



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL *Challenger*

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A New Name Written Down in Glory

Even as volunteers constructed the new church in Bilogorodka, Ukraine, they looked forward to seeing God bless this ministry. Now we can share about the first soul who has come to Christ there!

When a sinner repents, Heaven rejoices. In our church, we too greatly rejoiced. Victor is a man for whom we have prayed a long time. He actively helped in building our church. He became the first person whose heart found peace in Christ after many years of wandering in darkness.

Victor came from the world, from a non-Christian family. All of Victor's life passed without the Lord; therefore, when he repented that was a special event for us. Tears of joy welled in our eyes. We sang hymns of praise and thankfulness. The whole church got on their knees and gave praise to the Creator for this saved sinner.

However, while the church was rejoicing, the enemy of mankind's souls was preparing a serious trial for Victor to shake his faith. When Victor's wife learned he



BIEM missionary pastor Eugene Buyko (left) and Pastor Anatoly Kosyanchuk (right) rejoice with Victor, their new brother in the faith.

had repented, she began pressuring him psychologically. For two weeks she would not talk with her husband. Later she used words to pressure him at any opportunity. On Sunday mornings before worship service she would say, "Don't forget to give away all the tithe to your church." (That was as if to say, "Take all our money and give it to your church.")

Friends and relatives wondered how it was possible he would no longer drink alcohol. They wondered if Victor had fallen into a cult.

It takes courage to openly declare you've become a follower of Christ, that you want to change your life, especially when everyone around you is far from God. There's a risk everyone will turn away and say that you've lost your mind. But Victor had thought through his decision with regard to the Gospel and Christ. He openly said: "I am a believer. I no longer drink!" Thank God for his decision and courage. This was the first fruit of his repentance.

For a long time, Victor has taken medicine for his heart and blood pressure. He has bottles of medicines standing on the windowsill in a certain order, so even with his eyes closed he can take the right one and make no mistake. One evening he came home after a hard day of work, and he took his pills, drank the necessary dose and ... felt oddly. He lay down and all his body felt weightless. Victor thought he was dying. It turned out his daughter-in-law had unwittingly shuffled the medicines. As a result, he took ten times the normal dose of one medicine! When Viktor finally began to feel better, his concerned wife said tenderly: "Victor, go to your church. You will sing psalms. It will help you feel better."



National missionaries Eugene and Sofia Buyko and family.

*Eugene, Sophia
Solomia, Ivanna, Angelica, Michael*

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Christians Can Be Fun?

In western Ukraine, Russian Orthodox and Ukrainian Orthodox churches are considered normal, but Baptist believers are often viewed as cults, or at least odd. BIEM church planter Sergei Skripnik shared the following event in his March report.

“In the village of Aleksintsy, where we minister, we had probably the best evangelism in recent days. The Lord led us to create a playground for the village. People were amazed. They continuously walked up and thanked us. One man declared he was going to write to the regional newspaper about it.

“God gave helpers in the form of four brethren from Zdolbunov. We worked from morning to night, until it grew so



Assembling and installing playground equipment took all day and part of the night, but many people appreciated this contribution to the community—especially the kids!



Believers who enhanced this village didn't seek praise. Their motivation springs from verses like Matthew 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

dark we had to finish by using car headlights. What's more, after these brothers finished, they had to drive home 180 miles. Praise God for such brothers.

“Of course, in time the high emotions will die down, but this job isn't in vain. The children are very glad. They stood in line for turns on the swings and the merry-go-round. In the future we might add more equipment. We hope that people

will respond differently to the preaching of the Word of God.”

Of course, creating one playground won't make crowds flock to hear the Gospel. But perhaps some locals will see believers in a more favorable light. Please pray for the Gospel to penetrate hard hearts! ■

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“Reaching the world for Christ since 1981”

Dr. Peter Slobodian, Founder

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His wife's new, softened attitude is a huge answer to prayer. Fellow church members in Ukraine were praying, and so were Americans Victor had met when they visited Bilogorodka to help with the church's construction. People on both sides of the ocean prayed fervently.

There will be more trials in Victor's future. We are praying, and we ask that

you, dear brothers and sisters, please support Victor in prayer, that the Lord be with him in all his paths and give him peace of heart.

Thank you again to each of you who donated to BIEM's church construction fund, which in turn led to Victor's repentance. Saving sinners is the heart of ministry! ■



To celebrate Victor's decision to follow Christ, the whole congregation of this newly organized church commemorated the day with a group photograph.

30 Years of Freedom

On March 19, 2017, the Rumachik family in Russia celebrated a special event—30 years since Peter Rumachik was released from his last term

of imprisonment! In February of 1987, Soviet authorities released Peter before the end of his sentence. He was the first prisoner for the Gospel whom the authorities

released early from prison camp. Then, over the course of 1987, the Soviet prison system released many Christians who had been imprisoned for their faith before the conclusion of their prison terms.

This time of celebration and fellowship was held in the circle of Peter’s children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in the city of Dyedovsk, a suburb of Moscow. Peter Rumachik recounted some of the more interesting and edifying experiences from his time of sufferings, and he answered questions from those present. He thanked God for always being beside him and providing help.

