



TERNOPILO, UKRAINE

3rd Quarter 2012 Report

July

Already much time has passed from the moment that we enjoyed the blessing of holding a evangelistic camps for youth and children. Our team leaders especially enjoyed conducting youth camps. For several years the Lord blesses us with this opportunity. Holding a youth camp -- this is always a special time. Of course, children's camps are held with great enthusiasm and a special atmosphere, but running a youth camp brings to the team leaders more experience, more responsibility. One person is nervous because he's invited relatives or friends. Another person worries because he knows these will be peers. Usually the result of the camp exceeds expectations.

This year, God led us in a peculiar way. As usual, we planned the camp. We prepared a program, reserved a recreation facility, planned services, distributed responsibilities among the team leaders, and then for two months we were called by representatives of that recreation facility who told that the date for which we reserved our camp has to change, and we were offered the other dates. This caused a problem among the team leaders and young people. Some had already requested vacation time from work for camp, and changes weren't possible. Someone had already bought tickets for their family to travel there. Even I could not change my schedule. We saw that we would lose leaders, if we changed the date of the camp. I tried to find another base, but it was not possible. Either the price was not acceptable, or the date was not suitable. We began to pray about this situation ...

Then I remembered that it was during this time would be the All-Ukrainian youth camp near the Sea of Azov camp, from the Brotherhood of Independent Baptist churches and missions of Ukraine. Our church is working with the Brotherhood. Immediately we began talks with the leaders of that camp concerning the possibility of taking a group of about 50 people.

The name of the camp and its main theme were "Against the Current." We understand that camp is a good platform for evangelism, but we also realized that most of the young people in their camp would be from churches, so to say "churched youth." We were ready to give up our program and join the general camp program, but we are worried about the young people who needed to hear the gospel. We were assured that there would be a good Christian atmosphere, but that they would clearly hear the Gospel ... In talking with the organizers, we came to the decision that they would run the program and include the Gospel, and we in turn would work with the young people, who had come with us. We also decided that we would find the time to meet with our group separately.

And so we traveled to that camp. It's a scenic spot near the shore of the Sea of Azov. More than three hundred Christian youth and our large group numbering 47 people gathered. Most of our group was unsaved youth. Some for the first time were in a youth camp; someone else already had, but had not yet decided to follow the Lord. All the young people were divided into small discussion groups. Each group had 2-3 people from Ternopil, and the rest were 10-14 people from other cities.

At the beginning we felt some tension, suspicion, because a the youth came from different cities across Ukraine, and from different churches. Some were believers, and some not. But very soon, thanks to the efforts of the leaders, the discomfort passed and people began to chat. You could see them getting photographed together. By the end of the camp, everything changed; they exchanged addresses. A lot of them became camp friends.

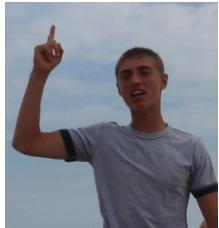
A great advantage of such a large camp was just being with a lot of Christian youth. In Ternopil, our church is not big, and some have the impression there aren't many Christian young people. The camp was attended by a large number of young people. When we sang, it was something powerful, big, many-voiced.

On the other hand, we realized that many Christians do not have a clue how to deal with non-Christian youth. Many young boys and girls were closed off from the Christian subculture. People used words that are

incomprehensible to young people from the street. They use Christian jargon. Very often young people came to us, asking what various terms mean. For example, «Why does everyone call each other "brother or sister"?» But in any case, it was a great blessing. During camp, from our group 5 people prayed the prayer of repentance.

With the completion of the camp, our youth work is not over. On the last day, before leaving the camp we met with leaders and discussed plans for what to do so that we would not lose the youth, whom the Lord had given to us in this camp. We decided a few days after returning to Ternopil to go on a picnic. Then we invited the youth to youth meetings.

Testimonies from young people. Interview recorded on the last day of camp.



