



Letter # 27 April 2008

# Manna Messenger

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## April - June Schedule

### April 1 - 10

Mike team taught  
YM 451: Youth and Family  
Ministry in Kyiv

### April 14 - 24

Mike taught  
YM 203: Curriculum Development  
for Youth in Kyiv

### May 9

Mike speaks at Regional  
Youth Conference in  
Kremenchyk, Central  
Ukraine

### May 24

Five Youth Ministry  
students graduate at Kyiv  
Theological Seminary with  
their Bachelors Degrees

### June 9 - 24

South Dakota to Ukraine  
YMI Missions Trip conducts  
English Evangelistic Camp  
in Lutsk, Western Ukraine

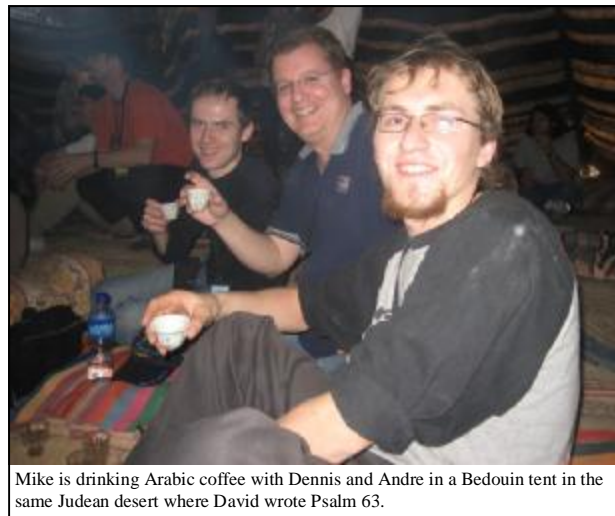
### June 9 - July 8

Colorado Christian College  
student Aaron Mednansky  
interns with the Mannas

## Exposing Students to International Youth Ministry from Mike

In February and March, we had the incredible privilege of bringing a few of our youth ministry students to international conferences in the US and in Israel. In February, the International Center for Youth Ministry invited both me and our new director in Western Ukraine, Vasya Ostriy, to speak at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. It was wonderful to see Vasya's world expand as he caught a vision of what he is part of in training youth pastors. Since then, Vasya has kept in contact with other youth ministry students from Mexico and Malaysia. He recently shared with me that three other Bible colleges in Ukraine have called to ask him to assist them in starting a youth ministry degree in their college. This vision was truly enhanced by attending the conference in Louisville.

In March, Judy and I took two of our students to a worldwide conference in Jerusalem sponsored by the Global Youth Initiative (GYI) and Dann Spader. This was an "invitation only" conference. GYI gave scholarships to me and our students. Fifty-three countries were represented as we were sharpened in our goal to make young disciples around the world. The highlight of the conference was actually getting to see where Jesus walked and taught his own disciples. Both of the students, Dennis and Andre, came back with renewed vision about being involved in youth ministry training in Ukraine. Andre has already been invited to be part of an Eastern Europe youth ministry training mission, and Dennis will be directing a camp in Crimea this summer. Judy and I feel like we will never be the same after seeing the Bible come alive in Israel.



Mike is drinking Arabic coffee with Dennis and Andre in a Bedouin tent in the same Judean desert where David wrote Psalm 63.

Continue to pray for us as we train the future youth ministry trainers of Ukraine. Our ministry is multiplying as our students are not only leading their own youth ministries — they are being asked to train other youth leaders.

## Katya's Miracle

From Judy

Life has contained a couple big surprises since you received our letter at Christmas. Our trip to Israel was thrilling to say the least, but the very biggest surprise was what happened in our situation with Katya. Some of you are on our email newsletter list and received my emails that contained the whole story as it was happening with all of the details. However, many of you do not receive our emails, and I want to fill you in on what happened — a very shortened version.

