



The Bilyaks in Ternopil, Ukraine

3rd Quarter Report, 2022

August

I greet you dear brothers and sisters, employees of the BIEM mission. As you know, we live in the west of Ukraine. The biggest influx of people and refugees is already behind us, at least we think so. While many of our refugees live in other countries, some have settled in the center or west of Ukraine. As a church, we started by helping refugees and displaced people a lot, but now it is understood that we must focus on helping those in the most difficult circumstances.

Of course, work opportunities can be found here, but I want to be sure that at this time I am helping where needed most. This is how the idea of trips to the east, closer to the front, appeared. We have quite a few acquaintances who live and serve in those areas, and we concluded that we'd work with them. So, I decided to go to Donbass.

Brothers and sisters from the church formed 2 types of food sets. 80 food sets are products for those who can cook, where you can light a fire or cook food at home. The 2nd part of the kits are kits for those who do not have the option to cook—for people in hospitals, basements. This set included quick-cooking products: stewed canned soups, semi-finished products, cookies... Oil according to the number of sets was left in boxes so that there were no leaks and other sets were not damaged. Khleb promised to bring one of our brothers from Zaporozhye. We are thankful to the mission for helping us purchase a trailer for the car. In total, I had more than 1.5 tons of various supplies in the trailer and in my car.

On August 7, I left for Kiev, where I had a wonderful opportunity to



meet with other missionaries and pray together. There we had a meeting with Sam Slobodian. I left Kyiv for Dnipro. On the road, we often had to drive slowly, because there were columns of military equipment ahead of us, which were also moving to the east. The closer you get to the east, the more soldiers you'll see at gas stations. Most people are serious, few people laugh or even smile. I spent the night in the Dnipro.

On Tuesday at 6:20 in the morning, Sasha brought me 100 loaves of fresh bread from Zaporozhye to Dnipro, after which I was ready to go. In Pavlograd, he met with his friends Alexander and Svetlana Moseychuk. They know the area and serve the people of Donbass - that's why they stayed with them.

In Kurakhovo (15 km from the front) they visited a hospital where many wounded from this region (Maryinka, Ugledar...) are lying. The most serious ones are sent to the rear, and the lightest ones go home or to relatives, so that the hospital is ready for an influx of urgent patients. There is also a military hospital there. The military hospital does not keep the wounded. They stabilize them and send them to the rear. At the entrance to the hospital there were gurneys with tarpaulins covered in blood. I wanted to take a picture, but then I realized that you cannot show such a photo to anyone. He gave the soldiers-paramedics medicines, hemostatic drugs, tourniquets...

Then they went to the village of Romanovka, not far from the front line. Ammunition constantly flies above and near them in both directions. Lyula didn't even react. It has not yet arrived in the village itself. About 60 people remained there. There is no store. People were waiting for us. At first they talked, then they gave out help and even took a picture together.

They drove back to the refugees fleeing from Maryinka to Kurakhovo. Maryinka is the front line in the direction of Donetsk. There are constant battles and shelling. The village is almost gone, but some people stubbornly remain in the basements. We talked with some people at the entrance. The remaining bread was distributed. It turned out to be an excellent home group in the open air.

Everywhere there was an opportunity to share the Gospel and distribute New Testaments. At the checkpoints, the children were given coffee and New Testaments. In the photo with landscapes, you can see smoke if you look closely. This is the front. The closer to the front, the more singing (howling) asphalt. Cuts (imprints) from caterpillars formed on it. Roads are mostly good. In many houses of Donbass, the windows are boarded up so that the blast wave and fragments do not blow out.

The closer to the front, the fewer civilians, but more military equipment and soldiers. VSU are God's servants who carry a sword. We pray for them! Those in the military are so different: experienced with a deep and serious look and very young. On foot and in armor... Behind each of them are families, parents, women, children... destinies...

They returned in the same way. Ambulances: military and civilian, are constantly traveling from east to west in the direction of the Dnieper. A very contradictory impression about people who do not leave the combat zone. I used to think that only those who were waiting for

Russians did not leave, but it turns out that people are quite pro-Ukrainian, and often stay for the sake of property.

In the photo is a man without a leg, Oleg from Marynka. He is 35 years old. About five days ago, he came out of the basement to call his relatives and at that moment a plane flew in. His wife was killed, and he lost his leg. He was supposed to leave tomorrow from the day of the shelling. One day was not enough. When I asked why he delayed the evacuation, he said "he put his soul into the house, took the furniture on credit, the pigs were already big..." He cried, saying, "take a picture of me - tell the others - it's not worth it."

The second woman was sitting in the garden because she had planted a vegetable garden. The children begged to leave for Dnipro. Now, she is in the hospital with her husband. She called the neighbors and told them, "Take what you want in the garden, I will not return." During our conversation, her wounded husband did not say a word. Another man in his 40s went out to the garden for tomatoes - now there is no need for anything... But people are ready to listen to the Gospel.



The soldiers were given sleeping bags, first-aid kits, hygiene products, and tourniquets. If you have high-quality military first-aid kits, hemostatic drugs, and high-quality tourniquets, give them to us –we know who needs them! As one soldier said, "There are never too many turnstiles." We are already running out of sleeping bags in our warehouse. For soldiers, this is also a consumable.

