

5-2021

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Recommended Citation

Polumysna, Olga (2021) "Monitoring of the Living Conditions of People with Disabilities in Ukraine under the Conditions of the Covid-19 Pandemic (On the Example of Evangelical Christian Baptists)," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 41 : Iss. 4 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol41/iss4/12>

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MONITORING OF THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN UKRAINE UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (on the example of Evangelical Christian Baptists)

By Olga Polumysna

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Abstract

The article finds that the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly affected social relations and exacerbated the already vulnerable situation of people with disabilities. Everything that was hidden or veiled in relation to people with disabilities by society has fully manifested. In these conditions it is necessary to monitor the living conditions of people with disabilities as the most vulnerable category of the population, which are currently ignored because healthy people suffer and are usually put first. The social and medical spheres proved to be the most unstable in the conditions of the pandemic in terms of assistance to vulnerable groups of the population. Official statements and postulates have not been fully implemented, they do not answer all questions, and they do not always coincide with reality. Responses to Covid-19 have impaired access to services for people with disabilities. It turned out that the religious sphere was the most stable, which we understood when we studied the activities of the evangelical Baptist community. They were characterized by consolidated assistance to socially vulnerable believers and people with disabilities, which manifested themselves in the social, medical, and religious spheres. Interviews and questionnaires revealed that it was only through the organized work of the faithful that timely assistance to people with disabilities was provided. In addition, it was found that the Ukrainian media has a lot of statistical information about Covid-19. However, in fact, there are no reports on the state of infectious diseases departments, the necessary equipment, and no coverage of patients with disabilities since journalists do not actually communicate with doctors about this situation. There are no analytical materials that would explore the situation and guide in the choice of adequate solutions.

Key words: a person with a disability, Covid-19, Evangelical Baptists.

Introduction

Today in Ukraine, as of 2020, approximately 2,700,000 people have disabilities—of which 222,000 people are a part of one disability group and 163,000 children have disabilities.¹ During the coronavirus pandemic, society experienced all the complexities of

¹ “Мінсоцполітики хоче посилити захист інвалідів в умовах Covid-19.” Укрінформ, 2020. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3150217-minsocpolitiki-hoce-posiliti-zahist-invalidiv-v-umovah->

lockdown: restrictions on communication, employment, movement, and so on. This has particularly affected the most vulnerable population—people with disabilities. In addition to the fact that a person with a disability has health problems and is therefore at risk, but someone who may be primarily infected with Covid-19 “is associated with increased mortality among people over 60, as well as people with comorbid conditions such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, diabetes and cancer.”² Those with disabilities are still dependent on outside help, and as a result, are isolated and unable to survive on their own. Matthew Schaaf, Director of Freedom House, says: “In Ukraine, as in many other countries, the crisis has had a disproportionately negative impact on the situation of the poor and vulnerable groups, exposing the fact that our societies are still not doing enough to protect all people without exception. And that our crisis response policies are often disproportionately harmful to the most vulnerable.”³ Prior to the lockdown, believers had the opportunity to attend church, communicate with each other, help, and visit the homes of people with disabilities. Unfortunately, this stopped with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and human isolation. The church has virtually no communication with people, especially those with disabilities. We can note that lockdown is not only religious but also social and medical. People lost the opportunity to earn money as the number of jobs decreased significantly. The lives of people with disabilities deteriorated in these conditions since it was difficult for them to get a job before the lockdown. The situation then became even more complicated during this time.

The purpose of the article is to outline the living conditions of people with disabilities who are Evangelical Baptists in Ukraine in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic: medical, social, and religious aspects.

To achieve this goal, four **tasks** were analyzed or performed: 1. Review of problematic medical aspects. 2. Characteristics of social restrictions. 3. Quarantine measures for religious organizations. 4. Conducting a survey of people with disabilities who are

covid19.html. [“The Ministry of Social Policy wants to strengthen the protection of people with disabilities in the context of Covid-19.” Ukrinform].

² “Профилактика инфекций и инфекционный контроль в учреждениях длительного ухода в контексте вспышки Covid-19.” March 21, 2020. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331508/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPC_long_term_care-2020.1-rus.pdf. [“Infection prevention and control in long-term care settings in the context of the Covid-19 outbreak.”]

