

UKRAINE MISSIONS NEWS

John L. Kachelman, Jr.

March 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

 Reports from our brethren in: Zaporozhye, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Stary Lysets, Skvyra and Kryvy Rig



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CONTACT INFORMATION

John L. Kachelman, Jr. Ukraine Missions College church of Christ 2934 East Moore Street Searcy, Arkansas 72143 Cell: 901-626-4538 john@kachelman.com "Thank you for everything—support, love, unity and prayers that you give to God on our behalf. We are enriched spiritually in your love. Thank you for blessings that you share with us. May God strengthen you in everything and may His strong hand be with you in everything you do."

The month of March has passed in a blur as numerous opportunities appeared—we shipped 3 containers into Ukraine to help the Lord's Church assist those orphaned, widowed, displaced and impoverished by Russia's invasion and occupation of the eastern regions of Donetsk, Lugansk, and Crimea. Russia continues to send its troops into Ukraine and consequent chaos follows.

In spite of the horrors of Russian evils our brethren are doing well. In the midst of war they are continuing to stand firm for God's Truth and do the Lord's work. Read their reports below and thank God for the dedication and commitment of His children. Also be thankful to those who are assisting in the efforts to send relief and spread the gospel.

There is a good report from brother Denis about the preacher training school (Bear Valley Biblical Institute of Ukraine). The school has not ceased operations during the war. They moved from Gorlovka to Ternopil and did not miss a moment of instruction for those studying!

In one of the side bars is a very encouraging but brief email from Yuri in Zaporozhye. You will also be encouraged with the side bar report from Kramatorsk where a container was successfully delivered. This is very good as that city is in the Donetsk Region and we were apprehensive about its safety. But the Lord blessed us with a very safe passage under the watchful eyes of Ukraine's security!

Read the below reports and rejoice in the great good that the Lord is accomplishing in the midst of the great evil that the Satan is fomenting!

I will be leaving for Ukraine soon and will be visiting with Christians and following up on the distribution of containers.

—John L. Kachelman, Jr.

MIKE LAWSON'S OBSERVATIONS ON HIS RECENT TRIP TO UKRAINE

Greetings from Ukraine. We are now in Sumy Ukraine after spending the previous week in Ivano-Frankivsk. Our main purpose in going to Ivano-Frankivsk was to do preparatory work for a summer camp... one patterned

THE CONTAINER SHIPPED TO KRAMATORSK HAS ARRIVED!



Hi our dear friend John! Here with a great pleasure we inform you that we have got the Kramatorsk container. We were informed about it by the officials. We also express you our gratitude for your help and assistance in getting this container. Your help is a great contribution in solving so numerous problems of the Ukrainian people. Thank you once more and best regards. Valery Karpenko



after our camp in the Eastern Ukraine city of Dzerzhinsk. I offer my sincere thanks to the Church in Ivano-Frankivsk and in particular Olya Kushnerova for her persistent efforts in finding a school willing to partner with us in our efforts—School #1. Thanks to John Kachelman who introduced me to this congregation in October 2014 while I accompanied him on one of his many follow-up missions to ascertain the distribution effectiveness of the many containers of relief his organization has shipped to Ukraine.

It is always good to be with the saints as it was great to see everyone again and in many ways I wished that I had not left in October because of the warm reception Susan and I received. The Church continues to grow and was at near capacity on Sunday morning as it reaches out to the community—I wish I could recall the names of two soon to be children of God when they are baptized. In October, Volodya and Galina were baptized and it was good to see them each time the doors were open for Bible study. An especially bright spot for Susan and me was to hear Vitalik Kushnerov preach his first sermon on Sunday. We first met Vitalik about five years ago during a Bible camp where he and Olya were translators. Even before that God was working in their lives to bring them to this point in their life. John Durham and Gary Jerkins arrived while we were there. John 'practiced' the prep work of the book of Luke he will be delivering at BVBI to illustrate Jesus' triumphal entrance as recorded in the gospel of Luke during three of the Bible studies we were able to attend.

Camp is scheduled for 1 June thru 5 June 2015. We still need volunteers if you are interested in coming to this beautiful city and being a part of this vibrant congregation.

In His Service, Mike

IVAN SKOLEBA REPORTS FROM IVANO-FRANKIVSK!

Greetings dear brothers and sisters!