We spent the night again in Dnipro. This is a huge city of

millionaires, oversaturated with refugees. The next day, Wednesday, was shopping day. An electric stove, a kettle, and various products were purchased so that Alexander could help people. These purchases included medicines for people under the front line. Sasha had a list for 10 people who were waiting for medicine. They spent about 300 dollars on medicine.

Thursday was the day of return, and on Friday morning at home I read that Kurakhovo, where we were on Tuesday night, was shelled and people died there.

The war has tired many people, but we cannot become dull to it. 1250 km one way to serve people. Ternopil - Dnipro - Pavlograd - Kurakhovo - ... Is it worth going so far? Worth it! If the Lord allows, I will go again.

Friends, thank you for your help, for resources, for money for tourniquets and hemostatic drugs. I especially thank you for your prayers.

Pray for our travels. God willing, next week I plan to go east again. Pray about safety and protection, and that through these dark times we may carry the Light of Christ. Pray for God's wisdom and strength to serve.

Best regards,
Your brother Vitaly Bilyak

September/October

Greetings, dear brothers and sisters of the BIEM mission. Whenever it's time to write a letter, I consider what to say. In this letter I would like to talk about simple everyday things.

For me personally, every morning begins with reading the news from our mayor. When I open Messenger and see that our mayor has no messages, that's good news. Because messages from the mayor are air -aid alerts or announcements of funeral services for dead soldiers from our city. For the past few weeks, every day we have been burying fallen soldiers.

We also learn to appreciate the simple things. When the Russian orcs bomb the electrical systems of Ukraine, everything is sad in the first days. Then stability slowly appears. As soon as there is more electricity than there is not, then they would bomb Ukraine again.

I never thought I would thank the Lord for YouTube and Facebook.

Today I needed to print one page, sign it, and scan it. For the sake of doing this, I had to start a generator in the church for 15 minutes. Starting an electric generator sounds very simple. But to do this, you need go around, turning off all appliances that consume more electricity. The electric kettle for heating water, coffee maker – all these must be turned off. Then you switch the network to generator mode. Next, you unwind 25 meters of cable. Then take the generator outside. Finally, you can start. The light came on but disappeared after 10 seconds. Turns out I forgot to turn off a coffee maker. So, I turned off the coffee maker, started the generator again, and only then could I work. I printed, signed, and scanned. Next, I had to undo everything in reverse order. Turn off the generator, wound up the cable, reconnected everything ...

It turns out that life without the Internet exists. There was no Internet for a whole week at home. Sometimes the Internet appeared through the mobile network. Even when the phone shows three or four bars, and it says 3G or 4G, this does not mean at all that there is Internet there. Even a simple mobile connection is still a challenge. Calling someone is like playing the lottery. Either the call does not go through, or it drops out. Or it echoes and you hear yourself twice, but you don't hear the other person... When Internet goes live at home, it feels like a holiday.

I leave home for church in hope that there is electricity and Internet there. And I head home from church with the same thought and the same hopes. There are days when there is no civilization there, either.

And here are some more examples of simple things... The drive-in gates to the yard and the garage used to open with a button from the remote control. Now they open only manually. You get out of the car, open the lock on the right side of the gate, then the lock on the left side of the gate, then open the gate, drive the car in, walk back, close the gate, close the lock on the left side of the gate and close the lock on the right side of the gate...

The gas stove must be lit with matches. The button-operated electric lighter does not work. There should be flashlights in all strategic places of the house, so that if the electricity suddenly winks out, you can quickly locate a flashlight that should be in its place. I never considered drinking tea from an electric kettle a source of happiness. It seems to taste better from an electric kettle. Coffee from a coffee maker? Too many coincidences.

We wash clothes, not when we want or when we need to, but when there is electricity. Usually, that's at night. To have clean clothes for Sunday worship service, you need to start thinking about them at least by Wednesday. Washing, ironing...

When there's electricity, we set the boiler for warmer than usual to heat the house while there is electricity during a power outage.

At some point, Google Maps became a luxury. I was preparing for a trip to serve in Kherson. I had to calculate and plan the trip in advance. I had to search the Internet in advance.

My hands smell of gasoline, because refueling the generator from time to time.

There are huge traffic jams in the city because the traffic lights do not work. In the evening, the city is a separate experience. The streets that used to be lit up have become dark, and pedestrians can't be seen. People who do a lot of walking wear reflective tape for their safety.

The hardest part is for those who live in apartment buildings. Some manage to use their balconies for generators, which are very dangerous because of the fumes. There are already cases where exhaust fumes from power generators have caused fatalities.

When there is a power outage, some shops don't work. Big shops already have generators. In small shops you can pay only in cash. Sellers write down your purchases on a piece of paper, so that later, when electricity reappears, they can enter this data into the computer.

We hold home and small groups by candlelight.

This could go on and on for a long time...

I want to thank you for continuing to pray for us, for your interest and empathy. For donating money so we can have a generator in the church and can serve people.

Now we are ready to transform our premises into a heating center. If it is very cold and there are long blackouts, we are ready to receive people inside the church so they can warm up, drink warm tea, recharge their phones...

Pray that we, the church, could at this time be a real light in a world of evil, fear, hatred...

Your brother,
Vitaly Bilyak from Ternopil