³ Петров, М. “Як захистити права вразливих груп населення під час пандемії Covid-19? Візія Freedom House Україна.” Українська Гельсінська спілка з прав людини., April 30, 2020. <https://helsinki.org.ua/articles/yak-zakhystyty-prava-vrazlyvykh-hrup-naseleння-pidchas-pandemii-covid-19-viziia-freedom-house-ukraina/>. [Petrov, M. “How to protect the rights of vulnerable groups during the Covid-19 pandemic? The vision of Freedom House Ukraine.” Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union.]

Evangelical Baptists in order to determine the level of reaction of the recipients themselves to the situation.

Key Definitions of the Study

Medical lockdown is the restriction of people's actions due to medical indications that can worsen health and affect people's quality of life. Social lockdown is the restriction of people's actions related to social aspects: communication, isolation, loneliness, absence/assistance. Religious lockdown is the restriction of the actions of believers who for a certain period cannot attend religious institutions, worship, help people in need because of the risk to their own health. Individual lockdown is a restriction of movement and communication of people, which affects their both internal and external state: loneliness, isolation from society, deterioration of health, mood, weight change, etc.

The presentation of the main materials of the study will begin with the most pressing issue today--the level of medical care for people with disabilities in Ukraine, including Evangelical Baptists.

Medical Field

A person with a disability during quarantine has been discriminated against, especially in the field of health, because of "lack of available information and environment, and because of the selectivity of medical guidelines and protocols that can exacerbate the discrimination that people face in receiving medical care."⁴ That is, we see a certain prejudice against people with disabilities regarding the quality and value of their lives in society. For example, UN officials provide guidance on sorting (when allocating scarce resources) by criteria that excludes health problems, the high need for outside help in daily life, "vulnerability," the likelihood of "successful treatment," and "life expectancy assumptions" in the case that the patient survives. In addition, health systems are pressuring people with disabilities and their families to refrain from resuscitation.⁵ First, the responsibility for providing assistance lies with the state; no person without exception has the right to assistance if there is a threat to his life. Dainius Puras, a UN expert, said, "People with disabilities, the elderly, minority

⁴ "Covid-19 и права людей с инвалидностью: руководство." UN Human Rights, April 29, 2020. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/COVID-19_and_The_Rights_of_Persons_with_Disabilities_ru.pdf. ["Covid-19 and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: A Guide."].

⁵ Ibid.

communities, internally displaced persons—these and other groups need the help of governments.”⁶

People with disabilities who are in specialized institutions are at particular risk. International organizations note that these facilities have a high rate of infection and mortality: from 42% to 57% of the total number of deaths due to Covid-19 in the studied countries. First, it is associated with comorbidities, as well as the difficulty of distancing between patients and staff, and the active release of the latter. It is in such institutions that human rights are most often violated: violence, isolation, and contempt.

The World Health Organization has developed an interim guide, "Infection Prevention and Infection Control in Long-Term Care Facilities in the Context of the Covid-19 Outbreak," which proposes to monitor staff and patients, restrict visits, socialize, conduct anti-epidemic measures, clean and disinfect premises, adhere to the regime of the change of linen, and the restriction of movement and transportation. Due to the monitoring carried out by the Commissioner of the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine for Human Rights during quarantine, violations of human rights with disabilities were revealed:

- For initial and repeated examinations of the Medical and Social Expert Commission to obtain an opinion on disability.
- Due to the shutdown of public transport, persons with disabilities were not able to undergo vital medical procedures due to the cessation of public transport.
- Timely receipt by insured persons of material support and treatment services in the case of an accident at work and occupational disease, as well as financing of rehabilitation after stroke and heart attack in health facilities.
- Reduced fare on transport.
- Rehabilitation services, in connection with the closure of the relevant institutions, etc.⁷

⁶ “Никаких исключений в условиях COVID-19: ‘Каждый имеет право на помощь, необходимую для спасения жизни’ - отметили эксперты ООН.” UN Human Rights, March 26, 2020. <https://www.ohchr.org/RU/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25746&LangID=R>. [“No exceptions to COVID-19: ‘Everyone has the right to life-saving assistance,’” UN experts said.]