We thank God for another month that we have lived through. March was a month of hope to us as all of us hoped the war would be over but it seems that the Lord is still angry with our nation. We pray to the Almighty for mercy so that we would be able to live in peace and preach the Gospel.

Thank you, dear brothers, for opportunities to hear the Gospel through your missionaries that make us a part of God's family. God gives us assurance and inner peace despite all fears that people have in this country. Now, many people are open to God more than ever. All pray for peace, some attend our Bible classes. Those who either used to be indifferent to God or would hold up Orthodox principles have now started studying the Bible. Five such young men/women have decided to be baptized. We have a separate Bible class for them on Monday and Friday.

- ✓ Sunday worship services from 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.
- ✓ Wednesday Bible class is from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
- ✓ Average attendance is 25 to 30.

We continue helping refugees from the East. Four of them started attending Bible classes regularly.

Stas and Anya are going to get married as they want to have a legitimate marriage and to live in accordance with biblical principles. They used to have a "common-law marriage." Stas and Anya attend our Bible classes and

FROM ZAPOROZHYE

We thank God for adding saved souls to His church.

Our Sunday attendance now is 50 adults and 20 children. We have already outgrown our meeting place.

Please, pray to God to take care of that situation and to bless us with more funds because the majority of people are displaced and we do not collect enough to pay rent.

Thank you, John, for your help to the church.

Yuriy (Юрий Таран)



we can see God change their lives as they try to correct their lives and build up on Christian foundation. This young couple is going through serious trials of life. War changed all of their plans. And now living in the West of Ukraine they have to do things on their own and basically begin from the very beginning. Anya's parents have made their minds to stay in Donetsk and now separatists do not let them leave. Anya's father tripped a mine when he took his dog out for a walk. Mine exploded and killed the dog but its body saved Anya's father's life. Such events cause them to re-conceptualize their lives and plead with God for help.

Pavel from Kryvy Rig came for worship assembly last Sunday. He comes for fellowship. We would like to have a campaign in Kryvy Rig in April using Pavel and Ivano-Frankivsk brothers. We would like to encourage Pavel in his ministry in Kryvy Rig as he is having hard time due to lack of experience. But he tries hard.

Brother Vladimir (Ukrainian – Volodymyr) continues his ministry in Stary Lysets and preaches to this congregation from time to time. Sveta and I try to let young brothers gain experience, we encourage them, and all young brothers take part in church ministry.

One of our brothers in Christ, Vitaly, is a student. He comes to Ivano-Frankivsk on Sundays to be with his family. Last Sunday Vitaly had a sermon. Vitaly and Olga have 2 daughters. They are a very good young family. They are also IDP's from Donetsk and have already adjusted to the West, which, thank God, has made them feel much better. They have even taken Olya's mother from Donetsk to live with them. True, she is Orthodox and has not come to Church yet.

We also have a young brother Dmitry. He teaches Bible classes for youth and plans to get education in the USA. He knows English very well. He is very gifted and we pray and ask the Lord to take care of his life and to give him opportunity to fulfill his potential and use his gifts to His glory.

Brothers John Durham and Gary Jerkins from America came here on March 27. There is another group visiting as well – Michael, Susan and Bill. They are here to prepare for Christian summer camp in June. It is very important for this church as it gives us opportunity to preach to the young generation. Brother John Durham teaches a series of Bible classes now.

Thank you, dear brothers and sisters for your prayers and help, for being one family with us thanks to your missionary work.

Thanks to brother John Kachelman and all who help him in this ministry and humanitarian aid. Thanks to all brothers and sisters because your help brought two more people to this Church, namely, Lena and Inna, and Inna brings her five-year old son Elijah with her. Inna came because she saw Church's address on buckets that were given away on behalf of the Church, and that had been put together at Hillsboro. She attends Bible classes regularly now and has made up her mind to be baptized next Sunday. Your help has changed attitudes of many who call themselves Orthodox towards church of Christ.

Thank you, dear brothers and sisters. With love, Ivan and Svetlana С люб. Иван и Светлана

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THE CHURCH AT WORK

"Thanks to all brothers and sisters because your help brought two more people to this Church, namely, Lena and Inna, and Inna brings her five-year old son Elijah with her. Inna came because she saw Church's address on buckets that were given away on behalf of the Church, and that had been put together at Hillsboro. She attends Bible classes regularly now and has made up her mind to be baptized next Sunday. Your help has changed attitudes of many who call themselves Orthodox towards church of Christ."



