

Heavenly voices lead to nearly 4,000 decisions in Ukraine

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Heavenly voices partnered with the gospel message led to a multitude of life-changing decisions during a April 23-May 4 [Singing Men of North Central Texas](#) mission trip to Ukraine and Crimea.

More than 8,800 people heard the gospel through preaching and singing as they attended eight Singing Men concerts in seven cities. Nearly 4,000 people embraced the hope of Christ during the concerts in Odessa, Nikolaev, Kherson, Evpatoria, Sevastopol, Simferopol and Yalta.

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"God gets all the credit, but we are so grateful that he chose to use each of us in this wonderful mission in Ukraine," Derrel Thompson, minister of music and education at Valley Grove Baptist Church in Stephenville, wrote on a blog about the trip. "We cannot say thank you enough for your support. This victory report is as much about you as it is about us. And it is all about God and his amazing work all around us."

The mission trip was the second of three trips by the Singing Men of Texas to Ukraine, which the group has adopted as an area of evangelist emphasis. The trips are collaborations between the Singing Men groups across the state, [Woman's Missionary Union of Texas](#), [Michael Gott International](#) and the Baptist General Convention of Texas music and worship team.

"Everywhere we went, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the preached word

and the prayers of those back home drew hundreds to Christ," said Tim Studstill, director of the BGCT music and worship team.

"It was so moving to look into the faces of thousands so hungry for the message of hope and salvation that the gospel brings. We were blessed to be vessels of that message and a part of what God is doing in Ukraine."

Many of the Ukraine concerts were standing-room-only. At one venue, people had to be turned away because the facility was too full. The Singing Men ministered through music for about an hour during each gathering. Each concert was followed by an evangelistic message from Michael Gott, who has shared the gospel around the globe as an evangelist.

God used the choir's efforts in conjunction with the spoken gospel presentation like a symphony to touch people's hearts, Gott said.

"I've tried to be a student of effective evangelism, and in almost all cases great music precedes effective preaching," he said. "That's exactly what you have with Don Blackley and the Singing Men of North Central Texas. This is a choir who sings with a purpose and not for performance."

"All the songs that they sing have words written in Russian put on a large screen. So that when I stand to preach, I feel that the audience of a thousand people has already heard the message of Christ. Because they've heard it sung with excellence, it makes it possible for me to preach with greater confidence."

Ukrainians were extremely appreciative of the Singing Men's efforts, leaders said. That included people who were not Christians.

"Well, you definitely got a nine for the technical level, but it should be a 10 for your praiseworthy efforts," wrote one audience member on a comment card. "Thank you for having the faith in people to spread happiness because you believe that it's the right thing to do. Time definitely well spent. I

enjoyed your concert despite being an atheist."

Ukrainian Christians promoted the choir's tour and invited people to attend as an opportunity to share the gospel with their friends and neighbors. Local believers also are following up on all the documented decisions made during the concerts.

"We cannot overlook the witnessing by the local Christians, the tremendous prayer support we had both in America and in Ukraine, and the fact that God in his sovereignty has chosen to work in the former Soviet Union today in a remarkable way," Gott said.

A combined Singing Men of Texas choir will minister in Ukraine Sept. 23-Oct. 4. Individuals still are needed to help with the trip by greeting people who attend the concerts and distributing Bibles and evangelistic materials. Financial support also is needed. For more information, contact Studstill at (888) 244-9400.