



# UKRAINE MISSIONS NEWS

John L. Kachelman, Jr.

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## ***"OUR LORD OUTPOURS HIS BLESSINGS ON US AND WE HAVE BAPTISMS BASICALLY EVERY MONTH NOW."***

The month of June 2016 will be remembered for a number of things. Perhaps one of most prominent memories will be the incredible increase and demonstrations of flagrant evil. There were a number of violent acts committed by those governed by hatred; innocent children were subjects of the worst abuse imaginable; the political theatre continues to devolve into injustice and illegalities that are not prosecuted and the "majority" of the nation refuses to acknowledge crimes while persecuting those striving to follow God. The list could continue endlessly and the illustrations are heinous, egregious and repressible!

It is amazing that many refuse to admit the presence of "evil." In the political arena they attempt to frame it in as civil rights. An article I recently read attributed the prevailing evil of our nation and world to the presence of "Christianity"! It was suggested that because Christian values have been taught some are prejudiced and are the ones contributing to the unraveling of our culture. The not so disguised message was that if Christianity is erased then the problems of today will vanish. In the religious area evil is often framed within the satanic parameters of "tolerance" and "personal opinion." Those who seek to fashion their own understanding of who God is and what God expects are flagrant in their rejection of biblical authority and preference for their own interpretation.

This is correctly seen as "criminal" in regard to civil actions—anarchy is forbidden by the governing laws. How absurd it is to hear governing officials announce that if a group does not like the law they do not have to obey it! But there is disconnect in this logic when it comes to religion—anarchy is applauded and encouraged and defended by those spurning the governing law (the Scripture). How absurd it is to hear people advocate anarchy by saying that even though the Bible teaches a certain doctrine/practice such can be redefined so that the consequent practice is far different than previous practices.

We live in an amazing time that is governed by an ungodly anarchy!

Can you imagine the culture that will exist when this goal of removing Christianity is successful? Hosea 4:1-3 tells us what such a culture will be, *"For the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land. There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns, and everyone who lives in it languishes."*

Evil is real. Evil originates with the Satan's temptations, delusions and misinformation. Evil's power rests in its ability to deceive mankind into thinking that he has a "civil or personal right" to do other than what is taught



Yaroslav and Luba have been consistently attending worship assemblies and Bible studies since last October. They were invited and attended the family retreat that took place in Ivano-Frankivsk last October.

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"You could see their joy and relief afterwards.

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in the Bible.

In Corinth evil was framed in the phrase "wisdom of the world" (1 Corinthians 1, 2). To the Thessalonians evil was framed by a rejection of God's Truth and acceptance of man's teaching (2 Thessalonians 2). In Colossae evil was exposed in the vain "will worship" or as the NASB identifies it "self-made religion" (Colossians 2).

Evil knows no boundaries. Evil attacks every facet of worldly living. There is evil in society, in politics, in personal living and even in the religious realm. There is no part of earthly living that is not touched by evil.

The presence of evil demands an energetic response from God's People. Like young David, God's people must "run" to confront the evil giants that blaspheme the Almighty God and seek to destroy God's People. There is the temptation to "cower" and be "timid" but remember Inspiration's counsel, "God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7).

Silence, irresponsiveness and reticence are inexcusable.

You must not sit. You must not choose to be silent. You must speak and uphold God's Truth. There are no other options!

The marching orders from Inspiration command all Christians: *I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry* (2 Timothy 4:1-5)

Why is it imperative that Christians rise up in opposition to those who attempt to redefine culture and religion to fit their own understanding? Because Christians are to be light, leaven, and salt. They are to make a difference. They are to demonstrate unequivocal loyalty to the Almighty God. All of the metaphors applied to Christian activity command active energy not passive silence.

Illustrating this fact are the following texts from Ecclesiastes.

*Evil will insidiously infect religious beliefs/practices.* Subtly evil creeps in "unawares" and begins its dastardly work. Evil delights in energetic religious devotion as long as that religious devotion is not following God's will. Ecclesiastes 5:1: "Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil." Note the tragedy "they do not know they are doing evil." How sad that such ignorance exists. Tragically much evil is committed by those who foolishly follow some wrested religious motivation.