Igor (17). "Impressions: Here, it's interesting. It's cool here. We have fun. The games are different. There's always someone to talk to. I really liked the all-camp game. It's great that the camp is located near the sea. "

Veronica (17). Leader. "I really liked the camp. I've been waiting for this camp, we were ready for it. It was a special feeling when we arrived and saw so many young people here. This camp gave me a lot of new friends, good impressions. The sea is a special highlight of this camp. We were a bit afraid of snakes that were in the water, but it's not important. We heard very special sermons from the pastors invited by the organizers. They were a good spiritual strength, pointing to the fact that we need to change. I think for everyone this camp was not in vain. It has left a good impression on our lives."



Mariana (17). "I loved the camp. An interesting story was when we were divided into groups and the separation of accommodation into rooms. In the beginning, we all almost cried, because we from Ternopil wanted to be with our own group, and those from Lvov wanted to be together. Everyone wanted to live with their own groups. But we quickly became good friends with the other young people seven days of fellowship with them was too short. I had no time to say goodbye to Olga, a girl from my room. I miss her. "



Anna (17 years old). I was at this camp, that is, in this place, once when I was little. "There is a lot of that has changed. The place probably has not changed much, but we grew up. Last time I was here, I was with kids. But it's been the most wonderful experience. This is the best week of the summer. I've met many people, and I've grown spiritually stronger. I've experienced some spiritual lessons, heard new sermons and discovered many spiritual truths.



Andrew. Director of the youth ministry of our church. "Honestly, you do not want to go home, but I understand that it's necessary. I really liked it. I can't speak for the others, but I'm happy. I hope the young people also liked it. I liked the theme chosen for this camp, and I liked the sermon 'Your Skeleton in the Closet' about the hidden aspects of our lives. It was very important for young people."



Zorian (16). "Impressions of the sea - the sea of impressions. (A play on words.) The camp has been interesting, fun, very cool. We liked it. People are happy here, we made a lot of new acquaintances. Most liked the two all-camp games. This provided an opportunities to meet new friends. We liked the food. Everything was delicious."



Julia (leader). "Camp has been beautiful. There's good teaching, many thoughts. Many people have decided to follow the Lord. Praise the Lord for that!"

Thank you for your participation in evangelism among the youth of Ternopil, for supporting the camp ministry.

August

First Time in the USA

Dear friends, colleagues in evangelism, I am glad to write you this message.

For me it was a great blessing to visit some of your churches in the United States in August and early September. This was my first trip to the U.S. Many friends from the U.S. have come to us in Ternopil, and here I had the opportunity to visit some familiar brothers and sisters in Christ, but even more new friends in different places. On this trip I was with the director of the mission in Ukraine Eugene Buyko. We were constantly accompanied brother Sam Slobodian, and several times by Rick Barry.

On this trip, we felt surrounded by the warmth of your hospitality and Christian love. We experienced the most positive emotions and pleasure. We received spiritual, emotional and financial support to serve our Lord! One of the most impressive things for us was a great sense of God's command staff gathered around to achieve particular goals -- expanding the influence of God's kingdom.

We want to say a big "thank you" for your care of us on this journey. Everything was planned in advance to the smallest details. All our needs were filled completely. Thank you for your open hearts, open doors for your homes and families.

I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to talk about our ministry, for the opportunity to praise the Lord with you for your worship services and Sunday school.

Many thanks for your donation to serve the Lord. Thank you for being involved in our needs personally and practically. This gives us great support. We feel a real part of the big family of God's children who care about each other. For us, you have become an example of sacrifice and kindness.

What especially touched me is that I have now seen many people who have supported our ministry for years in prayer and financial donations. Someone came up to me and asked about a need that I had not mentioned on this trip. They knew about this from our missionary letters over the past few months. One brother in a family where Rick and I stopped for a night said at dinner: "I had imagined Vitaly Bilak differently. I have read your letters of missionary service, and I imagined a solid man with a beard, but I see you are young and beardless." I jokingly apologized for being clean-shaven. But really I could closely relate with my prayer partners. In some homes they had lists of our prayer requests that I sent this year. This for me was the strong support.