VOLODYA SENDS NEWS OF HIS WORK FOR THE LORD!

Greetings, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. I am glad to greet you from Ivano-Frankivsk. I am sending you greetings from my family and church in Ivano-Frankivsk. We always remember you and your love, and thank our Glorious God for it. We pray for you and ask God to bless you in your ministry and work.

Another month has passed and we are even closer to meeting our Creator. These thoughts always inspire to work harder in His vineyard. As usual, I would like to share with you some news from the past month as well as plans for future. March was quite filled with activities and abundant in different events in our lives.

Let us begin with main and essential, with things that, to my mind, are pleasing to the Lord – with preaching and teaching of His Word. My work in Stary Lisets has not undergone much change this month. I continue establishing personal contact with people. I am trying to become friends with the community so that people would accept me and trust what I preach. At the same time, I pray to God and ask Him to send those people my way that seek Him sincerely so that my preaching would bring forth fruit in His Kingdom. I have also realized that the majority of our population knows the Gospel and knows that Christ is the Savior. However, unfortunately, people do not know how to build up personal relationship with God. This is something they have to be taught. But to teach something to someone you have to either be his/her friend or have authority with him/her. That is why I am trying to gain such trust and make friends with people there. I visited the village out-patient hospital several times last month. I gave them some humanitarian aid and met a young guy there who worked as a driver. I keep in contact with those people and try to be helpful to their medical institution. I hope it will bring forth fruit. That is why I pray to God every day and ask Him to give me and show me sincere people who seek to know Him.

We have some good news from Stas and Anya, displaced couple, who have left Donetsk and live in Stary Lysets now. They have decided to make their relationship legitimate and applied to be officially married. Government will register their marriage officially in April and they will become husband and wife. Having done that, they will have the right relationship and will not sin having wrong relations. We teach classes in Ivano-Frankivsk for those that would like to be baptized. Stas and Anya attend them regularly. We try to encourage them to make a covenant with God so that they would have personal relationship with Him.

This is the way my work in Stary Lysets goes. As for the room that we were given there, I plan to resume some repairs there once it warms up a little more. It has been too cold to do anything. We need to plaster walls since the new door was put in, replace the floor, paint walls – these works require warm weather. And now I hope we will be able to go on with those repairs. That is why I welcome everybody who wants to encourage this work and to help financially if they can.

Brothers John Durham and Gary Jerkins have come to visit us. Last Sunday after worship service, we had great fellowship that encouraged and inspired us so much. Brother John will be with us for only this week and will then go to Ternopil to teach at the Bear Valley Bible School. We plan to take him to Stary Lysets to see the room that we have and maybe visit with the

THE SITUATION IN GORLOVKA

Despite the truce, the life of people who stayed in Gorlovka is getting more complicated. There is still a problem with getting the passes, without which it is impossible to enter or leave Gorlovka. Besides that, the checking of busses and passengers at the block-posts last about 4-6 hours. That is the reason why traveling from Gorlovka to the closest town takes at least two days. Each trip may present a serious danger to people's life. Last week a bus with people from Gorlovka exploded on a landmine near Artvomovsk. Almost all people who were in that bus were seriously injured.

Because of the implementation of the passes-system, it is getting difficult to get food into the town. The shops are half empty, and the food that is available is sold for the double price.

Our Christians who stayed in Gorlovka have not received their pensions for many months, and they are alive only because of your financial help.

administration and village polyclinic. Thus, he will be able to personally share all the news and plans with you.

I would like to thank you for encouraging us through our brothers' visits. It is very uplifting to us. John teaches the Story of Jesus now and specifically the last week of His life. Besides Sunday we assemble for classes three more times a week because group study of God's Word is our main focus these days. Thank you for encouraging us through our brethren that come to visit us.

I preached several Sundays for the Ivano-Frankivsk brethren this month. Brother Ivan granted me such opportunities to practice. It is in Ivano-Frankivsk that we assemble now while the place in Stary Lysets is not all ready for conducting services and people there do not know us very well yet. Stat and Anya come to Ivano-Frankivsk from Stary Lysets and this way we assemble together and enjoy great fellowship and study the Word.