*Evil will insidiously infect personal relationships.* Evil will seek to compromise the relationship boundaries that God's Word sets forth. The Christian is called to "(N)ot participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. (Ephesians 5:11, 12). However evil seeks to soften and even erase this divine command when it comes to personal relationships that the Christian feels are somehow exempt from



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“We are happy to have one more brother in Christ. Now we need to pray for him and ask God to direct him in his life because that is what he is praying to God about and with what he trusts God will do!”

this boundary. Ecclesiastes 8:3: “Do not join in an evil matter, for he will do whatever he pleases.”

*Evil will insidiously increase UNLESS it is confronted.* Evil is able to deceive as it brings destruction. It is amazing how some are blind and insensitive to the degradation of Truth that evil causes. We can see this in society, or nation or even the Lord’s Church—evil subtly changes in small ways until we awaken and exclaim “What happened!?! How did we get so far off course!?” The United States of America has awakened too late to the reality that evil reigns because its citizenry has remained silent and has not challenged evil. In many churches this same tragic reality exists.

The tragic answer, as to “How?” and “What?” is simple. Evil was not confronted and exposed by Truth. Those who sought to expose it were shunned, castigated and colored in the worst possible way to discredit their positions and silence their warnings. Ecclesiastes is blunt in describing this process. Ecclesiastes 8:8: “No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it.”

Later in Ecclesiastes 8:11-14 a more complete discussion of this process is given by Inspiration: “Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil. Although a sinner does evil a hundred *times* and may lengthen his *life*...it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God. There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked.”

Did you hear the emphasis of Inspiration as it stated, “Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly”? If evil is not confronted and challenged quickly THEN certain destruction is assured. Simply stated, you cannot be “nice” to evil. The greatest deception that Satan has wrought in man’s mind is the suggestion that “Christians must always be ‘nice.’” Such was definitely not exemplified by our Lord. In regard to personal matters we are to “turn the other cheek” but in regard to upholding Truth and preserving God’s boundaries we must “fight the good fight”!

A failure to confront evil quickly in culture, in politics, and in national actions leads a nation to become reprehensible to the Almighty God. Soon that nation is destroyed by its own evil.

A failure to confront evil quickly in the Church permits Satan’s workers to infiltrate, influence and initiate changes that lead the Church to leave the divine doctrines.

Simply stated, compromise of basic commands, concession of Truth’s commands and cooperative fellowship with those contrary to God’s Bible results in the inevitable surrender of God’s Truth!

This is a choice each makes in all aspects of life. It asks “Will I adhere to God’s Law or will I find ‘wiggle room’ to allow ‘just a little latitude’ to befriend the presence of evil?”

Our brethren in Ukraine encourage us to remain steadfast in loyalty and devotion to God’s Truth. Our Ukrainian brethren are a wonderful example of trusting God’s Word and using it to determine beliefs, actions, and

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boundaries.

Read their reports and thank God for their fidelity to God's Truth!

Thank you for your financial support, prayers, words of encouragement and all the many ways you assist us in reaching out to the world with the good news of Christ! Thank you for your encouragement, financial support and prayers.

—John L. Kachelman, Jr.

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## ***IMMERSIONS IN IVANO-FRANKIVSK & INDIA***

During June there were a number of immersions in the Ivano-Frankivsk congregation. It was wonderful to receive enthusiastic reports and stories of those who had decided to obey the gospel and put on the Lord in immersion. We sent out various reports on these but I wanted to summarize them for you in this report. Read and rejoice again over these who have committed their lives to the Lord’s covenant.

### **IMMERSION OF YAROSLAV & LUBOV**

In Ivan Skoleba’s May report these words are found: “We have a family of dentists that started attending thanks to your help. The father and son are dentists. Yaroslav Olexiovich is 90 and he was the one to set up dental clinics in cities and villages of the Region. He has a lot of experience to share. He talked to the Church and urged young people to have an active stand in life both at Church and in the society. He urged youth to brace themselves and work hard to serve people and gain knowledge. His son, Valentine, brought his wife and daughter for the first time to the worship assembly. His wife sings in a Catholic choir but she still came, attended our worship and said afterwards that she liked it very much.”

