



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL *Challenger*

A publication of **Baptist International Evangelistic Ministries**

Vol. 36 No. 3, 2018

Reaching out to Widows and Orphans

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)

This fall, BIEM missionaries in Ukraine are once again organizing special meetings for two distinct categories of people: widows and orphans.

The services for widows will share the Gospel, plus a meal, and each woman who doesn't own a Bible will receive one along with a sack of helpful items. The services for kids will be held primarily in orphanages. Typically, the kids hear a Bible lesson where they learn about Jesus,

and children's Christian literature will be distributed along with an age-appropriate "care package" for each child.

Why the special outreaches? Pastor Sergei Debelinsky, one of BIEM's first church planters and President of the Brotherhood of Independent Baptist Churches of Ukraine, explains:

“Probably most people wonder about the meaning of their lives: why we're alive, what we can change, and what we should be doing. God's plan for believers is to live for others, to live a life whose purpose is serving others. Intrinsic in the Bible verse above is the idea that God has prepared for us a field in which to perform ministry

services. He expects us to do them as if for Him....

“Probably one of the most famous Scriptures concerning good deeds is ‘Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world’ (James 1:27). God expects His people to have a special mindset concerning orphans and widows. His will is that they be visited and given assistance as a smaller imitation of God, as it is written, “a father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation...” (Ps. 68:5).

continued on page 3



Here, the church in Kobrin, Belarus, is holding a service specially geared for widows in their community.



Before leaving, each woman receives a sack of helpful items, plus a Bible if she doesn't own one.



Following the service is a delicious meal with a chance to relax and enjoy conversation.

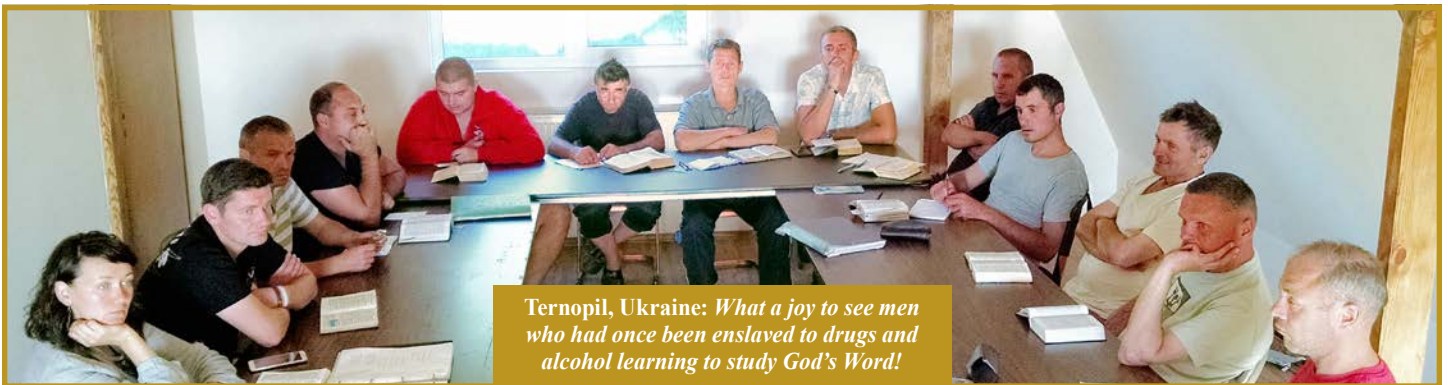
Glimpses of the Mission Fields



Cusco, Peru: Cristobal Churlata praises God for numerous baptisms in Cusco.



Central Russia: Free time during camp gave these girls a chance to be silly and forge long-lasting memories.



Ternopil, Ukraine: What a joy to see men who had once been enslaved to drugs and alcohol learning to study God's Word!

BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL
Challenger

"Reaching the world for Christ since 1981"
 Dr. Peter Slobodian, Founder

Baptist International Evangelistic Ministries
 121 Commerce Drive, Suite 50
 Danville, Indiana 46122
 317-718-1633
 Missions@BaptistInternational.org
 www.BaptistInternational.org

- Church Planting
- Evangelism
- Bibles & Literature
- Training Nationals

Board of Directors
 Dr. Sam Slobodian – *President*
 Dr. Greg Wahlberg – *Chairman*
 Mr. Terry Minton – *Secretary*
 Rev. Kevin Gaugler – *Treasurer*
 Rev. Tim Coley Mr. Gerald Nystrom
 Rev. Jason Grubbs Rev. Jack Walker

Field Directors
 T. Smith – *Central Asia*
 Sam Slobodian – *Eastern Europe*
 Andy Counterman – *Latin America*
 David Cateam – *Special Ministries*



Yucay, Peru: Church-planter Juan Huilca Quispe gained a new partner in ministry, his bride, Isabel!



Drogichin, Belarus: As church members praised God, Nikolai Ryzhuk baptized several newer believers.



Fastiv, Ukraine: Pastor Vadim Stepanovicz invited BIEM's Sam Slobodian to assist in baptizing three believers.

A “Thank You” about Summer Camps

Dear friends of BIEM, thanks to you, about 3,025 children and teens attended BIEM-sponsored camps in 2018. These camps took place in Belarus, Central Asia, Russia, and Ukraine. Some campers were Christian kids who enjoyed fun and games while growing in grace and knowledge of God’s Word. Yet, many others were unbelievers who had never attended church. For them, camps introduced God, the Bible, Jesus, and vital spiritual truths.

