our heart is open to international mission. In various ways we have seen the need to take the Gospel to unreached peoples. But for now, we don't see the possibility of handing over the ministry. We need a pastor.

Please pray with us for our family, for all of our health.

- For Karina and Sergei and their preparations to establish their own family.
- For the wedding preparations and the resources necessary for this holiday.
- For our readiness to release our daughter so that we don't become hindrances for their family.
- For the church, that the Lord will show us and call a brother who can be ready to accept the ministry of the church.
- For God's leading in our family, for us to understand where the Lord wants us to be, and what kind of project He has for us next.



With warm greetings,

Your brother and coworker for God in our common work of evangelizing,

Vitaly Bilyak

## February

Dear brothers and sisters, coworkers of the BIEM mission! We greet you in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this letter I'd like to share about the situation with the ministry to children in the orphanage. First of all, I would like to thank everyone who supports this ministry to orphans and children from problem families.

It has already been about 2 years that our youth and friends from church have been visiting this orphanage in order to share Christ's love with the children there.

Previously, I've already related that in this orphanage, the children who live and study there come from various social categories. There are approximately 100 children there. There are kids who are genuine orphans and children whose parents have lost their parental rights.

There are about 15 such children. For them, this orphanage/school is their home. They live here all year. The second, very large group of children are those from problem families. The parents of these children have legal parental rights, but these are children of drug addicts, prostitutes, alcoholics, gambling addicts . . . A few parents have psychological problems or problems with mental development.

This orphanage has “offspring” children. The teachers say, “This boy here... 10 or 15 years ago, his mother or father was here too.” What does this mean? It speaks of the fact that some children, after they leave the orphanage, lead a socially disrupted life, so their own offspring become clients of similar institutions. We pray for such children and try to tell them about Christ. They need God’s grace in order to break out of this vicious circle.

This year has brought complications in ministry to these kids. Because of the fact that, from the position of the government, children who have parents do not need to be kept on weekends. They have reduced the finances to this orphanage and obligated the children to go home on weekends. Because several children live not far from the orphanage and they have parents who are not the best role models has led to some children simply not studying; they simply come for a couple of days per month. The actual number of kids is more like 70. It’s possible this is connected to the government’s gradual reduction in support, or it’s possible this is due to the coronavirus epidemic. Hard to say.

Although in the past the best day for a visit was Saturday, this year the best day should be a working day, which makes trips there more complicated to organize.

We glad that they’ve begun to allow our youth access to the children in their classes. They hold for them Bible lessons, and of course each time they give gifts. Usually the gifts are fruits, juices, and sweets. Furthermore, each time the team takes essential items for the orphanage itself—Pampers, masks, sanitizers, cleansers... But the emphasis is on the children. There are children who get attached to the leaders.

Several team members are already thinking ahead and are concerned about how to help these children when they finish their education here and become independent. They have begun to pray about the possibility of working with the young boys and girls who will graduate out of the orphanage. The question remains of how to help these children from problem families so that their eventual children don’t become clients of such establishments, but to a great degree, how to help them learn how to live in the real world and to acquaint them with the church and with the Lord.

Please pray for the team that involved in outreach to these children. Pray for hearts to be open to the Gospel. Sometimes we get the impression that gifts are the only thing that interests these children. Some of them have modern smartphones in their pockets, and they look at very dirty images on the internet and show them to other children. Sometimes it seems that sin has more of an impression on them than the Word of God.

Thank you for being with us in this ministry!

My wish is for you to have much of God’s grace every day!

Vitaly Bilyak

## March

Peace to you, dear brothers and sisters, coworkers of God in the work of evangelism. In this letter, I'd like to share about the ministry of our church during the time of crisis. We have another aggravation amidst the pandemic situation. Literally yesterday, our city officials announced that church services ought to be conducted outdoors or online. We still haven't decided what to do, obey it or ignore it . . .

Over the past half year, we had already fallen into a normal rhythm of life. All of our gatherings, worship services, and home groups were conducted as if there were no sickness, except that a few people wore masks.



Life in the church was humming along. When, at the end of Sunday church services, I gave the announcements concerning events, I have often joked that the announcement time was the most important—these 10 minutes say more about the church than the two hours spent in the service. And I remind everyone of our life after that 2-hour service.

Each Monday we have a brothers' day. Every alternating Monday we have a men's dinner, where we eat and then share our thoughts from a book that we all read together.

Tuesday is the day for home groups.

Wednesday we have group Bible study in the church. Those who don't visit the home groups come to these gatherings. About 15 people come for these.

On Thursday we have rehearsal for our musical group. This time isn't for everyone, but I mention it so that people can pray for the group that is preparing our Sunday worship services.

Friday—In the morning before work, we have church prayer. After lunch the children's team prepares for the Sunday lesson time with the children. In the evening there is the youth group and family home group.

On Saturday we have a teen club.

Sunday—Besides the church service, on Sundays we have lessons for the three children's groups. Women's meetings. Preparation for baptism.

In addition to those, there are various other meetings that happen in the church. It's enjoyable to see one person teaching how to play guitar. On Saturdays there are classes for the spiritual development of sportsmen and trainers. Three times a week, women and girls meet for fitness. There, too, they hear the Gospel.

In evenings, guys bring their friends to the fitness room, where there are several training machines. We have not yet done any repairs or remodeling there. They hold sports classes and simultaneously tell their friends about the Lord.

There is also work outside the confines of the church building. This includes the ministry of our rehabilitation center. The ministry of aid for poor people. And a monthly trip to the orphanage.

All of this in spite of the fact that our church consists of just 32 members who love the Lord. Most of them live very humbly, if not literally poorly. All of the resources that the church collects go toward the ministries listed above.

We have an urgent particular need. We need a laptop computer for the ministry. The one we have is quite old, and it's already having problems. All of the church ministries use it. We use it for Sunday services (for the words to songs, Bible verses, presentations). The children's ministry uses it for preparing meetings. Sometimes it's used to show a video to the children. The youth constantly use it for their meetings. Those in charge of the rehabilitation center have been requesting a laptop computer for a long time in order to show worthwhile sermons to the men undergoing the rehabilitation program.

If you can assist us with this, we will pass along the old computer to the rehabilitation center and use the new one in the church.

Please pray for the Lord to add souls to the church. Much work is being done. In addition to the 32 church members, about 70 others visit the services. Many of those have been attending for a long time, but they maintain distance from the Lord and the church.

We thank you in advance for your support of evangelism in Ukraine.

Your brother and coworker,  
Vitaly Bilyak