Yaroslav and Luba have been consistently attending worship assemblies and Bible studies since last October. They were invited and attended the family retreat that took place in Ivano-Frankivsk last October.

I received emails from Tanya announcing that Yaroslav and his wife (Lubov) had decided to be immersed into the Lord. The situation was complicated because Yaroslav suffered a heart attack. Here is an excerpt from Tanya’s email about this couple.

It was so wonderful to see Yaroslav and Luba being baptized together on the same day. We were worried about Yaroslav getting into the pool. But everything worked well and he did great climbing those treacherous steps. As you can see from the pics Luba was the first one and then Yaroslav. You could see how serious and resolved they were. The mere fact that Yaroslav had had a heart attack the night before and didn't change his mind is self-evident. You could see their joy and relief afterwards. What a wonderful day!!!!

Ivan added this information:

Greetings dear Brother John!

I know that you have already heard our good news but would still like to let you know that you have played a very important role in the salvation of these two souls. We had two baptisms - Yaroslav and his wife Luba were baptized. Luba made up her mind after the classes that you taught in

**“Just several years ago I did not want to go on with life as I saw no purpose whatsoever. My husband left me with a child. Then war in Donetsk began and I had to leave. My life was sought to be killed because I was pro-Ukrainian. I left my place in Donetsk with everything I had there hoping that war would be over soon. But the war dragged on and on. Nobody wanted to hear us and it seemed that nobody cared. I prayed to God asking Him to take me but I was concerned for my son. It was when I came to church of Christ that I and my son found care and sympathy for the first time. I thank God for you, brethren!”**

Ivano-Frankivsk. But she wanted to be baptized together with Yaroslav. The latter was baptized at the age of 13 with Jehovah's Witnesses, as they call themselves. Following your advise, I talked with Yaroslav and found out that his baptism was not biblical. We talked and studied the Bible to understand Lord's teachings and the fact that there is only one biblical baptism for forgiveness of sins. Yaroslav pondered what we studied and when he finally made up his mind to be baptized he had a severe heart attack that night. Luba called us and said that she would be baptized alone. But two hours before the baptism Yaroslav called and said that he wanted to receive forgiveness of sins while he was still alive. Ruslan picked them up and brought to the pool where he was baptized. Mike Lawson did the baptizing. It was a happy day and all of us sang and rejoiced.

Big thanks to you, brother, and to all American brethren for teaching us to understand and apply God's truth. We see its power when it changes our lives. Even lives of such people like Yaroslav who is 90 years old and whose life has not been a bed of roses as he lived through WW2 and Soviet Union regime after the war. Such people rarely turn to God but Yaroslav at 90 was as happy as a little child and thanked Church and God for salvation. It was very touching.

### **IMMERSION OF NANA**

Here is communication on the immersion of “Nana” who is one of the men studying at the Ivano-Frankivsk medical school. He is from Ghana and has been attending worship and Bible study for a number of months. In Tanya's email she writes about Nana's immersion.

It has been a great day here as Nana was baptized earlier today. He used to be part of a charismatic denomination in Ghana but Emmanuel brought him to us and he has been attending faithfully ever since.

He is a nice person and seems to be very devoted to God.

Ivan talked with him after services last Sunday explaining to him about baptism. Nana said he actually had thought about it already and was willing and ready for that to take place. Nana thought we could do it on Wednesday so we made reservations for immersion but then he had his state exam and was tied up till 7:00 p.m. so reservations at pool were impossible to keep. So we re-scheduled it for 1:30 p.m. today.

When I saw Nana today I could sense that it was a solemn and important event for him. You could see it in his eyes.

Afterwards we went to the restaurant adjoining the swimming pool and had lunch. We had great fellowship and learnt more about Nana. He lost both of his parents. His father was a businessman with a huge business (his grandfather was a King of that area of Africa) but got killed in a road accident when Nana was 11. His mother had been sick for awhile before she found it out but she did not tell Nana anything as he was to go to Ukraine and she did not want to throw off his plans. She passed away in a hospital. Nana was planning to go back then but it did not work out.