Tracking the exact number of decisions campers make is difficult. Some kids respond to public invitations to put



In Bilgorodka, Ukraine, neighborhood kids packed the church for Bible time in day camp!

their faith in Christ. Others quietly listen to the Word, believe, and accept in their hearts. But we have received reports of 749 known salvation decisions.

God assures us His Word never returns void. It works in hearts. *Thank you* to everyone who donated in order to help young people learn about salvation in Jesus! ■



“Look what I got!”

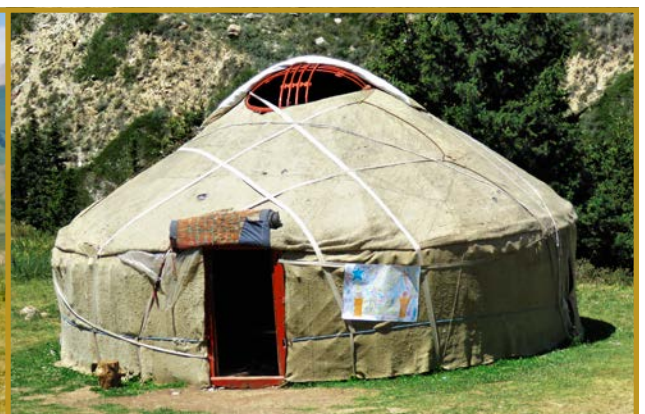
...Widows and Orphans *continued from page 1*

Not just hearers of the Word, Sergei and his wife have adopted numerous orphans. Passionate on this topic, he points out additional Scriptures:

- In Exodus 22:22 God protects them: “Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.”
- In Psalm 146:9, God portrays Himself as aiding them: “The Lord...relieveth the fatherless and widow.”
- Through Isaiah 1:17, He calls upon us who believe in Him to aid them: “Learn to do well... relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

continued on page 4

...Glimpses of the Mission Fields *continued*



Central Asia: For these kids, summer camp in a remote location included flag football and traditional tents, called “yurts.”

...Widows and Orphans *continued from page 3*

In Ukraine today, the pension a widow receives isn't large, only \$100–\$150/month, depending on work history. And numerous widows are far from elderly. These are young women who have lost their husbands in the military conflict that continues in the East. Believers can guide such women to spiritual truths amidst their loss and despair. In God, widows and orphans can find fresh hope, meaning, and support.

Sergei advises, "It's precisely when the wound is bleeding that we must apply God's balm for healing and hope. We must hurry to do good deeds, remembering the transience of a person's life. The opportunities that are available today may not exist tomorrow...."

"These people don't just happen to be near us. God allows them to be near us, and He expects something from you and me concerning them."

Sometimes, widows who first enter a church for these services take an interest in the Gospel. Some accept Jesus Christ as Savior. And no one can count the number of orphans who gain a Heavenly Father through loving Christians.

BIEM appreciates these special opportunities to reflect God's love. A minimum of \$6,000 is needed for gifts to be distributed. However, in order to magnify the potential, we hope to raise \$12,000.



This girl just received her first children's Bible.



Every child likes gifts, and these orphans were no exception.

Will all the recipients put their trust in the Lord? Not likely, but some will, and God will be glorified, and the needy will be helped. Also, believers will receive blessings for

obeying God's call to defend the defenseless and to help the helpless. If you would like to give toward this project, please mark your gift "Widows & Orphans."

Aunt Motya

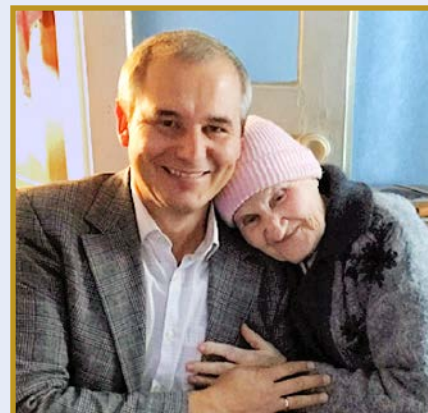
BIEM church planter Vitaly Yuchenko shares this touching story from Chervona Sloboda, Ukraine.

There was a time when I drove around the village in my car and picked up elderly widows to bring them to the church services. They couldn't get around by themselves. In this way, several elderly women accepted Christ before departing into eternity.

One time an elderly woman named Matryona came to our church. I had visited Matryona, but she hadn't yet been to our church. Like most elderly Ukrainians, Matryona considered herself an Orthodox believer. She had no desire to visit our church.

Besides, the Orthodox priest didn't allow such. But once she visited a worship service, Matryona loved us with all her heart. We began affectionately calling her "Aunt Motya." Aunt Motya didn't miss a single meeting. She fell in love with everyone, and if she couldn't attend a service, she sincerely missed it.

One day Aunt Motya fell and injured her hip. She lay in the hospital for a long time. After the hospital, Matryona couldn't walk without help. Olya visited her each day, read her the Word of God, and prayed with



Although at first afraid of the local church, Aunt Motya fell in love with them.

her. I also visited Aunt Motya from time to time. Then came a day when Olya reported that Aunt Motya was very sick. We hurried to her. I wanted to talk with her about faith. We were very pleased when Matryona assured us she believed in Jesus Christ and was confident of His forgiveness of her sins. Matryona knew that if she died, she would enter Heaven with the Lord. We prayed with her. A few days later Aunt Motya slipped into eternity.

Praise the Lord for His mercy and love, and for giving us the opportunity to serve the elderly and take part in their salvation. Thank you, dear friends, that you pray for us and support us financially. Thanks to you, the work of God is being done in Ukraine.