



## **TERNOPIL, UKRAINE**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2013 Report**

#### **January**

Peace to you, dear friends. I'm very pleased each time to share with you our joys and prayer requests.

The first month of 2013 turned out to be pretty active and eventful. It so happens that the celebration of Christmas in our culture is more often in January, and to be precise on January 7. We decided it would be proper to use this holiday for evangelism. For this holiday, we invited children from the summer camps, parents of children who attend our meetings, and our friends. The landlord of the place that we rent for services came with her grandson (age 6).

The young people who are involved in the children's ministry prepared a program for the service along with the children. In addition, the youth prepared a short play on the celebration of Christmas in our time. The idea is a very simple scene, but at the same time clear enough: Several young people are preparing to celebrate Christmas. They buy everything you need for a holiday. They always think they have forgotten something. They remember one by one or two different things, but still feel that they have forgotten something important, they are not leaving. The entire room has long been aware that they have forgotten Christ, as the protagonist of Christmas; kids even tried to suggest to them, shouting, "Christ! Christ," and then they remember. It turns out they forgot garland (lights for the Christmas tree). Children when they heard this, were already upset. And then there was a conclusion about how sad it is that people in the celebration of the birth of the Savior to forget about the Savior.

In this worship service, I preached on "Who is your hero?" I started by noting that kids have their heroes, usually in the cartoons. Adults have their heroes. With heroes, people want to be friends with them, they want to be photographed together, their arrival is eagerly awaited. And here to earth comes the hero who will save His people from the enemy of humanity and its bondage, but people do not notice it. In fact, He is ignored, humiliated and rejected. This trend continues today. Ignore Christ in our time. Even during Christmas celebrations, people do not make room for Him. At the end of the sermon was an invitation to pray, and several children and adults responded.

Another special event for the church was some teaching. From time to time, we try to meet on a Saturday in order to learn. This time we talked about how to defend their faith. What does it mean in the 21st century? Around us, there are a lot of different faiths, various "churches." How can we be prepared to meet people professing different heresies and errors? We are told that many misconceptions come to us via the Internet through the media information.

For later this month we have been preparing a few people for baptism. Five of them have been coming to these meetings where we discuss baptism and its meaning.

We understand that these blessings are possible because we have you, friends, who pray for us and our ministry. Please continue to pray for our ministry.

Prayer #1 - a prayer that our church would have the spirit for missionary work, a love for people. That those who believe will assume responsibility for the family, relatives, employees, and ultimately for our city and region. And not just to understand the responsibility but to go to people to evangelize.

Prayer #2 - we have long been praying for the opportunity to begin a ministry in Zbarazh. This city is located near Ternopil (20 km) and very close (2-5km) to our rehabilitation center. We pray that the Lord will send a family of missionaries there, and we in turn will help them.

## February

Peace be with you, dear friends!

Sometimes at the end of the month it's difficult to remember all the events of the past month. Good thing I keep a journal, in which I write down plans for the day, and the camera, which also records special events a month.



Reflecting on February, I understand some fatigue from the prolonged winter. The amazing thing is that I do love winter, but this winter was complicated. Often we had situations where, because of the big snow, my plans collapsed. The other day, I had to go to the rehab center. I got up early and left home. Then I got a call from the guys at the rehab center: "You've already left? Go back! Last night there was a strong wind and snow covered the road so bad that the plow cannot clean it." That day I had to buy building materials for the construction of wood-burning stoves.

The second problem is the roads. It seems that the

last time we had such roads was in the 90's, when the USSR collapsed, and probably after the war (but I cannot remember). It's unreal how many potholes there are. Two weeks ago, I was going along a road, went around a pit, the left lane on the road seems to me better than the entire right, then there is a stretch of road (about 50-100 meters) that was all right, no holes, and then again another section that was horrible with potholes. I continued to drive down the left side when what do I see ahead but the traffic police. The policeman stops me and tries to fine me for driving on the left, not the right lane. At this point, I realized that here I do not need patience but rather, long-suffering. After some discussion with the policeman, I was leaving, but he promised that a fine will come to my home by mail. I'm not even sure that my American friends will understand such a problem. This case shows corruption, insanity, and mismanagement all rolled together.



Pray for the spiritual strength that we, the Christians in Ternopil, and especially the leaders of the church, do not start to grumble. A lot of people around us constantly gripe. They are, in human terms, rights, and they have every reason to be distressed. Small salaries (from all regions of Ukraine, Ternopil has the lowest wages), there are no roads, bad hospitals, corruption in the courts, among the police, and even in schools corruption. To defend their rights even to certain benefits (hot water, heating) is not easy. Whoever has his own business is already tired from the constant pressure of authorities demanding inspections and trying to fine the business owner or to get him to offer bribes.