We found out that a preacher had told Nana that he should become a doctor and then another man had told him to go to Ukraine for medical schooling. He has a brother and a sister back in Ghana.

We had good lunch and fellowship was even better. Wish all of you could

## INDIA—FRUITS OF THE GOSPEL HARVESTED



“I am enclosing a picture of baptism of brother Nagaraj immersing a lady who is obeying our great Lord God Almighty. Please pray for the spiritual growth of new convert.

“Closing with love, yours in His service, Immadi”

have been with us to share in our joy and great fellowship!

We are happy to have one more brother in Christ. Now we need to pray for him and ask God to direct him in his life because that is what he is praying to God about and with what he trusts God will do!

### IMMERSIONS IN INDIA!!

It is wonderful to receive and pass along news of the Lord's Church elsewhere in the world. We have a special interest in India and David Lawyer had asked about the progress of the gospel in the regions of India where we are familiar. In response Immadi sent this note...

My dear loving brother David and Sister Gennie,

Greetings in the merciful name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I once again thank you for your kind loving helps. Kindly convey our thanks to brother Ernie for his help for the widows. Widows and preachers also conveying their thanks.

I am enclosing a picture of baptism of brother Nagaraj immersing a lady who is obeying our great Lord God Almighty. Please pray for the spiritual growth of new convert.

Closing with love, yours in His service, Immadi

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### ***IVAN SKOLEBA REPORTS FROM IVANO-FRANKIVSK!***

Greetings, dear brethren!

There are many joyful events and news to share with you that took place in June. Our students finished their school and it was so good hear teachers command children from this Church for their diligence, politeness and responsibility. These are fruits and results of our Christian life in the Lord. Christian life embraces all aspects of life. We as Church try to help all institutions in the Region. This makes the congregation well-known and appreciated by the community. We thank the Lord and His Church in America for everything we have and all that we have achieved. Without you, dear brethren, we would not have done as much good. Your help makes us stronger and more confident in our ministry to God and people.

Yesterday we learnt that a former governor of the region passed away. He had fled the country after the revolution. He was only 65, had great possessions, and had bought houses abroad for himself and his near ones. But he did not get to enjoy those things for a long time as God took his life.

This man had caused the Church a great amount of grief. He was the one to turn down our registration for three years. We had pursued his administration in the court several times but had not been able to gain justice but only faced evil as he was the “supreme authority.” But the Lord took his position away from him. Evil was rewarded with its justice.

This former governor's death brought to my mind a passage from Psalm 91, “You will only look on with your eyes, and see the recompense of the wicked.” It is urgent to be rooted in the Truth and trust the Lord even when you seem to be drained of all strength by attacks of evil.

I know that the Lord does not allow us be tried more than what we can endure. That was exactly what happened to us. And now as we look back

*“After the war began many of us experienced hardships, losses, shocks and traumas. But the Lord through His Word gives us strength to bear all this and receive comfort.*

*“On the territory controlled by the so-called ‘Donetsk People’s Republic’ there is no possibility to preach the gospel in the open.*

*“Brothers and sisters are united not only by the pain of the sufferings because of the war but also by their faith and hope in the Lord that by His mercy this extremely difficult period of their lives will one day be over. The harder the trials the more intense is our longing for heaven... no one can take away our assurance of the meeting with each other and the Lord in the place He has prepared for us.”*

we understand that those trials made us stronger and helped us see the great protective power of God towards His children and His Church.

Our Lord outpours His blessings on us and we have baptisms basically every month now. Tanya has written you about bother Nana who was baptized recently. His life has been filled with trials. His parents passed away. His father was killed in an accident when Nana was 11, and his mother passed away a few years ago. His parents were under great pressure on the part of their relatives because they had left voodoo religion for Pentecostal church.

For many years Nana’s family had been oppressed both psychologically and physically by their relatives who at the end confiscated all their possessions and left him with nothing to live on.

