

Kremenchuk, Ukraine Newsletter

Doug Berry, Missionary Volume No. 3

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“To all the saints in Christ Jesus...

...across the United States and beyond, grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel with us in Kremenchuk from the first day until now,” (adapted from Philippians 1:1-5). I find great joy in writing to you and sharing with you the work here in Kremenchuk!

A Year of Growing Up

I knew that this year would be different in many ways because of the new Christians that came to Christ here this last year. It is not enough for me to see them just ride along in their daily lives. I have tried to disciple them into greater growth and maturity in Christ. Of course, because of the different personalities, I have had varied success in this process. Of the 17 new Christians, 14 have remained strong, faithful, and growing. Two have let the world have them, Tanya and her father, Vladimir. Please pray for them. Another one, Artem, comes sometimes, but it is obvious that he has other things that are more important to him. That leaves us 14 or 82% who have continued to strive to grow in the Lord. Most of these 14 new Christians are very excited to be growing in Jesus! We will have 7 of our “Seniors” graduate this year, 4 of whom are Christians. Four of these for sure will go to universities in other cities. Two of the girls aren’t Christians, and I have strong hopes that they will be Christians before the summer is over.

Two of our young Christian sisters, Zhenya and Ksusha, are now taking the leading role of teaching a younger children’s class at a local orphanage. 4 other Christian girls are also helping with this class. Their class often has as many as 40 kids in it. Four of our girls go out there every Sunday afternoon and teach this class for an hour or so. I am very proud of our young sisters in this work!

What about Evangelism?

Evangelism is an everyday concern and effort of mine. We, the new Christians, the Churches and I, live and breathe to bring the Good News to the lost. We have to have an unwavering effort to continue to work through the struggles of reaching a society that really wants very little or nothing to do with true Biblical Christianity. We are looking all the time to find the hearts that God is preparing for us to reach and teach. One of our girls recently mentioned that we didn’t have very many new people with us this year. I had to stop

and think. Of those that come to our classes at my house, we have 8 new people with us this year and 6 regulars that are not yet Christians but have been active with us for at least 2 years. I also have studies with some adults and parents going on, as well. One of my biggest hopes is our 6th and 7th graders this year at School #11. These two classes have faithfully been with me now for 2 years, and I think that several of them will go with us to our Bible Camp this year. We have to start building again from our younger classes as we will have 7 seniors graduate.

As I mentioned in my last newsletter, our AIM team of 4 young men will be joining us for at least a year on May 10th! By early September, we hope to start teaching more classes in School #9 (we have 1 now), and we also hope to start new classes in at least 1 other school, School #5, where my Russian teacher teaches and has a lot of influence.

Of course I have my fellow native preachers, fully or partially supported by you and the West Fayetteville Church of Christ, working and evangelizing in other cities and places as well. Sasha is working in Komsomolsk with a new Church there. Valeria is working with the Central Church of Christ (where I attend) in Kremenchuk and in a village church, as well. Gregory is working in Vlasicof and in the boys’ prison. Their work is continuing to be productive and fruitful. I am proud to be working with these fine Christian workers, and I know you can be proud of them, too!



Church in Komsomolsk, March 19, 2005

The 2 ladies on the left are not Christians. Sasha, in the back is the preacher. Yulya and Nastya, right, came with me. The church has met in a local school chemistry room the last 2 months for about \$11 a month rent.



Student Spotlight – Yulya

Yulya started attending our classes in November of 2003. Yulya is 16 and will be 17 on Dec. 14th, is in the 11th form, and will graduate this year. She became a Christian when she was baptized into Christ on June 3rd of 2004. She has been a faithful, loving, and strong child of God ever since. She is active in all our classes, in church, and in helping our outreach to Komsomolsk. She also helps with the orphan work on Sunday afternoons. She lives alone with her mother, but has an older brother living in Kremenchuk. She is one of the reasons that the work here is going so well! Praise God for bringing Yulya to us!

An Opportunity to Serve

Many of you have asked how you can help the poor and needy that lives in Kremenchuk. This last Sunday, one of the traveling missionaries who do good work in Kremenchuk, came to visit us. Buddy Baker and others are working very hard to get quality used clothing, medical supplies, and other things to the poor and needy here. They have acquired a U.S. government grant that will allow them to ship 15 shipping containers to Ukraine a year! If this continues to go forward as we all hope, it means that we could tremendously assist the boys' prison, the schools, hospitals, orphanages, and many other areas of need here. I will have only a marginal part in this, but the Central Church of Christ, where I worship, will be the main accepting and distributing point for this work. Valeria, one of my fellow workers, has been asked to spearhead this effort on this side of the ocean. I know he will do a tremendous job of it. I am going to give you Buddy's stateside address, phone numbers and email so that you can be in contact with him to ship things to his address to ship to Ukraine. ***If you are going to be included in the first shipment, you need to send things in the next 2 weeks!*** This has been a proven way for benevolence to work and God will bless it!

World Missions

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Struggles

I wouldn't be honest with you, if I didn't share some struggles with you and ask for your prayers. First, my mother passed away on March 9, after a short illness. She was 91 years old and was ready to go home to our Father in Heaven. I am now doing OK. We have had 3 weeks of no school this last 2 months because of schools annually closing for much illness and for this last week of spring break. This makes it very difficult to keep our schedule and classes at the schools. It seems like February and March have proved to be our hardest months in the past, and so we have seen it again, but God constantly shows us that He is in control and blesses us.

Blessings

I continue to be greatly blessed in many ways! Also on March 9th, my daughter Janessa gave birth to her first child, Gavin Edward Paul. Both mother and son are healthy and well! Another blessing is that we were able to have larger and better attended classes at my home while the schools were shut down because the kids were less busy. On March 16th, I bought a new car, a Daewoo Sens, thanks to the assistance of many of you. It looks a lot like a Chevy Cavalier. In a couple of weeks, I have already put on over 700 kilometers on it, and it runs real nice!

Prayer Requests

1. For God to continue to open hearts to Christ's message.
2. For us (Christians here) to be bold to walk through the open doors that God gives us.
3. For our classes at all levels to be well-attended.
4. For the faithfulness of our new Christians and that they would be encouraged and strengthened every day.
5. For Tanya and Vladimir who are not being faithful and that they will come back to Christ and to us.
6. For my children and family and for their health and well-being while I am away from them.
7. For Gregory in his work in the village and in the boys' prison and for Valeria in his work in the Church as well.
8. For Sasha as he preaches in the new Church of Christ in Komsomolsk and for the young church there.
9. For the AIM team coming in May to live and work here and our other students coming to work this summer.
11. For me to be the strong, faithful, loving leader, teacher, brother, and friend that I always need to be.
12. For us to trust God to break down the barriers in people's lives, so they will be open to the truth of the Gospel and will, at least, listen to the Word of God.
13. Thanks and praise God for His great work!

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