



# UKRAINE MISSIONS NEWS

John L. Kachelman, Jr.

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## IN THIS ISSUE

- “Casting bread upon the waters”
- A brief summary of the fall trip to Ukraine
- Hannah’s greeting to you
- Natalia Sekerina reports on work with the orphanage
- Ivan Skoleba writes of successes



Arriving at the Ivano-Frankivsk airport  
Ivan Skoleba, John Kachelman, and  
Gary Jerkins

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## TERRIFIC TRAVELS—AMAZING NEWS!

The month of October was consumed with travel and activities in Ukraine. The trip took me to a number of places where I met with our brethren, inspected the distribution of the benevolence shipments that are being distributed, and met with a number of individuals regarding our efforts in that nation. The trip was successful in every way and the weather was so nice that it enhanced the beautiful autumn throughout Ukraine. Daily reports on the trip were sent back and are currently posted on my website. There are also pictures. Those that helped to finance the trip will soon receive the DVD report that will have the pictures as well as short video messages from those in Ukraine.

—John L. Kachelman, Jr.

## “Casting bread upon waters”

I have often been reminded of this admonition from Inspiration as we have been endeavoring to introduce the Lord’s church in western Ukraine.

The environment in the west is totally unlike that which we find in the east. This great difference is seen in critical areas: language; culture; religion; and the political situation. In fact, almost everything is different in the west than what we have in the east. The religious environment is very challenging as we work in the west. When the Iron Curtain fell and freedom to practice religious convictions became possible, those in the east eagerly welcomed such because they had been under the atheistic communistic ban on religion for seventy years. When we first entered into the east we were swarmed by those who had been deprived of religion and forcibly prevented from freedom of worship, Bible possession, and open Bible study. Those involved in those first years after the fall of the Iron Curtain will remember the incredible response.

The culture in west Ukraine is not as open and eager for religion as the east because under the communists western Ukraine basically carried on religious practices and teachings. The west was historically in a resistance movement all during the Soviet occupation and oppression. In fact, there are places in the west where the Soviets dared not go because the resistance was so strong.

During the communist occupation the west still practiced a freedom of religion and the occupation only served to engrain the prevailing religion deeper into the community’s culture and such became a factor that was parallel to the other nationalistic elements of pride that were heralded as separating them from the Soviet occupation.

The consequence of this has resulted in an impregnable barrier guarding against any religious teaching other than the Greek Catholic and some elements of the Ukrainian Orthodox. In the confines of each village you will find a Greek Catholic Church that is woven into the fabric of all the village life. The Greek Catholic Church is prominently involved in any village ceremony and is tacitly the unspoken authority that gives approval for even the least activity in the village. This basically amounts to an unchallenged and absolute control.

The practical consequence of this is that the village Church authorities control every thought and action of the village. Our greatest challenge is to break through this control and get the people to think for themselves and to study and accept the Word



John Durham arrives in Ivano-Frankivsk

**From Kramatorsk, Ukraine:**  
*"In June we received another container with humanitarian aid. Like always all medicine were sent to hospitals and all clothing plus some other items like toys, soap, etc. were distributed by the church. This work takes a lot of time and energy, but it worth the efforts. Especially when you go to the hospital to visit the members of the church who are sick and see them laying on the new beds which were delivered from USA. Thank you!"*



A memorial in western Ukraine to those killed fighting the Soviet occupation 1944-1951

of God as their religious authority instead of accepting the Priest's orders and the traditions that have been set for centuries.

In addition to the cultural challenges just detailed, factor in one other significant point. There is an unbelievable suspicion toward any outsider that hinders even a greeting on the village paths. Strangers are treated cordially but there is a distance that is maintained and separates those who are from the village and those who are outsiders. This reticence is magnified significantly when the new faces are Americans because many have never seen an American in the flesh.

But the suspicion is not limited to foreigners. Those from east Ukraine are viewed with an equal suspicion. After all, the east was controlled by the Soviets and has been aligned with the Soviets. The east views the west as traitors. The west views the east as traitors.

All of these factors present a great challenge to the preaching of the gospel. Many have tried and have given up.