We help brother Nana with food and we have also arranged for him to have some medical training at hospital upon the completion of his third year of Medical School. The Head of Maternity Hospital (that we have helped very much) agreed for Nana to have training at the Gynecological Department on the recommendation of the Church.

During June we had visitors from America, who came to worship with us. They held a Christian children’s camp in Western Ukraine.

Our members, especially those that are in need, are very thankful to God for the help and comfort they have found in Church. We cannot begin to imagine where we would be had it not been for your help at these trying time.

Inna says, “Just several years ago I did not want to go on with life as I saw no purpose whatsoever. My husband left me with a child. Then war in Donetsk began and I had to leave. My life was sought to be killed because I was pro-Ukrainian. I left my place in Donetsk with everything I had there hoping that war would be over soon. But the war dragged on and on. Nobody wanted to hear us and it seemed that nobody cared. I prayed to God asking Him to take me but I was concerned for my son. It was when I came to church of Christ that I and my son found care and sympathy for the first time. I thank God for you, brethren!”

Here is one life filled with tribulations. There are many more like that. But if we call on to God He will help us see the purpose of things happening in our lives.

Currently, we pray to the Lord asking Him to help us complete construction of the meeting place where we can host more people. We have outgrown our current assembly place plus we cannot put up a sign with our schedule. If we do put up sign we will be subject to fines. There are other inconveniences that restrict us that will not exist when we are able to meet permanently in our own place of assembly.

Thank you, dear brethren for prayers and help!  
In Christian love, Ivan and Svetlana

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## ***VOLODYA DIDUKH SENDS NEWS OF HIS WORK FOR THE LORD!***

Greetings dear brethren in Christ. I rejoice in being able to send you

“Sadly at the night time I could hear the sounds of nearby warfare and it does not look like it is going to stop in any foreseeable future. As soon as the local Christians heard of my arrival they got together happily to fellowship, study the word and worship in hymns.

One sister admits that she knows all hymns by heart now because every night trying to cope with stress she would sing to the Lord with the complete trust in Him. I ask you to continue prayer for the people of the occupied part of Ukraine.”

greetings from Ivano-Frankivsk area. I am also greeting you on behalf of my family, mother and father, and Lord's Church in Ivano-Frankivsk.

Another month has passed and I would like to share with you some of the news and events that have taken place as well as plans for future.

My life has been filled with trips and fellowship with youth this month. Last month, I told you about the trip that Mike Lawson and his team took to hold a children's camp here. Church in Ivano-Frankivsk took part in that project as well. We were blessed with an opportunity to spend a weekend in Mykulychyn (the Carpathians). We spent a great amount of time visiting with young people. I was encharged with a group of young boys and we spent time together. I pray to God about all that work and fellowship hoping both will bring forth fruit for His Kingdom.

Having spent that weekend in the Carpathians, one of the boys from the camp came to Church on Sunday. And one couple, husband and wife, were baptized. We praise God for adding those that are saved to His church.

Upon my return from the camp, I went to School in Kyiv Region where I was enrolled in Master's program. This program was rather complicated for me because I had missed some classes and had to rely on my schoolmates for help. However, I had great time studying Scriptures. I pray to God asking Him to help me pass onto others the knowledge that He has granted me. I ask Him for strength and courage to preach His Gospel.

Together with brother Pavel we had an opportunity to visit Miroslava and Stepan's family. This is an elderly couple that gave up their lives to take care of their disabled son, Andrew (but you remember from past reports that Andrew died). So now that Andrew is gone they have lost all purpose in life. We keep fellowshipping them and preaching Christ to them. And we sure are thankful to God for those opportunities to preach His will. Your donations and humanitarian aid enable us to help people like this showing them that Christianity is not about words as much as it is about deeds. Glory to God for everything.

We have given aid to many medical institutions this month. That aid came from shipments that you sent us. Such help is invaluable to people in this country. And we are very thankful to all those that take pains to do this work. We always thank our Lord God for you and your hearts.

I spent two weeks earlier this month repairing the truck. Now we are in the process of putting it back together. We have put the engine in and ran it today. Lord willing, installation of the body of the truck on the frame as well as the putting in of some interior parts will be our next phase, which will also complete all renovations. We know that this truck will be a great tool to glorify God and thus we strive to complete renovations as soon as possible. We want to thank all of you that helped purchase it. Very soon this truck will be used for the Kingdom of God.