After his release, Peter thought that God might possibly allow him another 18 years of life to live and labor as compensation for the years he had spent in captivity. However, the Lord has already preserved him for 30 years since that date, and he is still active and fruitful. In June he will turn 86. Praise be to God Almighty! ■

To learn more about Pastor Rumachik’s life as a believer during Soviet times, order his book, *A Path Not Lined with Roses*, the inspiring true story of Pastor Peter Rumachik, imprisoned over 18 years in the Soviet Gulag for preaching the Gospel. An eye-opening encouragement in the faith! 207 pages, softbound.

Suggested donations for books (includes S & H):

1 for \$9.75	2–5, \$8.45 ea.
6–9, \$7.15 ea.	10 or more, \$6.50 ea.



In the 1980s, friends of BIEM prayed for Peter Rumachik’s release. God answered! Here’s a photo of friends and family welcoming him home at the train station early in 1987.



Celebrating his release gave Peter Rumachik yet another opportunity to praise God for His faithfulness.

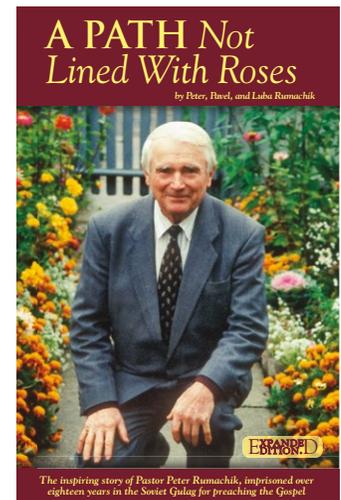
“Fishing” for Camp

The kids in this photo enjoy the competitions of their Christian camp, which is held annually on an island in the Volga River, Russia. This particular contest involves trying to catch paper fish.

Fishing is a recurring topic in the Bible. Jesus even told His disciples He would make them “fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19). In essence, that’s the purpose of summer

camps—to present the Gospel and “catch” souls for the Kingdom of God.

Since BIEM hasn’t quite reached our financial goal for this year’s camps, we’re “fishing” for donations with this last camp appeal for 2017. Currently, we need \$16,600 to reach last year’s level of support. If the Lord touches your heart to help, we’ll be grateful for a gift of any size. Thank you! ■



The Orthodox Husband

Within a country, life in rural areas can be quite different from life in a city. This account from BIEM church planter Mikhail Titarenko provides another illustration of that truth.

In the neighboring village of Rovy lives a Christian woman named Olga Ivanovna. She hasn't had an easy life. Her oldest son left home and never returned. That was over 10 years ago.



BIEM church planters Mikhail and Julia Titorenko serve the Lord in Fedorivka, Ukraine.

Six years ago, her youngest son died in an automobile accident. After that, her husband Vladimir began attending an Orthodox church.

The husband blamed the wife in the death of their son and tried to argue it was her fault. He insisted she attend the Orthodox church with him. Olga Ivanovna refused. Next her husband forbade her from visiting our church. Time passed.

Vladimir locked this Christian sister in the house while he went to church. In time, he eased up on these measures (we were upholding Olga in prayer), and she again came to church. On the evening of May 22, 2016, their house burned down. The house was built of wood, so almost all of it was destroyed. When we learned of the fire, my wife and I drove straight there. The fire truck stood nearby, and firemen were doing their job. Yet another sorrow. Vladimir again blamed his wife for not attending the "right kind" of church, thus bringing God's punishment on them. We at the church continued to pray.

Olga grew quite tired of her husband's accusations. This was a serious trial, but God gave her strength to endure.

Then September came, the Harvest holiday. And what did I see? A car drove up to the church, and out stepped Olga Ivanovna and her husband. Our joy knew

Late-Breaking News!

A second soul has come to Christ at the new Bilogorodka church! Although Pastor Eugene Buyko's father-in-law helped in the church's construction, he had been skeptical of non-Orthodox Christians for years. Working alongside our believers convinced him the Gospel is true. Praise God!

no end. One of our Christian women walked over and hugged and kissed Olga. These Christian sisters stood there, hugging and crying. Vladimir stood to one side, shifting from one foot to the other.

After the service, which was a huge blessing for everyone, we invited all those present to a holiday feast, including Olga's husband.

The following Saturday, Olga telephoned and said, "Vladimir wants us to visit you together. He wants advice..."

A while later I heard the sound of a car stopping at our gate. When I went outside, I saw Olga and her husband. Shaking my hand, he said, "Here. I have brought your Christian. I see how she misses you. I am permitting her to attend your church."

Thanks be to the Lord for His mercy and answer to our prayer.

Although such a story can seem incomprehensible to westerners, it can be reality overseas. Pray for your missionaries to have wisdom in dealing with local situations! ■

Another Container on Its Way!

Thanks to you and God's blessing, these volunteers were able to pack this 40-foot container with aid for churches in Ukraine. In addition to clothing you donated, the shipment includes Bibles

and church supplies, such as a pulpit, hundreds of chairs, folding tables, and other supplies. By the time you read these words, this shipment should be in Ukraine!



Remembering Peru!

BIEM is still accepting funds for the relief of Peruvian believers affected by the huge amount of flooding this Spring. Homes and church buildings have suffered serious damage. Can you help?

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Proverbs 19:17).