Our question has been, "How do we break through these barriers and become known as sincere and genuine so we can introduce the gospel?" Ivan and I have talked at length about these challenges and how to address them and our conclusion has been that such will take time (a minimum of at least five years) and we must utilize means that will reflect genuine concern so trust will be developed and the soil will be prepared for the sowing of the seed of God.

Our efforts have thus focused on benevolent actions that reflect the love of the Lord and the sincerity of our hearts. The shipment of the containers of benevolent items, the work of Dr. Ron Swang in setting up dental clinics, and the cooperation of Dr. Gary Jerkins with the eye clinic in Ivano-Frankivsk have all combined to help our efforts.

The tragic flooding in July was catastrophic to west Ukraine but from that disaster we have been able to utilize Ivan's presence and work in ways that have resulted in amazing advances for our efforts.

There are times when it seems we are "spinning our wheels." There are events and activities that at times seem to be a total waste of our time and energy. There are definitely some mistakes that have been made, or at least at this point appear to be mistakes. At times the efforts do appear to be as useless as "casting bread upon the water" as it dissolves and disappears.

That brings my thoughts back to Ecclesiastes 10:20. Within the biblical text there ought to be no division between Ecclesiastes 10:20 and Ecclesiastes 11:1. A contrast to the self-indulgence described in Ecclesiastes 10:16-19 is presented and urges a devotion to the opposite virtue, a readiness to give to others. The use of the word "bread" in Ecclesiastes 10:19 and Ecclesiastes 11:1 points the contrast. The exhortation from Inspiration is that we must be devoted to giving even when all seems hopeless because eventually a harvest will result. That is the guarantee by God—do not become discouraged when it seems nothing is happening; do not give up and quit! Adding emphasis to this point is the later exhortation from Inspiration that "in due season we will reap if we faint not." The phrase to remember is "in due season."

Unfortunately many wish to fast-forward to the "due season." Many become disillusioned with the work if there are no instant successes. Others often seek to present the harvest before its time by exaggerating or manipulating factors. I am reminded of a dear friend who tried to reason with others seeking "instant success stories" by appealing to the biblical truth that it is our duty to plant and water but it is God's prerogative "to give the increase." My friend's query is still valid, "How do you know that God is ready to give the increase right now? Who are you to tell God what to do?" As wonderful as the harvest is, it is our basic duty to plant and water—or to cast bread upon the waters. Then in "due season we will reap if we faint not."

Be assured that the Lord's work is progressing in western Ukraine. Perhaps some have allowed their involvement to cease because things did not work on their timetable and the "results" they thought should be harvested were missing. Thus they dismissed the work as non-productive. However discouraging it is when mortal



Students in the village of Glebokea send America greetings

From Ghana:  
"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your great service to humanity. May God continue to bless you as you reach out to bless His children all over the world."



Proudly showing his first Bible!



Chernivtsi flood relief discussed with brethren and the government's official.

arrogance dismisses devoted duty, it is comforting to know that God is in control and He will bless the sowing and watering and bring forth a harvest in "due season." Let us faint not in the work set before us!

## AN OVERVIEW OF OCTOBER'S MISSION TRIP

The trip covered a large area of Ukraine. I travelled from the east to the west to the southeast. In the course of these travels I visited a number of our brethren and spoke and taught at a number of congregations. While I was there my visit overlapped with several other brethren who were there doing the Lord's work.

Daily reports were sent back that highlighted the major actions of each day. These reports are available on my website and you can log on and read these reports online or print them off. Please pass these reports around to others who are interested in the Lord's work in Ukraine.

Besides the objectives of meeting with brethren and teaching and encouraging them, I had planned to visit and inspect the distribution of the benevolence containers that we have shipped. I visited Kramatorsk, Konstantinovka, many places in Ivano-Frankivsk and its Oblast, and the city of Chernivtsi.

The inspection tours provide me an opportunity to meet with officials and to introduce them to members of the Lord's Church that are working to help the community. These meetings offer us the mechanism by which the Lord's Church will be given prominence and respect in the community. This recognition and respect will then provide the means for further involvement and a receptivity from the community for the Lord's Church and a willingness for them to listen to the simple Truth of the Bible.