⁷ “Представник Уповноваженого Віктор Іванкевич взяв участь у презентації інформаційної записки щодо впливу пандемії Covid-19 на людей з інвалідністю в Україні.” Уповноважений Верховної Ради України з прав людини, November 12, 2020. <https://www.ombudsman.gov.ua/ua/all-news/pr/%d1%96nformacz%d1%96jno%d1%97-zapiski-shhodo-vplivu-pandem%d1%96%d1%97-covid-19-na-lyudej-z-%d1%96nval%d1%96dn%d1%96styu-v-ukra%d1%97n%d1%96/>. [“Representative of the Commissioner Viktor Ivankevych took part in the presentation of an information note on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on people with disabilities in Ukraine.” Commissioner for Human Rights of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine].

The website of the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine raises issues concerning people with disabilities and their existence during the pandemic. Secretary-General of the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine, Victoria Nazarenko, commented on the situation with a letter received by Viktor Bulka (Adviser to the Head of the Kherson Regional State Administration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) in his address to the head of the Kherson Regional State Administration, Yuriy Gusev. It emphasizes the dryness of the presentation of information. Indeed, the official response is sound and concerns the improvement of the conditions of people with disabilities. But V. Nazarenko asks questions that really worry people with disabilities:

I want to ask: where are people with disabilities, in whose family children with disabilities are brought up? Why are people calling today from small towns and villages of the region for help? They ask, who will I be with - a person with a disability when my mother falls ill? Where will a bedridden person or a person with severe mental or intellectual impairment receive medical services related to Covid-19 coronavirus infection? Specifically, how many people in the region receive a "social taxi" service for hemodialysis? Does the regional budget provide financial assistance to people with disabilities who find themselves in difficult family circumstances? Where can people with disabilities take the free Covid-19 test? What exactly in these conditions the Kherson regional branch of Fund of social protection of disabled people in the field of employment of persons with disabilities did? What measures are taken in boarding schools to prevent an outbreak of infection? Is there a social order in the region?⁸

That is, the authorities do not know about these problems or pretend not to know. This indicates a certain detachment of leaders from reality, from the real state of affairs, and the lack of communication between the government and people with disabilities and the NGOs that represent the interests of this group of people.

Social Sphere

During the pandemic, the issue of communication between people with disabilities in society became extremely acute. They are forced to stay at home where not everyone can visit them, and their needs are not taken into account—which can endanger their lives and health. Accordingly, the government should support people with disabilities through various social services. At present, the world does not provide systematic information on anti-viral measures for people with disabilities in accessible formats and through accessible measures.

⁸ “Люди з інвалідністю і Covid-19. На часі Херсонська область – 2020.” Національна Асамблея людей з інвалідністю України., June 4, 2020. <https://nau.org.ua/lyudy-z-invalidnistyu-i-covid-19-na-chasi-hersonska-oblast-2020/>. [“People with Disabilities and Covid-19. Kherson region is on time - 2020.” National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine].

In addition, some people with disabilities (with psychosocial disorders, autism) cannot stay in isolation for a long time; they constantly need to go outside.

Catalina Devandas noted that very few measures are taken to protect people with disabilities: “People with disabilities believe that they have been forgotten...Those who cannot eat, dress and wash on their own are unable to take measures to contain the virus, such as social distance and self-isolation.”⁹ She stressed the need to be able to work without leaving home, to receive paid leave, and to have a guaranteed income. In addition, she also stressed that “limiting contact with loved ones makes people with disabilities completely vulnerable to abuse and neglect in specialized institutions.”¹⁰ In this context, Catalina Devandas advocates the accessibility of information for people with disabilities: “Public information campaigns and information from public health authorities should be available in sign language and through a variety of means and formats, including all available, digital technologies, subtitles, radio relay services, text messages, adapted texts.”¹¹ Of course, in this case, it is necessary to conduct surveys of people with disabilities about their quality of life, as well as to help ensure their presence at all important events.

The Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Ukraine, prepared as a result of the work of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, reports on the situation of people with disabilities during the pandemic. This section begins with a quote from a woman who works in the field of human rights for people with disabilities: “For people with disabilities, now going to the store is just awful.”¹² Describing the impact of Covid-19 on people with disabilities, the speaker emphasizes that “the response to Covid-19 has impaired access to social services for people with disabilities. Particularly vulnerable were women with disabilities, single mothers of children with disabilities, families with several people with disabilities, and others.”¹³

“The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on People with Disabilities in Ukraine” states: “The crisis caused by Covid-19 has also revealed a significant gap between existing social services in the community and the real needs of people with disabilities. In addition,

⁹ “Covid-19: Кто защищает инвалидов? – заявление эксперта ООН.” UN Human Rights, March 17, 2020. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25725&LangID=R>. [“Covid-19 and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: A Guide.”]