Since I preached on Sunday, brother Ivan substituted for me on Wednesday and taught a class on the Acts of the Apostles. This is how we worked this month. We also teach classes for those that are thinking about being baptized and we are in the process of preparing a few to make covenant with God. I hope they will make up their minds and will be added to the Kingdom of God.

Finally, I would like to share some personal news with you. First of all, I would like to let you know that I have started dating someone. Her name is Maria, like my Mom's. She comes from Kalush, a small town 30 kilometers away from Ivano-Frankivsk and works at a library in Ivano-Frankivsk. We met four months ago but did not start dating until recently. She is Greek Catholic traditionally but she has questions as far as Bible goes. She attends Wednesday and Friday Bible classes and has started attending classes for those who think about being baptized. Her parents, thank God, do not mind her attending the Church. I ask God to show her the truth. And I also pray that God would show me whether this person is someone He has meant for me so that I would not make a hasty decision without Him. I would like to ask you to pray for it as well. This is very important to me because I really do not want to do anything that God does not want me to do.

My father has come to Church once again for Sunday worship service this time. I am very glad to see this happen. And it is amazing, too, how things developed after he attended Church. Right after that he was on the booze but surprisingly he stopped in five days. Used to he would stay drinking for 2-3 weeks but this time it lasted only five days and after that he stopped. He now spends more time with me and it is such a joy. I pray for him to be saved and ask for your help in this. Being honest, it is hard for me to preach the Gospel when my home is struck by alcoholism and disorder. But God is gracious and is taking that away from me, and my father does not have bad drinking sprees any more – great thanks to God for that!

I have had another leg surgery this month. This time it was varicose vein removal. I am going through rehab period now and have to wear elastic compression stockings all the time. It wears me out more so I am not as active now as I would like to be. However, I am thankful to God that I am past the surgery and everything went well. The surgery was on my left leg as for the right one, it is undergoing a non-surgical treatment. If that treatment is a success I will not have to have anything else done to it but if not, then I will have to have a surgery to remove those veins on that leg as

Unloading a Container in Ivano-Frankivsk

On December 8, 2014 Kathy Cadden and her crew loaded a container in Columbus, MS. That container held 662 pieces for a total weight shipped of 18,450 pounds valued in USD as \$134,865.00. It cost us \$7,175.00 for transportation. That container arrived in Ivano-Frankivsk March 2 and was cleared "on the wheels" by Ukraine Customs. The term "cleared on the wheels" is most significant as it shows Ivan and the brethren were able to work with local authorities and get everything done so that distribution could begin as soon as the commodities were unloaded.



well. I hope that God will take care of everything. And at this time, I would like to thank you for the humanitarian aid and support that you send through brother John Kachelman. Medical supplies that we receive help us gain support on the part of doctors. We can turn for help to all of them whom we give humanitarian aid, and they are always willing to be helpful in return. That is why I am thankful to you and God. It helped a lot with my surgery as well. I praise God for the work that you do.

Thank you for everything – support, love, unity and prayers that you give to God on our behalf. We are enriched spiritually in your love. Thank you for blessings that you share with us. May God strengthen you in everything and may His strong hand be with you in everything you do.

With love, your brother Volodya (Didukh) 3 любов'ю, ваш брат Володя (Дідух)

PAVAL SENDS NEWS ABOUT CONDITIONS IN KRYVY RIG!

I greet you with great love, my dear brothers and sisters! I always mention you in my prayers to the Lord and ask Him to always bless you for your help to us and to all churches of Christ in Ukraine. It is thanks to your help, both financial and humanitarian, that churches of Christ can develop in Ukraine. When we distribute humanitarian aid those receiving it see the love and understanding, with which Christians treat them, and they make their minds to come and hear the word of God.

You know the situation this country is facing, you know that people are frightened and have many needs, especially spiritual. The same is true for Kryvy Rig. Many people went to war in order to defend their families, and many of them have been killed. Thus, the majority of the population is depressed gravely and needs spiritual support but they still hold onto the Orthodoxy, which is pushed on them from the very childhood. They grow up in it and it's hard to change people's beliefs in the adult age. We are a small group of people that continues studying the Holy Scripture and praising our Lord. I am thankful to the Lord because He continues opening the hearts of my family (my mother and sister) and I can see their understanding of the Scripture change with their study. We also continue getting together with the children to study Bible stories and play games whenever there is an opportunity.