On each visit to the west I am seeing a greater willingness and a relaxing of the barriers that have been formed by suspicious minds.

During this trip I enjoyed visiting with Valdimir and Oksana in Kramatorsk. In Kramatorsk I met with the Consignee who receives our containers and visited a warehouse that had received a shipment from Colorado and had just been granted Customs clearance. Vlad and Oksana continue to do a great job for the Lord. It is always a great joy and encouragement to be able to visit with them. Through the distribution of the benevolent containers the church in Kramatorsk has received a tremendous amount of good publicity has led to a respectful standing in the entire city. Enclosed with this report are three newspaper articles that were published in Kramatorsk.

The visit with Ivan and Sveta Skoleba was great. You will remember that when the disastrous floods struck west Ukraine the United States government asked if they could use our contacts in western Ukraine to distribute critically needed flood relief items. Through this contact Ivan was able to distributed six large cargo containers of flood relief items. This distribution placed him in contact with some of the highest ranking government officials in western Ukraine. Ivan told me that because of this work he no longer has to go into a government office and explain who he is and what kind of church he is with—all knew about the effort! I would hope that this recognition would last indefinitely but I suspect that it will fade and we will have opportunity to remind them once again.

Ivan's time has been consumed with the receiving and distribution of the flood relief items. Prior to my visit there was an inspection team from the United States Department of State that had been sent to report on the distribution. When they made the checks I was told they were very pleased and impressed with the way Ivan had managed the project. They admitted that sending so many containers at once probably overwhelmed Ivan but they commended his work. At a later series of meetings I attended in Washington, DC I was told again about the commendable way that Ivan worked in this project.

In addition to the flood relief items that Ivan received from the United States government, our brethren sent money that Ivan used to provide direct assistance to a number of people in the flooded villages. This supplemental money helped Ivan to give a greater emphasis to how the Lord's Church was involved in seeking to help



Worshipping assembly in Zuhres, Ukraine. We established this congregation ten years ago!

**From Donetsk, Ukraine:** *Dear John Kachelman! Donetsk City Public Organization "Disabled Miners Union" would like to give you their heartfelt thanks for the benevolent help that you have provided for this organization. Thanks to you and all Christians from churches of Christ for your concern about us, for your big and kind hearts. We hope to continue our fruitful co-work. We wish good health to all of you. We wish you success in everything you do. On behalf of the Council of the DCPO "Disabled Miners Union." With respect  
Chairman Baranchuk A.B*



Meeting with the Consignee in Kramatorsk, Ukraine. Vladimir Pazyi (far right) is the evangelist who helps us accomplish great success.

those harmed by the floods.

This trip allowed me the opportunity to provide the funds for part of the mattresses that I sought to buy for the hospital in Krivyy Rog. I was also able to provide funds for the treatment of critical medical needs that some had who otherwise would have not been able to receive the treatments. I also was able to leave some funds for the orphans and widows so they will have some help in purchasing food and needed items during the winter months.

Overall the trip was a great success that transversed the nation and accomplished its objectives. I was able to meet new people and to introduce the Lord's Church and its mission to some that had never heard it before. The trip continued to solidify the recognition that the church has thus far attained. The combination of the medical mission efforts of Dr. Swang and Dr. Jerkins dovetailed perfectly in our objectives. After years of seeming fruitless efforts I am beginning to see some cracks appearing in the opposition—the bread cast upon the waters is beginning to return!

## HANNAH'S GREETINGS TO YOU...

Many of you have previously met our dear sister Hannah Seniv. She gave me this letter and asked that I share it with her brothers and sisters in America.

