

Religious organization Chernihiv Christian mission 'Charity and Spiritual Rebirth'
Chernihiv Missionary Baptist Church
Crossroads Ministry, Ukraine

CHERNIHIV, UKRAINE
JUNE – SEPTEMBER, 2023

Dear brother Richard!

Today is already the beginning of October 2023. It is unbelievable how quick the time goes. The war in Ukraine has already been going for over 19 months and, unfortunately, we don't see the end of it.

First of all, I want to thank you and all the supporters for your prayers and help, and that you stand with Ukraine during this awful war. Thank you very much!



Many Ukrainians left the country because of the war in 2022 and some in 2023. If the war does not stop quick enough, many people will stay where they are, because they will settle their lives there. A thought about this makes me sad, because many talented Ukrainians may not return home. Many Christians and a lot of those who were in the ministry are somewhere else now. This is sad.

On the other hand, Russian aggression brings the death of civilian and military population of Ukraine every day.

Moreover, you possibly heard about the children's abduction 'performed' by Russia. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, thousands of cases of child abduction have been recorded. The Russians have illegally deported children, supposedly under the pretext of "health improvement, evacuation from dangerous areas and the need to provide medical care", etc.



During the commission of crimes, the Russians sometimes changed the personal data of children. In particular, there were cases when they added age to children taken to "re-education camps" in Crimea.



It is almost impossible for children to leave the Russian federation and temporarily occupied territories, as the Russians are preventing them from doing so. According to the Children of War platform, 19,546 people have been forcibly displaced or deported so far. It is very scary to even imagine how the Russians treat our Ukrainian children.



An active war is going on in the south and east of Ukraine now.

Many other cities are also constantly under the threat of missile and drone attacks. Periodically, some cities and regions are attacked. It seems like Kyiv has been attacked by missiles and drones more than other cities (not including eastern and southern regions).

Most of my family and me live in Chernihiv and since Russian troops completely retreated from our region (April, 2022) nothing has really “landed” in our city. Though, the villages and towns of Chernihiv Region, close to the border with Russia, are being shelled every day.

On August 19, 2023 I was driving through Poland, heading to Germany and saw the news on my phone that the downtown of Chernihiv was attacked by the missile.

Few minutes later, they explained the reason why all that happened. Some “smart people” (I mean leadership of our region) organized “drone exhibition” at Chernihiv Drama Theatre which is located in the very center of the city. Moreover, they announced about that event on the internet. This provoked the missile attack which happened that same day. Officially 7 people were killed (among them was a 6-year-old girl) and over 200 people were wounded (including children). Of course, the real number is bigger.



I called my family and friends to find out if they all were okay. My father was not far away from downtown at that moment, but, praise God, nothing happened to him.

Despite the fact that we constantly hear the air raid alarms, see the missiles flying over our city, hear the noise of the air defense systems, however, this is nothing like what people go through in the south and east of Ukraine every day.



Having a "quieter life" here, people tend to relax and forget that we are in the state of war. It is not something that we should get used to. We need to do all we can to STOP this cruel war.

I believe that you regularly pray for Ukraine and for our people and we surely appreciate it very much.

I also want to encourage you to continue praying, because we see the prayer working here every day. I am convinced, that God is more powerful than all the armies of the world. Therefore, we trust Him and pray that He would help us to defeat the enemy, liberate our territories and get the victory.

MINISTRY NEWS | CHARITY & GOSPEL

The war in Ukraine has not stopped Ukrainian Christians from doing their duties. Praise God, we can serve Him and the people of Ukraine even in such circumstances. Our church and mission continue serving our community not only in Chernihiv, but also in Chernihiv Region.

Chernihiv Missionary Baptist Church: Evangelical service and food package's distribution.



August 17, 2023



We have been organizing food package's distribution at our church for a long time and now it seems that time has come to do it less in the city. We see that many people lie (*they come many times and say that they have never received a food package, even though they did*), many became very impudent and think that we

owe them something. This is very discouraging.

Therefore, we made a decision to slow it down locally (in the city), and instead we give help individually (not massive) to those only who really need it. More than that, we organize the trips to villages of our region more often now, because the people there are definitely in need.

Shestovytsya Village, was occupied for over a month in 2022. The occupants lived in people's houses and destroyed the houses they didn't like. The village is back to normal life now.