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² “Доповідь щодо ситуації з правами людини в Україні 16 лютого – 31 липня 2020.” UN Human Rights, 2020. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine_UA.pdf. [“Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine from February 16 to July 31, 2020.”]

¹³ ООН Жінки в Україні, *Оперативна гендерна оцінка становища та потреб жінок у контексті ситуації з Covid-19 в Україні* (2020), 59.

quarantine has exacerbated the isolation and alienation of people with disabilities in Ukraine."¹⁴

Emphasis is also placed on the ineffectiveness of distance learning for children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities as personal contact with teachers had to be maintained, and many lacked the necessary technical means for online learning. Of particular concern are persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, as:

the provision of day care services in the implementation of physical and psychosocial rehabilitation programs has been suspended. Also because of their inevitable discharge from psychiatric hospitals without any suggestions for alternative forms of support in communities due to reduced government funding.¹⁵

According to Ukrinform, "The Ministry of Social Policy wants to strengthen the protection of people with disabilities under Covid-19." The words of B. Lebedtsov, Deputy Minister of Social Policy are given:

We are talking about targeted delivery of personal protective equipment and hygiene to such vulnerable groups as people with disabilities, strengthening the protection of their rights in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, preventing the spread of Covid-19 in specialized institutions for people with disabilities, preventing discrimination against this category of people in the workplace, in medical institutions, ensuring the implementation of a full medical examination and access to medical services."¹⁶

Ukrinform has a publication which quotes from a letter from the President of Ukraine, V. Zelensky to D. Shmygal, about strengthening support for people with disabilities to minimize the risks of Covid-19: "They already have a significant level of health loss, and for them, a pandemic means an increased risk to life and even more complications."¹⁷ In the *Ukrainian Week*, in the context of the impact of social isolation on people, those with disabilities are briefly mentioned. "The issue of isolation is extremely important for people with special needs. According to the Sense study, 50% of people with disabilities are

¹⁴ "Доповідь щодо ситуації з правами людини в Україні 16 лютого – 31 липня 2020." UN Human Rights, 2020. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine_UA.pdf. ["Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine from February 16 to July 31, 2020."]

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Мінсоцполітики хоче посилити захист інвалідів в умовах Covid-19." Укрінформ, 2020. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3150217-minsocpolitiki-hoce-posiliti-zahist-invalidiv-v-umovah-covid19.html>. ["The Ministry of Social Policy wants to strengthen the protection of people with disabilities in the context of Covid-19." Ukrinform].

¹⁷ "Президент доручив Шмигалю посилити підтримку людей з інвалідністю." Укрінформ, 2020. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3122710-prezident-doruciv-smigalu-posiliti-pidtrimku-ludej-z-invalidnistu.html>. ["The president instructed Shmygal to increase support for people with disabilities." Ukrinform].

constantly lonely."¹⁸ The website of the “Public Space” provides information on the assistance of the charity organization Caritas Ukraine to people with disabilities in the framework of the project "Response to the emergency situation in some regions of Ukraine associated with the Covid-19 outbreak," whose employees delivered food kits to homes of people with disabilities.¹⁹

There is very little information in the Ukrainian media about Covid-19 and how to survive as a person with a disability in such a situation. The media should fully cover and provide access to such reports, but, unfortunately, we see only statistical information. Journalists only report on the number of patients with Covid-19 while not writing about the state of infectious diseases departments, the need for equipment, and not covering stories of sick people with disabilities. Journalists also do not actually communicate with doctors about this situation. There are no analytical materials in the media that would analyze the situation and guide people in choosing adequate solutions. This problem is prevalent not only in Ukraine but also in the world. The problem of mediating information about Covid-19 is being studied by Australian scientists. For example, the article "Fighting for survival: persons with disabilities' activism for the mediatization of Covid-19 information,"²⁰ by Nhamo Anthony Mhiripiri and Ratidzo Midzi, was the first that investigated how public authorities transmitted Covid-19 messages via television and the suitability of television content from US stations in the UK, Zimbabwe, and New Zealand for the hearing impaired. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine notes that “The government does not collect data on Covid-19 cases disaggregated by disability. The lack of clarity about the extent to which people with disabilities suffer from Covid-19 in Ukraine is an obstacle to developing effective responses to Covid-19, taking into account the needs of people with disabilities.”²¹ They conducted 86 semi-structured interviews with 20 men and 68 women who have disabilities and identified a number of violations: lack of access to treatment, medical services, interruptions in the

¹⁸ Світлана Липовецька. “Вірус відійде. Ізоляція залишиться.” Український тиждень, April 6, 2020. <https://tyzhden.ua/Science/242313>. [Lipovetskaya, Svetlana. “The virus will go away. Isolation will remain.” Ukrainian week].