*Praise God my dear brothers and sister in our Lord Jesus Christ!*

*Great distance separates us but God and His great love unites us.*

*My dear family in the Lord, I have never seen you nor communicated with you face-to-face but I love all of you with the love given to me by our Lord.*

*You do not know me and have not see me either but God our Lord through the Holy Spirit's inspired Word has united us and now I write this letter to you.*

*My family is praying for all of you and we are thankful to you for all of your prayers that we sense in our family.*

*We are also thankful to you for your financial help for my husband's Dmitry's treatment that we receive from brother John. He has been diagnosed with a dreadful disease (cirrhosis of the liver). But the Lord does not have incurable diseases. And I received the proof of this when my husband was about to have a coma and the doctors told me to get ready for the worst outcome. Then I called out to God for help and asked him to save my husband. The Lord heard my prayer and saved my husband. It has been eleven months and my husband has not only been alive in these months but he has also surprised all doctors as he has been recovering. Now he praises the Lord and thanks him for saving him. You have your part in this recovery through your prayers that you sent to the Lord and the Lord heard them and responded to them because our heavenly Father hears the prayers of His children.*

*I am very thankful to all of you for your prayers. I send hugs and kisses to all of you. And I love all of you with the great love of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Pray for my children Igor and Olesya who walk in this sinful world. Just like any mother or father wants their children to give their lives to God, so do we want our children to be saved and be immersed for the salvation of their souls. I believe the time will come when the Word will touch their hearts and they will give their lives to serving the Lord. There is nothing impossible for God.*

*May the Lord our God bless all of you my dear brothers and sisters. May God's hand protect you and your families because there is not a greater joy than to be with the Lord, serve Him and be called God's children. I believe the time will come and we will meet each other in heaven where our Creator is who is our heavenly Father who loves us and who is waiting for us in the place where there will be no tears, no sorrow, no ill-bodies but where there will always be joy and singing.*

*See you in eternal heaven of our Father.*

*With Christian greetings and God's love the Seniv Family*

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## NATASHA'S REPORT ON THE ORPHAN'S WORK...



Speaking at the Stary Lisets village day. A large crowd listened with interest.



Greetings, dear Brothers and Sisters, dear John and Kathy!

I'd like to tell you how I've lived these last two months – September and October.

I went to Karlovka orphanage every Saturday in September and taught classes on New Testament. I took fifty New Testaments for teenagers there. They are very helpful as I teach classes, talk about Jesus, discuss questions that being asked by children. And there are a lot of questions. There are about thirty children at the Center now. There are many new kids. They are more aggressive and it's more difficult to keep discipline in class. But God helps with it, we sing a lot and pray.

I was sick all October and even spent two-weeks in hospital with droppers. Nevertheless, I managed to go to Karlovka and teach classes twice. I have chronic health problems and very often I have acute conditions in fall. I thankful to God for putting me back on my feet every time. I'm very thankful to you, dear brethren, for your gracious hearts, for your sacrificial attitude, for your help to me and children in Karlovka.

In October together with brethren from other congregations collected money and bought a deep freezer to replace the one that had burnt. Valentine Shinkarenko, preacher at Tekstilshchik, sent a picture.

I thank God and you once again for your spiritual and financial help. May the Lord bless richly all of you, your families and your congregations.

In Christian love, Natalia Sekerina

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## IVAN'S REPORT ON THE SUCCESSES...



Assemblies of the congregation meeting at the Carpathian Hotel

Dear Brother John, dear brethren!

Our life here has been very busy and tense. Church life is about the same. At worship services we study Luke and in Wednesday class—questions concerning family life through the Bible. Several times young people have come to our classes, up to 15 people. They would be glad to meet young people from America for fellowship and studying English. We meet with 2 families regularly that attend services for fellowship and ask many questions concerning the Bible.

As for news of the church: Thanks to your help, John, Dmitry had a gall duct surgery to break a gall-stone last week. He feels fine now and was in the assembly today. Vitalick and Svetlana attend services as well. They like to study the Bible. They have a 2-year old daughter. They're especially interested to know what Bible says about family, upbringing of children, relations with parents. As any young family, they have many questions and problems. Thank God, they now try to find answers in the Bible as to their private life. At times we have individual studies with them—I study with Vitalik and Sveta studies with his wife. Another family is Ivan and Nadya. They have a 12-month daughter. They are also thankful to Kathy for clothes for their daughter.