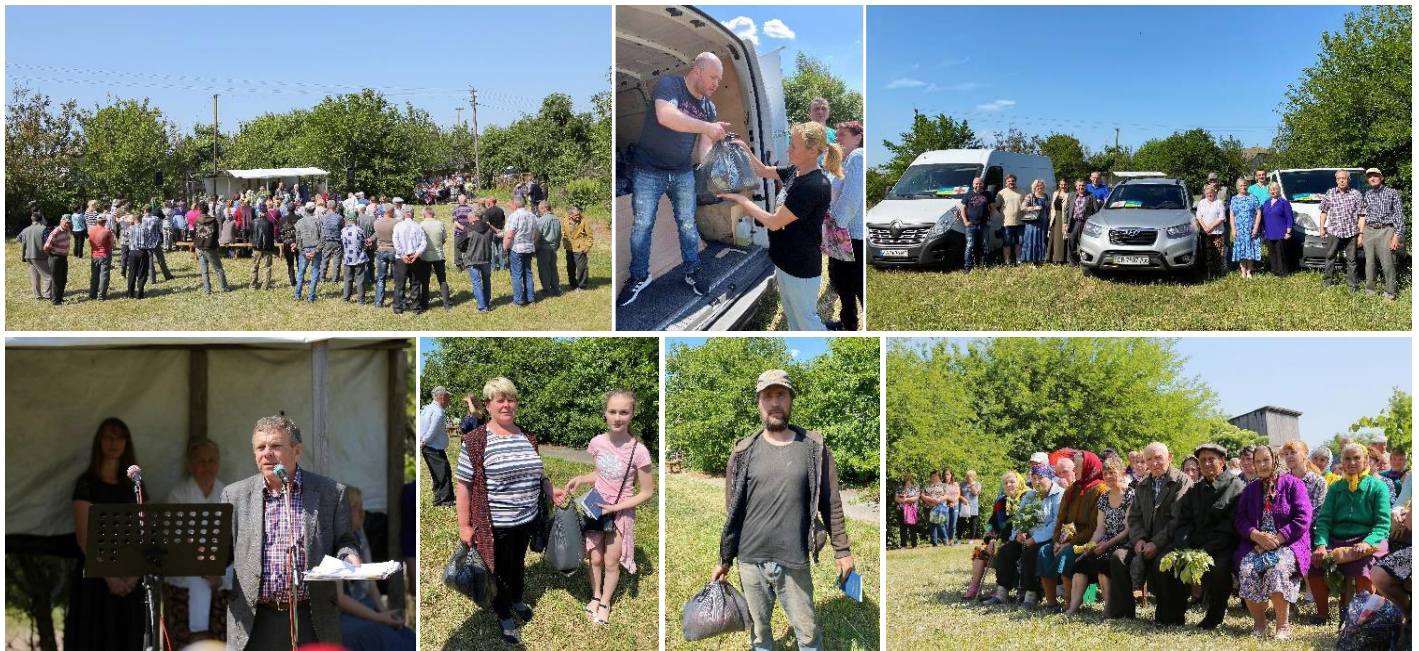
May 17, 2023

In some villages people said to us: "Don't bring help to us, take it to the people in the east and south of Ukraine, where people are more in need. We will survive here with the potatoes and other vegetables we grow." To this we answered: "We have our churches in the east and south of Ukraine and they take care of people there while we take care of you here".

It is such a big difference between those who has more in life and got used to receiving the aid constantly (monthly) and the ones who has less in life and received the aid only once or several times since the war started.

Beginning from June and up to the end of September we visited a number of villages and met with many people. We have been to villages and towns which were occupied and villages where people did not see the war. This way or the other, we try to go to places where people need help. It humbles your heart, when you see these people, hear their stories and feel their thankful attitude.

Kovpyta Village, was occupied for about two weeks in 2022. Before the trip to this village we had arrangements with the local authorities that they would provide us a place for meeting with people. At the very last moment they refused to provide an auditorium. We think this happened due to the pressure from the Orthodox priest on the local authorities. One Evangelical Christian, our brother, found the spot in the open air where we could meet with people, share the Gospel and give the aid to people.



June 2, 2023

Almost at the border: In September 2023 we visited a number of villages which are located 3-4 km from the border with Belarus. These villages were not occupied, but they had a lack of groceries and other goods because nothing could be delivered to them. The occupant's army was between those villages and Chernihiv city.



Radul' village, Chernihiv Region / September 15, 2023

Due to their location volunteers very rarely deliver the aid there. As local inhabitants witnessed, last time they received humanitarian help in May.



Lopatni village, Chernihiv Region / September 15, 2023



Visiting elder and bedfast people in the villages of Chernihiv Region / September, 2023

We are very thankful to God for every individual, church or organization who help us to fulfill God's work among the people of Ukraine. Through this ministry we care for people and show them the love of Christ together with you. May God abundantly bless each and every one of you!