¹⁹ “Добрі справи не закінчуються. Карітас продовжує допомагати у протидії Covid-19.” Громадський простір, August 9, 2020. <https://www.prostir.ua/?news=dobri-spravy-ne-zakinchuyutsya-karitas-prodovzhuje-dopomahaty-u-protydiji-covid-19>. [“Good deeds do not end there. Caritas continues to help counter Covid-19.” Public space].

²⁰ Nhamo Anthony Mhiripiri and Ratidzo Midzi, “Fighting for Survival: Persons with Disabilities’ Activism for the Mediatisation of COVID-19 Information,” *Media International Australia* 178, no. 1 (November 23, 2020): 151–67, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X20967712>.

²¹ “Вплив пандемії Covid-19 на людей з інвалідністю в Україні: Інформаційна записка.” The United Nations in Ukraine, October 5, 2020. https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/UKR_Briefing_Note_COVID_PwD_0.pdf. [“The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on People with Disabilities in Ukraine: An Information Note.”]

supply of medicines, suspension of scheduled treatment and face-to-face consultations with doctors, and closure of certain hospitals. People with hearing impairments have faced obstacles in obtaining advice via the Internet or telephone, alongside the suspension of public transport, the increasing financial barriers, delays in obtaining essential medicines, accessibility to information on the prevention of Covid-19 was not always made public by available means and in an accessible format, feelings of loneliness and isolation, and only a few were able to obtain mental health services, etc.²²

Religious Sphere

The best situation during the pandemic was regarding people with disabilities in the Protestant community of Ukraine. This is primarily due to the fact, that, according to O. Gordeev (author of the book *Church on the Maidan*), for the faithful of this movement, religious distance is a kind of norm because this community independently chooses places for religious worship. During the Soviet era, private premises served as Protestants' houses of worship, so when the pandemic restricted access to church buildings, apartments, and private homes, Gordeyev argued that it fit well with Covid-19's strategy.²³ But even among the Protestants, not everyone was ready for the new reality. There were believers, including people with disabilities, who believe that quarantine is an exception to the rule, not the norm. To establish the real situation, we decided to conduct a survey in several Evangelical Baptist communities in Kyiv. More than 70 people joined the survey who used test questions to outline the real situation of church members with disabilities.

Evangelical Baptists in the survey said that most communication between members of their community during the coronavirus pandemic underwent negative changes (58%), about 30.4% said that communication did not deteriorate, and 11.6% did not feel anything special. The most vulnerable group of people affected by the pandemic are people with disabilities. Members of the Baptist community try to help each other, and especially people with disabilities. To the question: "Within their community, do Evangelical Baptists communicate and help people with disabilities?" 84.1% of respondents answered that they help this

²² "Вплив пандемії Covid-19 на людей з інвалідністю в Україні: Інформаційна записка." The United Nations in Ukraine, October 5, 2020. https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/UKR_Briefing_Note_COVID_PwD_0.pdf. ["The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on People with Disabilities in Ukraine: An Information Note."]

²³ Л. Галичина, "Берегите себя, чтобы Богу было легче беречь вас'. Какой будет религия после карантина." Hromadske, August 3, 2020. <https://hromadske.ua/ru/posts/beregite-sebya-chtoby-bogu-bylo-legche-berech-vas-kakoj-budet-religiya-posle-karantina>. [Galichina, L. "Take care of yourself, so that it would be easier for God to take care of you.' What will be the religion after the quarantine?"]

category of people and constantly communicate with them, 5.3% did not support communication in any way and did not help people with disabilities, and 11.6% of respondents partially supported them.

We can see a tendency that Evangelical Baptists did not lack information about the coronavirus pandemic itself, about the course of the disease in humans, about the main symptoms, but many note a number of shortcomings related to the Ukrainian media and their coverage of the pandemic:

- The advantage of negative information over positive: emphasis on death.
- Lack of information about recovery, communication with these people in order to find out the consequences, quality of life, etc.
- Many lacked a journalistic background on the coronavirus, only a cursory overview of the information
- Withholding true, reliable information.