These last 2.5 months have been spent receiving, distributing and reporting on the six flood relief containers. That is why our current report looks brief. Thanks to humanitarian aid we have opportunity to get to know personally the administration and government of the city and region. We have been twice on TV talking about our work. People have gotten to know us better and especially they were touched to know that we had fully equipped 20 ambulances in Ivano-Frankivsk. It is also a very significant advertisement of the church in Ivano-Frankivsk.

Dear brethren, I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to you for your prayers, for your help to the people of Ukraine. And big thanks to you for helping my family. Sveta is very thankful for your prayers about her mother. Please, continue praying as she needs such support. Please, pray about Ruslan as well. He's taking a very good care of his grandmother even though it's not easy.

In sincere Christian love, Ivan, Sveta and Anya



### From Krasniy Shahar, Ukraine:

*Like always we brought some clothing and Oksana's grandmother distributes it among her neighbors. We always mention that this help is from Church of Christ. Maybe one day they will come and ask us: "What I have to do to be saved?"*

## To Supporters of Ukraine Missions: Financial Data—October 2008

It is amazing to realize that the year 2008 is almost gone! Since returning from the trip to Ukraine I have been running like a crazy-man. Immediately after returning I had to go to Nashville, TN and then to Washington, DC. I am currently working on reports from these trips for the November newsletter.

With the end of the year many are evaluating their mission budgets and formulating the mission budget for 2009. I understand that the current economic downturn has adversely impacted many mission budgets. I hope that my reports have demonstrated that your mission dollars are being utilized for the Lord's work in the most effective ways. The expenses this year have significantly risen but the Lord seemed to provide what was needed. Our brethren in Ukraine have struggled not only with the increased costs of transportation but their utilities have risen 40% and their inflation rate was 55% earlier this year. Compounding their situation was the devalued USA dollar.

I am currently working on a Year-To-Date report covering the highlights, income and expenses for my efforts in 2008. I will be sending this out within the next few days. This offers a one-page summary of the critical points of 2008 through November.

As the new year is being planned I ask that you look at the successes and accomplishments that we have made for the Lord's Cause thus far in 2008. I would like to ask you to continue your support and if at all possible help me locate new sources of support. Much more could be done but we are limited, and concern forces us to put energy and attention into other areas because of the financial crunch. I still believe our efforts help more brethren in practical ways to spread the gospel than many other works. YOU have a significant part in this!

### **SUPPORT RECEIVED...OCTOBER 2008 \$1,050.00**

During the month of October I received financial support for my work and the various projects being done by the Lord's Church from these individuals and congregations:

- Pleasant View church of Christ
- West Huntsville church of Christ
- Rivergate church of Christ
- James Rickard
- North Lexington church of Christ
- Tim & Debbie Meek
- Melvin and Carolyn Brown

### **EXPENSES RELATED TO MISSION ACTIONS...October 2008 \$2,150.00**

During October I had total expenses of \$2,150.00 (some other usual expenses were paid out of the funds contributed for my trip's expenses). These expenses included expenses helping with preacher support and expenses in Ukraine (\$775.00); work with orphans (\$275.00); salaries in the USA and Ukraine (\$1,100.00).

It is your support  
that allows me to  
spend time,  
energies, and  
expense in these  
activities.

*"Greetings, my dear  
Brothers and Sisters in the  
Lord Jesus Christ!*

*I'd love to greet you with the  
words of our Lord, "Peace to  
you and to your household!"  
John is with us now and I'm  
very glad that he's come to  
preach and teach the Word of  
God to us. Work in the  
vineyard of the Lord is great  
and difficult but at the same  
time it's also pleasant and  
rewarding."*

*Greetings, my dear Brother and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ!*

*I'd love to greet you with the words of our Lord, "Peace to you and to your household!"  
John is with us now and I'm very glad that he's come to preach and teach the Word of  
God to us. Work in the vineyard of the Lord is great and difficult but at the same time  
it's also pleasant and rewarding. But John also had another no less important task—  
humanitarian aid for those who suffered from the flood. He's done a lot within this  
short period of time. And I have seen nothing but smile on his face. God has blessed his  
work; has given him strength and energy. His eyes sparkle like those of a young boy and  
I can hardly recognize my brother when he's around. But at the same time I rejoice for  
him and his work that gives him such joy as he helps other people. Hannah*