DAY CAMPS | SUMMER 2023

This year, in spite of all the threats, we organized two Day Camps in July and August. We are thankful to everyone who prayed and participated in this need. As you might remember, we had the list of things we needed to purchase for organizing these camps. Thanks to God, we were able to get everything we needed, but the inflatable slide. Though, this time we had the opportunity to rent it free of charge from our friends in Lutsk (Western Ukraine). The inflatable slide had its own schedule and it was very tight because many churches wanted to use it in summer. The only expense we had on it was the cost of delivery to Chernihiv and then back to Lutsk. Anyhow, the inflatable slide stays in the list of our prayer requests .



God miraculously led us in the preparation for the camps. It was interesting to observe how everything was prepared, how the team was formed, how difficulties and obstacles arose. Despite all this, despite the martial law and the danger of missile and drone attacks, with prayer, we decided to do these camps anyway. Thanks be to God that He has kept us safe and blessed us!

Day Camp was intended for children from 6 to 13 years old. The registration began at 9:00 am, where children were divided into teams by age and were given bracelets with the color of their team. After the registration, children gathered for morning exercises and then for morning service (not long). After the service, all groups went to different activities.



One group went to crafts, the second - to Bible lesson, the third - to games and snacks activity (inflatable slide, trampoline, table tennis, popcorn, cotton candy) and the fourth - stayed in a large tent, where they took part in various competitions and learned Christian songs. Every 50 minutes the children moved from one location to another. Thus, all children could visit each location. After attending all activities, children gathered for a general meeting (20 minutes), where the results of the day were summed up and the necessary announcements were made. At the end of the day's program, children went to their homes.



Day Camp I - July 10-14, 2023



Day Camp II - August 7-11, 2023



The children's program lasted daily from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. In July on the first day of camp we had 145 children and 180 on the last one. However, in August on the first day we had only 109 children due to the bad weather, but later on the number of children rapidly increased to 180 children again. More than 35 team members were involved in each of the camps. Praise God!



Children played games and received prizes, attended Bible classes, did crafts, took part in contests and competitions, jumped on a trampoline and went down an inflatable slide. During the camp, children had a good time and received various goodies and snacks (buns, juice, ice cream, sandwiches, hot dogs, cookies, popcorn, cotton candy, etc.). The camp program was quite intense, which distracted them from their worries and fears of war, from the news and computer games.

The campers had a lot of fun, found new friends, learned Christian songs, heard about God and His plan of salvation, and at the end of the camp - received presents.

In addition to the children's Day Camp, we held a camp for teenagers and young adults (ages 13 and older) in the evenings. This camp lasted from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. It usually started with popcorn, cotton candy and games, and then there was tea, coffee and a snack.



Teen Camp - July 10-14, 2023

Later on, there was a worship service with songs and a sermon. After that, the fellowship continued around the campfire. Every day we cooked something on the fire, talked and sang songs. At the Teen Camp we had 40-50 teenagers/young adults and about 25-30 staff daily. It was an unforgettable time for both the team and the campers who attended. We believe and hope that God's word they heard will not remain in vain!

I would like to share some testimonies from parents whose children attended the camps, as well as testimonies from leaders who served at camp.

Evgenia, Alexandra's mother

"I thank Crossroads Camp's team for spending time with our children. My daughter was delighted, she had a lot of positive emotions on those days. Firstly, she learned a lot of new things, learned new songs, which she sings even at home. Secondly, she now knows who God/Jesus is and she begins to believe in Him. Thirdly, she liked playing different games. Your camp is very creative and a godsend for our children. We hope to meet again more than once. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the impeccable organization and great and meaningful 'holiday' for our children. Once again, I would like to thank everyone involved in organizing this camp, as well as everyone who worked with the children - thank you very, very much!"





"Hello. We, the parents, are sincerely grateful to Crossroads Camp for organizing such camps. During their stay at camp, children are busy communicating with other children, live communication (not online). Active games, goodies - all children love this. In popular establishments - it is expensive and most parents cannot afford to take their children to such events, especially if there are several children in the family. Children come home overflowing with positive emotions after the camp, they are delighted. Once again I would like to

sincerely thank the camp organizers for the happy moments of our children's childhood in such difficult times for the country!"

"I would like to sincerely thank everyone who worked at the Day Camp and made the children's vacation interesting, bright and unforgettable!

Thank you for your work, creativity, dedication to your work and love for children! My daughter happily ran to Crossroads Camp every day as if it were a holiday. Her eyes shone with joy. There were very interesting crafts and Bible lessons at camp.



Thank you for giving our children a real holiday in such a difficult time for all of us. We look forward to seeing you next summer."