My father has had a light alcoholic relapse this month. It has been a test for my family to some extent. I had to go to the village several times to take care of the farm (rabbits, chickens, etc.) and could not visit with my father who was on the booze all the time. Thank God it did not last longer than two weeks and with the third week he began coming back to senses. He is fine now, has fully dried out. I am thankful to God for the strength He has given us to survive and to keep our family relationships from being contaminated.



## Today's pics from church



Inna and Svyatoslav  
are leaving for  
Mariupol where  
Svyatoslav's  
grandfather lives.  
Svyatoslav made  
that card for us.

Larisa had her  
birthday four days ago  
and we greeted her  
with it today.



I plan to go to a Christian camp called Americaine from July 4 through July 9, which will take place in Dnepropetrovsk Region. I trust that fellowship with Christians will inspire me to serve and preach the Gospel even more.

Thank you for the fellowship and unity that we have with you. May the Lord bless you for your sincere hearts and kindness of hands. We thank God for everything and especially for your faith.

May God abide with you.

With love, your brother Volodya Didukh

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## ***PAVAL TUZNICHENKO REPORTS ON THE LORD'S WORK IN KRYVY RIG!***

I am happy to greet you again, my dear brothers and sisters. May peace, love and grace always abide with you. I thank God for bringing His children together. Thanks to Him we have this fellowship.

As always, I pray to God and ask Him to bless you for your love and help that you give us and other churches of Christ in Ukraine. It is thanks to your financial support and humanitarian aid that churches of Christ in Ukraine continue spread and grow.

Thank you for financial support of our brethren from America, who hosted such a great retreat not far from Yaremche, giving us opportunities to attend such wonderful Bible classes that they taught. We met new people and enjoyed a lot of fellowship. We also climbed a mountain (I had to do it several times with different groups), went to a waterfall, and played different intellectual and entertaining games. Such fellowship allowed us to make several new friends.

Two people were baptized after the retreat. It is wonderful to see Church grow! I pray to the Lord asking Him to give spiritual strength to all those that have decided to follow Him and even more than that do I pray and ask Him to give me more wisdom and love so that I can be a better servant in His vineyard. My brothers and sisters, please, pray with me to the Lord asking Him to add as many as possible to His Church.

I would like to give you big thanks for financial help to repair one ward in the Gynecological Department. We are half through repairs basically and the staff of the Department says that this will be the only ward repaired so well. Many wards are in a pitiful condition that is why the staff is very thankful to you for such great help.

Together with brother Volodymyr we continue visiting the disabled I wrote you about before. They are also thankful to you for clothes, rice, peanut butter that you send to Ukraine.

As usual, my dear brothers and sisters, please, pray with me for my family, for growth of church of Christ in Kryvy Rig, Ivano-Frankivsk and all over Ukraine, especially for those congregations that are located in the warzone, for those that have not come to the right path following Christ but would like to do so, and for peace in this country.

We pray for you and your families. We wish good health and God's love for you and pray that your mercy will return hundredfold blessings from God.

In Christian love, brother Pavel

## **ANDREW ZHURAVLYOV SENDS NEWS OF HIS WORK FOR THE LORD!**

Hello, dear brethren and your families,

Thank God I returned to Bila Tserkva last Saturday. After all the stress I have experienced during my travel to Gorlovka I am enjoying the fellowship of my family, peaceful sky above my head and the absence of religious pressure and nervous tension one can experience while being on the territory occupied by the pro-Russian armed soldiers. I am very grateful to all who's been praying for my safe return from that trip.

### **Trip to Gorlovka**

As I had written you before, on June 10 I went from Kiev to Gorlovka. Despite all the difficulties and dangers of the trip I was feeling joy expecting the meeting with my brothers and sisters in Christ there. While being in Gorlovka I conducted two worship services. As we did before, we all praised the Lord in singing and prayer, I preached, and after services we had a tea party visiting with each other. After the war began many of us experienced hardships and losses, shocks and psychological traumas. But the Lord through His Word gives us strength to bear all this and receive comfort. During the week I visited all Christians who live in the city, in their homes. We prayed together, sang and read the Scripture.