Good awareness of people with information about Covid-19 is explained by the fact that most of them get information from social networks (85.5%), television still provides it in doses (13%), from newspapers (1.5%), from the radio in fact do not take the information. To the question "Does the mass media publish a sufficient number of materials concerning people with disabilities of Evangelical Baptists?" 40.6% answered that they lack information about it, 17.4% of respondents have enough information about them in the mass media, and 42% did not pay attention to it at all.

In general, people with disabilities and Evangelical Baptists suffered significantly during the lockdown not only in the field of communication but also in the field of employment. Thus, 49.3% of respondents were partially deprived of earnings, 17.4% did not suffer in any way, 11.6% lost their jobs, and 21.7% did not pay attention to it.

Despite the promises of the authorities (B. Lebedtsov, Deputy Minister of Social Policy) to deliver personal protective equipment and hygiene to vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, majority of the respondents did not hear about it (56.5%), 23.2% of respondents knew this information, and 20.3% said that the state does not provide them. Evangelical Baptists with disabilities do not feel particularly protected while at work and in health care facilities. In medical institutions, they should be provided with assistance in the first place with 49.3% saying that, although rarely, they are given enough attention by medical workers, 31.9% are satisfied with services, and 18.8% did not receive sufficient attention and assistance while turning to doctors. Thus, what is postulated by official documents is somewhat different from the situation in practice.

We can see how members of Evangelical Baptist communities care for their wards or people with disabilities. The rehabilitation complex in Lutsk, which serves people with disabilities at the Fimiam Church, presents a model for working with people who have disabilities for interested people from other regions of Ukraine. From the interview with Olena Mykolayivna Nechyporuk, the press secretary of the church in Lutsk, it becomes known that the activity of this complex covers three main areas:

- Physical rehabilitation
- Accommodation with support
- A training center for physical therapists.

In addition, this complex promotes active communication between people with disabilities. Prior to the pandemic, it all took place offline, setting up camps for people with disabilities which were divided into camps for adults and camps for families. A club meeting for people with disabilities called "New Opportunities" is organized once a month, where one can look for new acquaintances and opportunities by joint efforts and develop them in oneself. In addition, there are the studios "Creativity" and "Joy," where there is communication between children, adolescents, and youth, providing social and spiritual support to participants once a month. The organizers monitor the needs of children with disabilities. Here they help financially—they conduct online training with courses that last three to four months and issue diplomas. Training takes place at the church, and high-quality software is installed on computers. During the pandemic, a team of ministers continues to give gifts for the holidays, while regularly visiting and communicating with people with disabilities. To provide information for people with disabilities, Evangelical Baptists have created the *Svitoglyad* information site where you can learn about news related to their denomination, articles, interviews, videos, Bible commandments, and more.

Conclusion

As we can see, the coronavirus pandemic has only exacerbated the already vulnerable situation of people with disabilities. In fact, what was hidden or veiled in relation to people with disabilities by society has fully manifested: everyone thinks only of themselves, cares only about their own safety as it was in ancient times: a person with a disability was forgotten, and others were not interested in their condition during major pandemics and wars because they believed that their lives were not valuable and important to society. Therefore, in these circumstances, it is necessary to monitor the living conditions of people with disabilities as the most vulnerable category of the population, which are currently ignored because healthy

people suffer. As we can see, the social and medical spheres have proved to be the most volatile in a pandemic to help vulnerable populations. Official statements or postulates have not been fully implemented, do not answer all questions, and do not always coincide with reality. Responses to Covid-19 have impaired access to services for people with disabilities. The religious sphere proved to be the most stable that we understood when we studied the activities of the Evangelical Baptist community. They are characterized by consolidated assistance to socially vulnerable believers or people with disabilities, which manifested themselves in the social, medical, and religious spheres. Interviews and questionnaires revealed that it was only through the organized work of the faithful that timely assistance to people with disabilities was provided. In addition, it was found that the Ukrainian media has a lot of statistical information about Covid-19, but in fact, there are no reports on the state of infectious diseases departments on the necessary equipment. The stories of sick people with disabilities are not covered, and journalists do not actually communicate with doctors about this situation. There are no analytical materials that would analyze the situation and guide the selection of adequate solutions.