



Ferguson Report



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“Go ye unto all the world”

May 2010

Final Month in Ukraine

Since it begins to get daylight around 3:30 in the morning in Ukraine, I often awake thinking it’s about time to get up. Who knows? With only four days until our flight home maybe it’s just a herald announcing that jet lag is on its way. So, it sounds like a good idea to get started on this report and possibly even print this particular issue for mailing after we return.

Friday, May 28th was a happy day for students and particularly the graduates as it was the last day of school and graduation day. But it was also sad as we said good-bye to the students who were going back home for the summer. Since we’ve been away from our own family, the students have become our “kids” in Ukraine. I’ve really enjoyed teaching them at BVBIU, and Mary and I enjoyed the frequent times of fellowship with them.

In last month’s issue I promised to give an overview of the “fruit” from our three-month stay in Ukraine. Before I give the “stats” of the trip, I want to repeat a principle in personal evangelism I taught in our classes: **fruit occurs on God’s timetable only after we have done the cultivating, sowing and watering.** I have frequently said to supporters that if you want “instant” results to make you feel good about dollars spent in mission work, you are supporting the wrong work. Gospel evangelism that is lasting must look at long-term results, not short-term gratification. Mission work requires much work, patience, is frequently disheartening, and can be emotionally draining. I would encourage you to re-read an article entitled “Senseless Sowing” in the June 2007 issue of the *Ferguson Report* (Vol 4 No 6) to be reminded of this principle. Nevertheless, here are some facts:

- ◆ Four courses taught at BVBIU (Personal Evangelism, Job, Jeremiah & Lamentations, and James)
- ◆ A number of personal Bible studies conducted
- ◆ Congregational, ladies, youth, and children’s classes taught
- ◆ Preached at seven different congregations (Central, Ilovaisk, Mayskya, Krasnoarmeysk, Lake Street, Slaviansk, Krasny Luch)
- ◆ Three baptisms (Central)
- ◆ One restoration (Central)

- ◆ Many new contacts made and relationships developed
- ◆ Long-distance fund-raising attempted with some success

The “Youth Day” scheduled on May 15th went well with a slightly lower attendance due to inclement weather. I believe I counted 33 people in attendance. I spoke on the subject “The Day a Church Member Died” and Andrew Zhuravlev spoke on the subject of what a person must do to prepare for the judgment day.



BVBIU graduation class & staff: (front left to right) Oleg Puzyrevich, Vitaly Smirnov, Vasily Bolhovitinov; (back left to right) Dennis Sopolnic, Steve Housley, Natasha Parakhina, Mary Ferguson, Howell Ferguson, and Terry Harmon.

After the songs, lessons, and prayers, there was plenty of food for everyone and some games and activities. Besides our own youth, there were visitors from Kramatorsk and Donetsk. These planned activities are designed to encourage the young people in wholesome activities and to help keep them sober-minded about the reality of their responsibility before the Lord God.

Friday, May 28th was a day of many graduations throughout the city of Gorlovka as well as for the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Ukraine. Three men graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Bible: **Vasily Bolhovitinov, Oleg Puzyrevich, and Vitaly Smirnov.** Each of these men has received a thorough, sound and balanced education in Bible and Bible-related subjects from a variety of Ukrainian and American instructors all of whom have post-graduate degrees. Our prayers go out to them as they begin a new phase of their lives

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in the service of our Lord. A historical note that makes this year's event unique is this is the first graduation class in the present facility since BVBID took official ownership of the property in fulfillment of the June 1, 2009 deadline. Those of you who had a part in making this happen financially and with your prayers understand how truly significant this is.

It's impossible to list all of the day-to-day activities, interactions, and impressions during our stay in Ukraine. As I mentioned earlier, I decided to stop writing the "daily devos" but will resume them after we return home. Our time here has given me plenty of fodder to write about. Actually, I wrote a few articles that are being allowed to incubate before putting them in print. A lot of it is from my impressions and reflections while living here—hopefully without being too judgmental.

Also during our stay here, I've been able to fine-tune materials from my study in personal evangelism and different classes I taught on that subject. The longer I study the subject especially from the background of the gospel accounts of Jesus, the more I am convinced of the importance of relationships. Whether in the foreign mission field or in local work right in our own back yards, building and maintaining long-lasting relationships is of utmost importance in soul-saving. The living message of the Bible must be lived with patience, sincerity and in the pattern of Jesus Christ Himself.



Mary with Vika—one of the girls from “Sasha’s Home.”

Next month's report will resume consideration of the Chimala Bible College in Tanzania. I know it's been three months since I discussed CBC, but I'm sure after being debriefed from Garry Hill who has been in East Africa for over three months, I'll have plenty to say about that work. Lord willing, this fall Mary and I will also be heading to Chimala to spend about three months where I'll be teaching at CBC and working with other aspects of the Chimala Mission and surrounding churches. We continue to thank God and you for the opportunities to serve in His work. Howell