On the territory controlled by DPR (the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic") there is no possibility to preach the gospel in the open. But, while visiting the Christians in their homes I was also able to speak with their unbelieving relatives and neighbors. So they had the opportunity to hear the good news and obey it.

All the brothers and sisters are united not only by the pain of the sufferings they are experiencing now because of the war on their territory, but also by their faith and hope in the Lord that by His mercy this extremely difficult period of their lives will one day be over. The harder the trials are the more intense is our longing for heaven. We realize that during the war the life of any of us can end unexpectedly. But no one can take away our assurance of the meeting with each other and the Lord in the place He has prepared for us.

The situation in Gorlovka remains very tense. The first two nights of my stay there the city was under artillery attacks. The school and buildings located in the downtown area suffered the most. The outskirts of the city are under such attacks almost every day. Entire districts in the city became unsuitable for living. After some quiet time the shootings resumed several days before my return to Kiev. I enclose the pictures of the outcome of the recent artillery attacks of Gorlovka.

During the daylight there are more people in the streets now. But despite this the city is very silent – no loud speaking, laughter or music is heard anywhere. People are seized by fear of the presence of armed people and punishment or executions that can follow for a trifle reason, and sometimes even for no reason at all. As one of the sisters pointed out after visiting one of the cities on the Ukrainian territory, "the people in that city live as before, while we are here as in prison."

The trip back to Bila Tserkva was also safe. While I was standing in line at

## **BIBLE CLASSES TAUGHT IN Bila Tserkva**

"My wife Veronica continues to work with the children that come to the Bible classes to the church in Bila Tserkva. Every time these kids learn about the Lord and His plan of salvation more. We hope and pray these classes will help them build their life in obedience to the will of God in the future."



“Constantine, the preacher from the church in Bila Tserkva, asked me to prepare a lesson on marriage, divorce and remarriage for the members of the congregation. Not all the people present at the lesson had a correct understanding about what the Bible says about this matter. We had a very lively discussion after the lesson. I think that everyone who has an open and sincere heart and wants to act in accordance with the commandments of our Lord, will hold on to the sound doctrine in this important aspect of the life in Christ.”

the last roadblock there was some blasting from the mines fired at the enemy's positions near it. Soon the return shooting was about to begin, but thank God, the bus driver quickly seated the passengers and we were soon quite far from the possible zone of shooting.

### **Ministry in the Kiev region**

After the end of the academic year in the Bible Institute we continue our evangelism work in the local oncological hospital. We are very welcome there as we bring the Word of God, hope and Christian care to the desperate people.

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All Sundays when I was in the Kiev region I served in the Shevchenko Church of Christ. I taught classes on the address of Jesus Christ to the seven churches in Asia for the brethren there. I believe these lessons will help them analyze their lives and service and make necessary corrections pleasing to the Lord. Also after my return from Gorlovka my son Ilya and I visited Christians who live in the suburb of Kiev. This visit allowed us to spend some time not only with Christians but also with the members of their families who had not obeyed Christ yet.

Every time I thank God for your support both spiritual and material. May the Lord richly bless you, and your loved ones, your congregations and your country. In ministry, Andrew.

P.S. While I was in the occupied Gorlovka, the authorities of the DPR passed the law “Concerning the freedom of conscience and religious organizations.” “All religious organizations that exist on the territory of the Donetsk People's Republic must compulsory get registered or confirm their previous registration...the mandatory registration procedure will last up to three months. The non-accredited religious organizations will not be able to continue their work on the territory of the Republic. With the purpose of counteraction against extremist, terrorist and sectarian activity the planned and casual control of these organizations has been hardened.”