But there are happy moments in our lives, and I'm starting to think that my readers will also get depressed. Friends, despite all the difficulties and experiences, the Lord is very kind to us! This month, we can understand that He cares about us.

Already we are beginning to pray and plan for camp this summer. I would like to use the opportunity of summer holidays for evangelism.



This month at the rehab center we began to build the stove and continued work on improvement of the kitchen, which we have attached. More of our friends have recently confirmed their decision to assist us in the construction of a workshop for rehabilitants. This means that if the Lord continues to incline their hearts, we can begin to build a quality building. It is our dream. We have long prepared for the construction of the foundation. Especially in the winter months the need for such a workshop is particularly evident. Usually in the winter we have more rehabilitants. In the summer there is a variety of work outdoors, in the garden ... in the winter it can be

difficult to create work for 5-10 men. Firewood -- it's all you can think of. If the Lord permits, we will make a workshop, in which rehabilitants can, for example, manufacture concrete blocks (large bricks) for building. These blocks, we can then use for the needs of the rehab center in construction. In this workshop they will be able to learn a profession, for example, learn to do welding, use simple tools for the handling of metal or wood. Moreover, on the second floor above the workshop we want to make a small dormitory for ministers needed to serve at the rehab center.

Friends, please pray for the church to have its own premises. While we have relatively inexpensive rent, it's for a small room. But another one and a half years and we will have to change something. To find the same cheap rent for a room we are unlikely to succeed. For about \$ 400 U.S. per month, and that is 80% of the church budget spent now on rent. If we had to rent our premises at current market prices - then we could not do it, because that would be 120% of our budget. The cheap price is due to the fact that we got this space in a very bad condition and did repairs here. Now we think that we need to build a small house of prayer or purchase an inexpensive house and refurbishing it to the needs of the church.

## March

Peace to you, dear friends, the coworkers of God!

In our small, new church, we encourage people to choose an area of ministry in accord with the gift given to them by God. Some people are very successful in this; some cannot find themselves, and some get involved in many ministries and projects. We all notice that the world around us has changed. Even in the past few years, we have noticed a number of changes. For example, we used to reach friends from church via an evangelistic newspaper we called "ICHTHUS" (an early Christian symbol, a fish). The usual print run produced 1000-1500 copies. We distributed the newspapers via the efforts of our young people. However, there were almost no reviews. It cost no small money, but we saw no return from the investment. We rarely received reply letters. Even when used the newspaper to announce a contest with simple questions and the chance to win a USB flash drive, there was very little feedback.

Eventually we noticed that practically everyone participates in social networks. We decided that the team engaged in making newspapers should switch to Internet operations. The first thing our young people did was to create a presence on a social networking page for Christian youth club [http://vk.com/future\\_ternopil](http://vk.com/future_ternopil). Many non-believer young friends joined this community. Almost everyone who visited our camp began to receive news from this resource. Now 277 people regularly read the news on this site. There are a lot of photos from the life of our young people, ads, Christian movies, Christian music, Christian posts, links to useful articles and lots of other interesting things.

Then we did the same network page churches <http://vk.com/newlife.ternopil>. Subscribers to this page were people closer to the church. Such people 87 people. Most of them are from Ternopil. There

are also photos, music, videos, but to a greater extent, this resource is aimed at people familiar with the church in real life. This resource is more valuable because it includes almost all audio sermons from the Sunday worship services of the church, most of which are mine. Many people are happy to listen to them at home if they could not visit the church.

The final blessing of the media ministry is that it has given us an opportunity to put our materials in local Internet resources, such as the Internet news portal "20 Minutes." Once I was reading the local news, where it was stated that on this site people can post their news and raise thorny issues. In other words, you do not need to be an official correspondent of the site to write something. We decided to try it. We gave that job to one of our sisters, who formerly helped in production of paper newspapers and she did a good job. This article [in Ukrainian] is on the link <http://20minut.ua/news/10269096>. During its active access (it has since moved into the category of archived materials) was viewed by 1,986 people, and 50 people commented. The promotion of this article was a team effort. That site operates by the principle that, if people continue to read an article, then its ranking rises and it does not disappear into the archives. If people do not read it, then after three days it disappears from the home page. We (the media ministry team) agreed that we all would be active in supporting this article. We asked our friends to support it, too, by being active in the comments. This was a good opening for us. A large audience of people in the Ternopil region read our material. This article was in support of the Christian family values. In particular, we talked about the attacks on the family from the gay community. It drew upon researched information and also the Christian position.

Please pray about the opportunity to preach the gospel to people through Internet resources. Pray for our small group involved in this ministry.

With best wishes and greetings your brother and colaborer,  
Vitaly Biliak