I came to Ivano-Frankivsk at the end of this month again to be uplifted spiritually and gain some more experience necessary for the growth of the Kryvy Rig congregation. Our brothers and sisters from America came to Ivano-Frankivsk. I have enjoyed being around them and gaining knowledge from them as well. I especially enjoy classes that John Durham teaches. He had his birthday recently and we were happy to greet him on that special occasion. Thank you for supporting people like John. Thanks to you we can communicate not only by email but face to face as well.

We plan to conduct a three-day campaign in April with the help of brethren from the Ivano-Frankivsk Church. We will give away humanitarian aid and talk to people about God. I would like to ask you to pray with us about the upcoming campaign and ask God to bless our efforts. Please, also, pray for my family, for the growth of the Church in Kryvy Rig and all throughout

FROM SUMY....

It's not only religious holidays that bring people to Church the war has had a similar impact on church attendance and prayer. At the small congregation where we attended this morning the sermons... yes, three of them lasting in total for about two hours with each telling of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. As always it is a blessing to be with the saints here however small their number. Some Church members received food baskets this morning... The weather remains cold here. Snow fell on us as we walked back from church this morning... looks like more of the same 'till midweek...

Yesterday, we got to spend time with Rita and 'little' Sasha. Sasha has a mild form of cerebral palsy. His mother brings him to Sumy often for physical treatment. I last saw them on October and it is apparent that Sasha is making progress with his motor skills. Sasha is a happy lad... he enjoyed taking 'selfies.'

(Mike Lawson)



Ukraine, for those people that made their minds to accept Christ in their hearts and obey Lord's commands with faith (and we know that Satan is alert and creates obstacles all the time to hinder Church's growth). However, I know that the Lord will never abandon His children and if someone makes his/her mind to follow the Lord, He will help that person.

Please, pray for peace in this country, for this absurd war to stop. Our congregation prays for the Lord to bless you in all you do and to strengthen your health and your spiritual growth.

I always pray for all of you, thank you for your help and love, for your support. I wish you good health, God's love and blessings.

With love, your brother Pavel с любовь ваш брат Павел

Andrew Zhuravlyov from Skvyra sends news of his work for the Lord!

Hello dear brothers!

Here came the first month of spring. Despite all prognoses, it was quite calm. Ukrainian army and DNR forces keep their positions. Not one side is advancing.

1. Situation in Gorlovka

Despite the truce, the life of people who stayed in Gorlovka is getting more complicated. There is still a problem with getting the passes, without which it is impossible to enter or leave Gorlovka. Besides that, the checking of busses and passengers at the block-posts last about 4-6 hours. That is the reason why traveling from Gorlovka to the closest town takes at least two days. Each trip may present a serious danger to people's life. Last week a bus with people from Gorlovka exploded on a landmine near Artyomovsk. Almost all people who were in that bus were seriously injured.

Because of the implementation of the passes-system, it is getting difficult to get food into the town. The shops are half empty, and the food that is available is sold for the double price.

Our Christians who stayed in Gorlovka have not received their pensions for many months, and they are alive only because of your financial help. Unfortunately, they are running out of money, and they are in a desperate need again. I call them every day, trying to comfort and encourage them, using God's word. We are waiting and praying for this terrible time to be over, so that we could meet again and worship God together.

The building of the Church and BVBIU is still under control of DNR forces. Recently my wife Veronika found in the Internet a picture of Gorlovka made from UAV. There is our building on that picture. We could see that there are lots of military machines around there.

2. Work in Kiev region

My family and I continue ministering at the church of Christ in Skvyra. This month I taught Revelation during the midweek Bible classes. On Sunday, when we stayed in Skvyra, I preached at the service. We developed very close relationships with local Christians. Due to the drastic weather changes, many members of the Church got sick. Veronika and I visited them

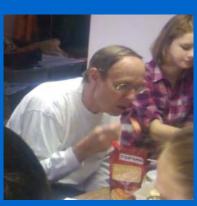


OLGA (MIKE'S INTERPRETER), LITTLE SASHA, RITA

The church in Ivano-Frankivsk enjoy a meal celebrating John Durham's birthday!







at homes and at the hospital.