Mike and I had a "feeling" when we returned to Ukraine after our summer in the States, that it was time to pursue adopting Katya. It had been two years since her mother had, in no uncertain terms, refused to give up her rights. In February, we met with Dima, our lawyer, to discuss taking legal action to remove Tanya's rights. Dima was discouraging. He felt that if Tanya was still unwilling,

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Photos  
and  
videos  
online



Go to our website at  
[www.youthdiscipler.com](http://www.youthdiscipler.com)  
to sign up for our email  
newsletter and see  
photos.

## Incredible News about Katya - continued

our chances of getting it done were very small. We felt strongly that it was time to do *something*. But what? We had no idea. So we prayed. The last newsletter you received contained the story of my friend Annette's and my attempt to visit Tanya (Katya's mother) in December – the trip that nearly ended in disaster as we got stuck in a pasture nearly two miles from a road.

We attempted to visit Tanya two more times after that. Circumstances kept us from going each time. The planned trip in March was our *fourth* attempt to visit Tanya. We made arrangements for Olya (Katya's older sister) to meet us there, too. The night before our trip, Katya got sick, and it rained like crazy. We could not go. We tried again the next day, but it rained AND snowed!

It was all in God's hand. Olya had gone to Tanya's as planned, and she found her mother drunk. She was disgusted and said, "Mama, you MUST give up your rights and let Mike and Judy adopt Katya." Tanya refused. Olya wisely waited until the next day when her mother had sobered up a bit before she approached the subject again. They talked for a long time. Olya kept insisting that her mother think about Katya and not herself. Finally, miraculously, Tanya agreed to give up her rights. Olya immediately went to a neighbor's house to use the phone. She called us with the incredible news.

To us, this news was completely "out of the blue." We had no idea that Olya was planning to talk to her mother. You can imagine our surprise! Katya danced and squealed with joy, then sat down and wept tears of immense relief. Poor baby! What she must have gone through, thinking that the security of adoption would never be hers. She wiped her tears and ran to get her backpack, for in her returned papers from school *that day* was a letter she had written to God just a couple weeks prior in Bible class. She showed us her letter, saying, "I didn't think He would answer so FAST!" Here is that letter — written from the heart of a child. It is precious.

*Dear God,  
In our Bible class we are learning about David and how he trusted you and obeyed you. I want to trust you and obey you. God, I am having a hard time thinking about not being adopted. It has been my dream to be adopted. But Lord, I can trust you because you know what is best for me. Even if I don't get adopted, I know you will take care of me. God, I really want to obey you.*

*Love,  
Katya*



Katya with her mother, after Tanya agreed to give up her rights.

Praise the Lord for His constant care over us! Our lawyer wasted no time in getting to Tanya with documents for her to sign. Tanya gave up her rights. We are now trying to attain guardianship. Adoption will be a two year process, but at last we have a beginning!

This is just a fraction of the story. If you have access to the internet and want to read the whole thing, including our visit to Tanya, getting stuck *again*, Katya's reactions, the lawyer's visit and ensuing manhunt, the price Tanya placed on her child — go to our website at [www.youthdiscipler.com](http://www.youthdiscipler.com), click on the link to our email newsletters. Read Judy's letters from March 1, 2008, and following.

## Ukraine inflation at 17% this year



The economy in Ukraine seems to be out of control. Inflation has been in the double digits annually for the past 5 years. Groceries and other expenses have doubled or tripled since we arrived. Gas is now at \$5.30 per gallon. The US dollar has normally been stable to the Ukrainian currency (Hryvna), but recently the value of the US dollar has gone down. Our ministry expenses have gone up including the salaries for our translator and our children's bus driver. We would like to print some new books for our youth pastors in Russian, but we don't have the funds. Katya's adoption will also be expensive.

The Lord has been so faithful in taking care of us through our supporters! Thank you so much for sending us to Ukraine. We wanted to share with you that we have a need. If God leads you to support us monthly, to increase your support, or to send a special gift — we will endeavor to use it wisely. Thank you.