Natalya, Maria's mother

“Thank you for organizing Crossroads Day Camps, for your attention to children, for investing into the future of Ukraine. My daughter Maria enjoyed the crafts, making of hot dogs, Bible lessons and fun activities. During a time of shortage of offline communication and positive emotions, children enjoyed communicating with peers and elders and experienced many positive emotions from handicrafts, games, songs, and morning exercises. I wish the camp team wisdom from the Lord and blessings.”

Svetlana Konovalova, responsible for crafts



“As a camp’s participant, I want to say that this camp was led by the Lord. This was noticeable both in small things and in resolving significant issues which determined whether the camp would take place or not.



Children are the main “reason” for which the camp took place. There were many of them. On the last day we had about 180 kids. It means that we were able to share the Gospel with such a big group of children and their parents. It has been a great blessing for me personally to minister to them and interact with them. I pray that they would turn to the Lord.”

“Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! No one can measure his greatness.”

Psalms 145:3

Anastasia Pustovoit camp coordinator



I've never liked day camps because they make it harder to understand how to build close relationships with kids. But now, due to the war, this is the only opportunity to reach out to children. This time the Lord revealed this ministry to me from a different perspective.

I was teaching Bible lessons at camp. There were a brother and a sister in the older group who were talking incessantly. At first it seemed that they did not hear anything because of their conversations, but in fact they heard much more than some of those who sat quietly. When I shared about the important truths of the lessons, they quieted down for a minute and listened carefully. In fact, they were the ones who asked the most questions after the lessons.

Their questions were very deep:

- “If you repent but continue to live as you want, can you go to Heaven?”
- “If my dad doesn’t believe in God, heaven and hell, then he has nothing to fear from hell?”
- “Is it enough just to be a good person to be saved?”

Despite their distraction, I saw that Holy Spirit worked in their hearts.

There also was a girl, Solomiya (in the center on the photo), I remembered her name in class because it is not a common name in Ukraine. She attended both children's and teen's camps.

We talked with her about some general topics: about school, parents, friends. As I later realized, that was a bridge for building friendly relations.



One evening, after the service, she came up to Roman and me and said that she wanted to talk. She had a question: "If there is a God, then why does He send such difficult trials to her and her family?" The main message of her question was: "We are good people, we do good, we love others, we do not do evil, and God leads us through such hard trials."

We talked, shared the Gospel with her again and offered to pray. She admitted that she did not know how to pray. We explained to her that she could tell God everything she had on her heart.



I prayed first to set an example. When it was her turn to pray, I expected to hear something like: "God, why is everything so unfair? Bring us out of these trials." But the first phrase of Solomiya's prayer was: "God, I am such a sinner, forgive me." She repeated it many times. This means that she heard the Gospel and understood its essence.

I presented the Bible to Solomiya and we exchanged the phone numbers. I pray for her and hope that the Lord will become her personal Savior."

Roman Bevz responsible for camp ministry



"It was a great joy for us to be useful to these children, their families and our community. During both of our camps, every day over 200 people heard the message about salvation. However, I can admit, that despite of the fact that most of these kids and their parents live nearby our church, they see our care and work we do and appreciate it, but they are still far away from the Lord.

One of our team members heard the boy talking on the phone to his parents at camp. Most likely they asked him: "Where are you?"- To which he replied: "I am at a sect". From this conversation you can understand, that "poisonous food" which former generations were "eating" during the Soviet Union, it still intoxicates the minds of people and goes from generation to generation.

Reasoning from this, I want to ask you to pray for the people of Ukraine and especially for the 'neighbors' of our church. We don't want them to be just neighbors and know something about God, we want them to know Christ as their personal Savior.

The lies, which communists were putting into the minds of people for years, can be won only by the prayers of God's people. Please, pray for them with us.



MINISTRY NEWS | FOLLOW UP

Among those people whom we serve, whether it is through humanitarian work, camp ministry or any other way, there are people who opened their hearts for the Gospel. This year our church baptized 9 people who joined the church family. Praise God!



Since we do not have the baptistry and the lakes are not safe enough now, we do not do the baptism separately for one or two people. In our church we usually schedule the baptism for the end of summer or beginning of fall, while it is still warm. It is almost like harvesting the crops, after the whole year of labor.

This year we organized the baptism together with the other church at their territory. It was a big celebration for all God's people.

Our new members continue attending classes (small group) where they study the scripture, ask questions and grow spiritually.

We also have another group which is attended by those who think about repentance and want to know more about God, faith and the other related questions.

God's work is going on and we hope and pray that more and more people would get saved while the doors of salvation are still open.

Please, continue praying for all of us in Ukraine while we serve for extending of God's Kingdom. Thank you for supporting our hands with your prayers .

In Christ,
Roman Bevz