On Sundays, I preach and teach Bible classes at Shevchenkivska church of Christ in Kiev. We have finished a series of lectures on Leadership. I will start teaching Bible classes on John's Epistles. As I have mentioned before, a member of that congregation, Yuriy Romanov moved to Ternopil with his family to study at BVBIU. They are on the Spring Break, and they have returned to Kiev. We are looking forward to him preaching on Sunday, using the knowledge he received at the Bible institute.

One Sunday this month, we went to Bila Tserkva, where I preached at the church of Christ during the worship service. We met with Christian from Gorlovka there, and after the service we celebrated birthday of Alex and Alina Mitskutis' daughter. She turned three that day. Besides they are expecting a new baby to be born in June.

3. Institute

I have already graded final tests and papers of first-year students on Minor Prophets. I still need to grade several sermon outlines that should be sent via email soon. However, it is obvious that the students have successfully worked through the material that I have taught them. Now I am getting ready to teach Revelation at BVBIU.

I am grateful to all of you who support me financially, who cares and prays for us. God bless you, your families, your congregations and your country abundantly.

In Christ, Andrew Zhuravlyov

DENNIS SOPELNIK REVIEWS THE PREACHER TRAINING EFFORTS IN TERNOPIL, UKRAINE!

Hello dear brothers, families and churches.

May our Lord Jesus Christ grant you peace. This word "peace" has become very precious for us. There still sounds of shooting in Eastern Ukraine, though it is obvious that they use heavy artillery not so often now. Nevertheless, this area is still dangerous to live in. For the last three months, there were more than sixty children killed in that area. We urge you to pray for Ukraine and for the future of God's Church.

Bear Valley Bible Institute in Ukraine

In March we had brothers in Christ from the US, Johnny Mack Young and Garth Hilton. They had been teaching at the institute for two weeks. It was a wonderful time to visit with old friends and good teachers. These brothers visit Ukraine every year and share their experience with our students.

Also we had a planned evangelizing campaign; students and their families participated in it. We were divided into several groups. One group of students went to spread the gospel to Dnipropetrovsk, the second group went to Chernivtsi, and the third group stayed in Ternopil. We used different methods to reach the hearts of people. In the city of Chernivtsi, our students and BVBIU secretary Oksana stood with the table and spread the Christian literature, inviting people to come to the Church. There was one baptism during the campaign there. In Ternopil, we had been inviting people to evening Bible classes, spreading Christian literature and posting

"For the last three months, there were more than sixty children killed in that area. We urge you to pray for Ukraine and for the future of God's Church."

"Last week a bus with people from Gorlovka exploded on a landmine near Artyomovsk. Almost all people who were in that bus were seriously injured."





announcements for three days. Unfortunately, there were no new visitors during the time of the campaign. I think though that any work for God will not be fruitless. It might be that we were sowing God's seeds in some people's hearts.

This week is the Spring Break, when students have to finish their written assignments, and starting April 6, the classes will resume.

We continue looking for better place for the institute. It is not easy. Due to the military actions in Gorlovka, terrorists took our building there, and we had to move to the territory of Western Ukraine, though many of our teachers stayed in Eastern Ukraine. This school year we had many classes taught via Skype. We are looking for such place that would be a good and convenient location for both teachers and students, being close to main roads and an airport. That is why I visited Bila Tserkva at the end of March and discussed the possibility of cooperation with the local congregation, considering moving to their facility. I ask you to pray for the future of the institute.

Institute Church of Christ

For the last three weeks we have been blessed with visits of guests not only from the US but also from different parts of our country. We had services when attendance would be 28 people. Maybe some would consider this number insignificant, but believe me, for a war-torn Ukraine, suffering through economical and political crisis, this number sounds very inspiring.

Now we are working in different spheres trying to attract more people to God and to His church. My wife and other ladies from the church organized a workshop for kids and their parents at the beginning of March. Such classes are quite successful, and we had 12 new visitors at our building. Johnny Mack Young gave a brief introduction, telling about the church and its purpose. We have also continued the program of teaching English via Bible. Right now mostly our students attend these classes, but we hope that soon we'll have new people.

We continue meeting during the week at Christian homes and encouraging one another. In April, we plan to have a one-day youth conference and invite Christians from local congregations.

Thank you for supporting the institute and my family. If you have any questions or suggestion, please write to me.

Your brother and coworker, Dennis Sopelnik, Director BVBIU

