

Open Bible News

February 2011

*"Praise our God,
O peoples, let the sound of his praise
be heard; he has preserved our lives
and kept our feet from slipping."
Psalm 66: 8-9*



Oksana Khimich: on calendars, plans and diaries...

Well, 2011 has arrived! It's enough for the clocks to chime twelve times at midnight and the energy which we had lost at the end of the old year reappears, we cheer up and all kinds of bright prospects open up before us with the start of the new year. We want the new year to be special, not ordinary, but memorable. I guess that this depends in part on us – how we see this year, what we want to achieve during this year or simply what we plan for this year.

I really like some wise words from Peter Hoppler, the Scripture Union European Regional Director: "Without planning, things just happen. Some Christian leaders do say: 'I do not plan, I rely on the Holy Spirit.' With this understanding they pretend that we either plan or we rely on the Holy Spirit. In my conviction we find a different understanding in the Bible: Relying on the Lord and Planning have to be combined. This is also mentioned in our Working principles: '... by combining prayerful reliance on Him with the best available means, maintaining the highest standards possible.' I would even say, either we plan led by the Holy Spirit, or we end in chaos, probably finally without the Holy Spirit." Learning to plan is not that difficult. Lots of books and articles have been written and there are special seminars on planning, or "time management" as it is now the fashion to call it. You can easily choose what suits you. The other simple thing is a calendar and a diary. They say if you don't know what to give as a present at the end of the year, give a calendar or a diary – you can't go wrong! I am very glad that my friends know this and at the beginning of the year I always have a new diary and calendar. You can write in the events that you already know about and you can add those that come up later. For a start you can make a note of the dates of our camps:

Vorzel

20 June to 1 July
25 July to 5 August
8 to 19 August

Crimea

11 to 20 July
20 to 29 July
29 July to 7 August
7 to 16 August

International Youth Camp – 9 to 23 July at Vorzel.

Maybe you would like to take part in one of the camps – pray that the Holy Spirit would direct you in planning your ministry, as Peter Hoppler advises.

Try not to forget about one more plan – the Bible reading plan for this year. We are starting a new cycle of reading the Bible over five years. Those who have already been reading the Bible following our plan will probably have received a special blessing through returning to the book of Genesis.

You can combine your reading plan and your diary in a very interesting way. In Patricia St John's book "Rainbow Garden" a teenage girl reads the Bible every day using a Scripture Union plan and every day she writes the key verse of the passage in her diary. I really like this idea and I try to do the same. May the Lord bless you this year with new opportunities in ministry and above all in drawing closer to Him, knowing every day how great and wonderful He is!



Timofei Stupak and Andrei Likhodeev:

Unfortunately this year we could not afford to hold a winter camp at Vorzel. But we decided not to lose heart but to treat the situation as an opportunity to hold one-day holiday activities at some of the places where we have Bible clubs for children and teenagers.

We chose five clubs and invited our volunteers to take an active part in planning and running these activities. Planning was quite difficult: firstly because we live in different districts of Kiev and many volunteers had a



long journey to get to the meetings in our office; and secondly our meetings were in the days before New Year and there wasn't much time. At the beginning it was difficult to agree on the aim for our activities. However, once we were agreed on the aim everything flowed from that: lots of ideas were put forward, we allocated tasks and even tried out games, songs and crafts and devised a script for a Christmas presentation. It turned out that by working together as a team we got far more

done than we had thought possible.

When the time for the activity days came, despite some uncertainty everyone worked together complementing and supporting each other. The activities we had prepared were fun and interesting for the children and at the same time we were able to convey the



message that Christmas is a sign of God's love for people who are His creation and that He came into this world as our Saviour.

The fun side of the programme went really well and we had lots of games and competitions in reserve. We really liked the way children and adults all took part in the Christmas presentation – even one-year old Lev Stupak had a part!

It was great to see the happy children's faces and also the smiling parents who came up to us and thanked us sincerely for the activities and the presents. And we are thankful to God that we had the opportunity to hold these activity days through which we were able to tell the meaning of Christmas to children and their parents.



Lena Yurchenko:

At the beginning of 2011 we planned holiday clubs in two villages – Belye Oslavy in Ivano-Frankivsk region from 3 to 5 January and in Prilipche from 6 to 9 January. On 1 January Lena Nagornaya and I set out by train. To make good use of the time we wrote posters for the clubs. The

church in Belye Oslavy welcomed us very joyfully and warmly. The team of volunteers was quite small – five people – and 80 children came to the church every day. You could say it was hot work! I have noticed how the regions of Ukraine are different and the children are different too. The children here amazed me with the enthusiasm with which they played games, listened to Bible lessons, did crafts and were willing to perform. They sang so loudly that the leaders couldn't make themselves heard even with the microphone! It was a really memorable time.

Our next club was in Prilipche. The team was a bit bigger – seven volunteers – and there were fewer children, so we decided to run separate activities for children and teenagers so that we could get to know each of them better.



We had already tried to invite the teenagers to the “Coffee House Club” – a youth meeting in Chernivtsy to which young people can invite their non-Christian friends, but the parents hadn't allowed them to come. This time we decided to invite the parents to the Christmas service in the church in Prilipche, so that they could watch the play that the children were performing and see for themselves where the children had come and what they were doing. Unfortunately, not all the parents came, but we very much hope and pray that God will soften their hearts and that we can have good contact with them in the future.



Nadya Gamova:

Last Friday was already the fourth meeting of my club this year. I had long promised them to organise a tea-party where we could chat about different topics and share news and ideas and plans for the time up to the summer. This time we did not have a Bible study as usual, but just enjoyed God's gift of fellowship. I discovered that many of them want to be more active in the life of the club. If before now the most we could get them to do was a display or making small presents for special occasions, they now said that they would like to put on concerts for parents and guests. I cannot say this was a complete surprise, because we had prayed a lot about it, but there is a special joy when you get a definite answer from God. Just as we were discussing this, the head of the centre came in and told us that she wants every club at the centre to prepare an item for a concert for International Women's Day on 8 March. I'll never forget how the girls' eyes shone – there were so many ideas and all of them wanted to play their part. I really hope that all of them will be able to take part and show their talents. We'll try to make the best of this opportunity.



Vyacheslav Gorshkov:

Over the past five years many of you have used the daily questions on the passages in our Bible reading plan. These questions were published on the Open Bible website and also sent by email. I decided not to write new questions. I think the ones that have already been published will suffice. To make it easier to use them I am putting them on the website on the Bible Questions page listed by the books of the Bible. I'm not sure what will happen to the emails via Subscribe.ru – it is possible that this service will end. If you have interesting ideas and suggestions for materials on our site to help Bible readers, please let us know!

We thank you for your prayer support and ask you to continue to pray for:

- the children who heard about the birth of the Saviour for the first time this winter;
- for the organisation of prayer meetings for teenagers;
- children's openness to God's Word;
- the clubs where there are no volunteers to work with children;
- wisdom from God for all who lead clubs to be able to organise their time well and prioritise their efforts;
- wisdom from God in ministering to children who are growing up so quickly;
- organising and running spring training events throughout Ukraine;
- the proper prioritising of efforts in the summer;
- organising and running camps and holiday clubs all over Ukraine;
- preparations for the international youth camp in summer 2011;
- the financial position of “Open Bible”.

*“May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice”
Psalm 141: 2*

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