<http://dnr24.su/dnr/15275-v-dnr-utverdili-obyazatelnyu-registraciyu-vseh-religioznyh-obedineniy-na-territorii-respubliki.html>

For a number of times now the Christians in the occupied areas have come under a scrutinized attention of the DPR secret service. Now these authorities will decide which religious organizations will be issued a permission to work in the republic, based on their own considerations. The UN has already stated their protest as this “law” will inevitably cause a new wave of religious persecutions and repressions, as it was back in 2014.

## Gorlovka in War



"The situation in Gorlovka remains very tense. The first two nights of my stay there the city was under artillery attacks. The school and buildings located in the downtown area suffered the most. Entire districts in the city became unsuitable for living. I enclose the pictures of the outcome of the recent artillery attacks of Gorlovka."



## NEWS FROM DENNIS SOPELNIK—THE BIBLICAL INSTITUTE TRAINING PREACHERS!

Dear brethren, greetings!

I would like to share some news about the recent events that took place in the Institute and some local churches in Ukraine.

### **Bachelors and Masters Programs in the Institute**

We have started the Masters program for our students in the beginning of June. The Masters' program has changed its form and the sessions of classes will take place two times a year in a three years' time period. This year seven graduates from our program of the previous years have decided to take it. The Masters' Program benefits the Institute providing us with local Ukrainian instructors. And the program does good for the local Churches allowing them to have leaders with solid Biblical education.

For the Bachelor students the time of summer practice/internship has begun. They are given the task to assist their home congregations and aid their local preachers working together in the summer time. Thus, Dima Levenets returned to Ternopil and according to his report he taught two classes each week, delivered two Sunday sermons, visited sick Christians at the hospital and also tried to reach out to a young man who had left the church about two months ago. I am very happy for our students staying active in summer time and gaining the practical experience in the church work.

It seems very likely that we are going to have more than ten new students for the first (initial) course of studies. We pray they do not change their mind before the school year begins. We will have to provide more auditoriums, rent more apartments but these are pleasant tasks. The most important part is to use the opportunity to educate more workers for the Lord's Kingdom. Alexey and I visited a lot of congregations of the Church of Christ in Ukraine looking to recruit new students. Currently my family is in Kramatorsk which is in the Eastern part of Ukraine. We are expecting four new students from this part of the country. I had a chance to meet them personally and visit a little with all of them. Also last month I had time to travel to Odessa meet the church members in this city and presented them with the information about our Institute.

### **Bela Tserkva – Gorlovka**

As you know, we have lived and served in the town of Bela Tserkva for a year and the staff decided to stay there for another school year. The local congregation welcomed us and gave us opportunities to preach, teach, evangelize openly, teach children's classes alongside with the classes at the Institute. Unfortunately we do not have the same opportunities in Gorlovka where the Institute had been located until 2014. We used to have comfortable facilities there.

Last week I had a chance to visit Gorlovka which is unfortunately under control of the unrecognized so-called Donetsk People Republic (DPR). The facilities that belonged to the Church and the Bible Institute are still being used by terrorists. The local Christians are few in number, lack a local preacher and suffer tremendously. The members of the Central Church of Christ who remain in the city can be counted by fingers on both hands—

## IN THE LORD'S NAME

"Your donations enable us to help people showing them that Christianity is not about words as much as it is about deeds. Glory to God for everything...We have given aid to many medical institutions this month. That aid came from shipments that you sent us. We are very thankful to all those that take pains to do this work. We always thank our Lord God for you and your hearts."



there are only eight of them left.

Some denominational preachers decided to return and they conduct services, probably by personal agreements with the DPR leaders who are illegal powers of this territory. All I could do was to visit the local Christians and encourage them personally. They are the examples of strong faith and courage for me.

Sadly at the night time I could hear the sounds of nearby warfare and it does not look like it is going to stop in any foreseeable future. As soon as the local Christians heard of my arrival they got together happily to fellowship, study the word and worship in hymns.

One sister admits that she knows all hymns by heart now because every night trying to cope with stress she would sing to the Lord with the complete trust in Him. I ask you to continue prayer for the people of the occupied part of Ukraine.

My family, our staff and students of the Bible Institute thank God for your prayers and your help. We have the common job and your aid is deeply appreciated.

Your brother and co-worker in the vineyard of the Lord, Dennis Sopolnik