Special thanks to Bible Baptist Church of Columbus, Nebraska, for a guitar. Before the trip, I prayed for a new guitar for the ministry. We had started a new home Bible study group, but to sing as a group we needed a guitar. I had given my old guitar to the other group. But I almost never talked about this. Whenever we were in a church, I sang Christian songs in Ukrainian with brother Eugene and played on two guitars. And Bible Baptist Church gave us a guitar. The brothers knew about this need from the mission and blessed me with this guitar. So I wondered how I could get it home. I called the airline to find out how I could carry it. They asked the number of my ticket and offered two options: one, to purchase a separate airplane seat for the guitar, which would be over \$600, and another option: to check it in as extra baggage, and that would cost only 50 dollars. I used the second option.

So, there I was with a guitar at Kennedy Airport, New York City. I checked in for the plane and I handed over my luggage. She looked at my guitar case and said, "You need to pay an extra \$150." I was shocked. What could I do? With my "broken English," I explained to her that I had called the airline and they told me that for the guitar I would have to pay only \$50, not \$150. Now she was confused. She picked up the phone and called somewhere. I understood that she was talking to some Tanya about my situation. Then put down the phone and started to glue on my luggage stickers (stickers on the handle), gave me my boarding card and explained where to drop off my luggage. I asked her, "Do I have to pay anything?" And she reposed, "You do not have to pay. Everything is okay," and smiled.

In such a special way the Lord took care of the situation. Now I can use my guitar in ministry. Almost every time when I pick up this instrument, I remember the story of God's care.

I also want to say a special thank you to everyone who donated money for a car for ministry. Now we have the opportunity to use the car for which we were praying. It's a huge sacrifice for the glory of the Lord on your side. This is a very nice 7-seat Mitsubishi minivan. It is reliable. This also speaks to us of the Lord's great concern for us and the ministry.

September

Peace be upon you, dear brothers and sisters in the Lord!

I'm very pleased to share with you some of the pages of our lives. First I hope that you will join with us to thank our Lord for blessings and to pray for the needs. We are very well aware that if we are experiencing the blessings, then that is not from our merit, but as part of a large team of coworkers in the Lord. If we have problems, we are very pleased to be able to share those with you.

Recent special moments in our ministry -- This is an update in the service of small group Bible study. We understand that this is a very important and necessary ministry to the church. There was a time that we had a small group, then the emphasis shifted to other ministries. There were some difficulties, and this ministry faded into the background, and then almost ceased to exist at all. One of the main problems and hindrances in development is the lack of leaders. Some leaders have been absorbed by other ministries; someone had problems and was not able to lead a group. For a long time, we talked about what to restore the ministry. We understood that the absence of group limits our ability to have an apprenticeship in the church. We lose intimate fellowship of believers, as well as lost opportunities for evangelism. But each time, as soon as we tried to take more concrete steps in this, we again realized that there were no leaders. All we could do is continue to pray about it. We asked you to pray about it, our friends. And recently, the situation has changed.

I can't say that more leaders have appeared, but for a few weeks we have met in four small groups. Two groups for families and two for youth. To make this possible, we restructured a little the youth ministry. Please pray that these groups will be lively. That the Lord will work here, that new people would come and repent. Please pray for leaders of these groups. Every Monday I meet with these brave brothers who are not afraid to take on more responsibility. We prepare for group, discuss how best to spend every special meeting.

As an experiment, we decided to base the groups' themes on the topic of the Sunday sermon, which will be after the groups. For example, we had a panel on Fear. And then I was preaching on "Fear. What we have to fear and what not." So in this way the groups are a preparation for Sunday worship.

Best wishes in the ministry and in your personal life,
Your brother in Christ,
Vitaly Bilyak