



Letter # 21

May 2006

# Manna Messenger

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## Schedule Highlights

### APRIL 17-27

#### YM 223: Contemporary Communication to Youth

Mike taught this course for the first time with the help of another missionary in Kiev.

### APRIL 23-29

#### Junior/Senior Trip to Prague

Mike & Judy chaperoned 16 MKs on an educational trip to the Czech Republic by train (expenses paid by kids' school).

### MAY 25-30

#### Western Ukraine Trip

Mike and Judy with Lena plan on visiting 5 of their students' ministries in Western Ukraine.

### JUNE 4-16

#### Masters in Lithuania

Mike will return to Lithuania to take two more BIOLA Masters' courses in Intercultural Studies.

### JULY 23-29

#### YMI Conference in Austria

Our whole family will be driving to Austria to meet with the other YMI missionaries from around the world.

### Can you run a cow for our support?

Ranchers, if you are interested in taking care of a cow for our support, please contact Bruce Brunner at 605-456-1665 or by email at [brucebrunner@hotmail.com](mailto:brucebrunner@hotmail.com).

## Practice Coaches and Game Coaches from Mike

During Mandie's basketball season this year, an analogy came to me that accurately demonstrates our situation in training youth pastors in Ukraine.

Early in their basketball season, Mandie's high school girls' team played in a tournament. The girls had a new coach this year who had really drilled the basics and prepared them well for the tournament. But Mandie and several of her teammates quickly got frustrated in the first game when the coach made some confusing decisions. He was substituting two or three new players every two minutes of the game in order to let everybody play equal time. Due to this decision, the team never felt unified or cohesive. He did not give them instructions on the sidelines. They were frustrated. After the loss, the Athletic Director asked the coach if he (the Athletic Director) could coach the remaining games of the tournament with their coach assisting. Mandie's coach agreed, and in the very next game our girls beat the defending championship team from Moscow.

A board member of the school told me

on the sideline, "The first coach is an excellent *practice coach*. He did a great job preparing the team to play, focusing on the fundamentals. Other coaches are better *game coaches*, coaching the team while they are actually playing in the game."

This describes our situation in training youth pastors in Ukraine. As a seminary teacher, and as a foreigner, I can be no more than the *practice coach* for my youth ministry students. This is why we require all of our students to be involved in youth ministry in their local churches, to meet with their mentors in the church, and to report back to me. But the biggest problem we face in training is that we don't have *game coaches* in the churches. Our students can't find consistent mentors. Mentorship is a new concept in Ukrainian churches, and we are in desperate need of *game coaches* who can be in our students' churches to coach them while they are in the game. We hope that someday our students will be the mentors for the next generation of youth pastors. Pray with us that they will rely on the Holy Spirit to be their *game coach* as they pioneer youth ministry in Ukraine.

## Can Katya be adopted? from Judy

If you have been following our emails over the past couple of months, you know that we talked to Katya's mother about giving up her parental rights so that we could adopt Katya. On March 30th, we took Galina, our Russian language teacher, along to ask the big question. She went straight to the point of our visit when we sat down together inside the wooden hut. Mike, Katya, and I were present. Tanya, Katya's mother, responded explosively with a definite "no." Her blatant refusals always seemed to center around one focal thought, "What would the neighbors think of us?" Relationships are key in Ukrainian culture, and the neighbors' opinions are of highest importance. Katya's family lives in a tiny



Children at the Katya's old orphanage received blankets and quilts from a homeschool group in Minnesota.

village where everybody knows everything about one another. If she allowed us to adopt Katya, the neighbors would call her a bad

*continued on back*

## Needed: Support for the Manna Family

God has continually provided for our monthly support over the past four years that we have been in Ukraine. We have a support team that is amazingly supportive and faithful. Words don't describe our support team! They are *with* us here. We are dearly blessed.

We haven't had to share financial needs until this year, because we haven't been in need. But now we are. Our expenses have gone up considerably in the past six months and they will continue to rise. Katya has now become a real part of our family, and we will have four kids in missionary kids' school next year instead of three (Sammie home schooled this year). Groceries have increased 40% since we moved here (meat 60%) and the government has just announced that they are going to raise electricity and heating costs by 25%. We also know that our transportation costs are expected to go up by 50%. A lot of this is a result of Ukraine's decision to enter the world economy and move away from government subsidies.

Thus, our family is in need of an additional \$500 per month of support. If this is something you would like to help with, please write a pledge on the enclosed slip of paper and send it into our mission, Youth Ministry International.

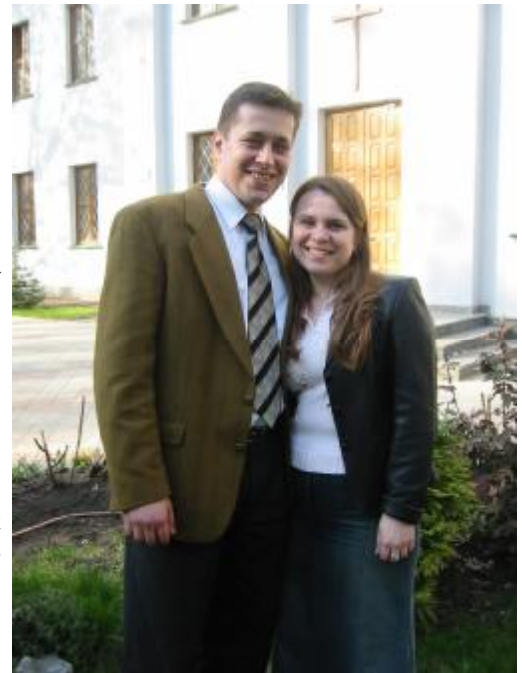


## Support Need for Lena and Vova Yakim, YMI Ukraine Staff

When we arrived in Ukraine, one of our first tasks was to hire a translator and office assistant for our YMI office. God hand picked Lena to be our assistant. She has been wonderful!

Since 2002, a grant from a church in Grand Rapids, MI, has paid Lena's salary and our office expenses. That money will soon be exhausted, yet Lena's work is not done. She is invaluable in the ministry to youth leaders in Ukraine. In the past six months, she has retranslated Doug Field's book Purpose Driven Youth Ministry for its second printing; she has orally translated three college courses; she has translated the notes for a new youth ministry course as well as graded papers, answered emails, and prepared reports. It would be impossible for me to do ministry here without someone like her.

Lena married Vova Yakim, a seminary student in the pastoral program, in May of last year. He is a gifted preacher and plans to teach at the seminary someday. Lena is in need of \$500 per month for her support. If you or your church would like to support her in her ministry, please send in your pledge on the enclosed slip of paper and send it into our mission as well. Lena will keep in contact with you by email.



## Can Katya be adopted? - continued

mother. Later, the conversation became more positive. Tanya assured us that every three years she will sign legal documents giving Katya permission to live with us. She said, "We will do this until Katya is 16. At the age of 16, Katya can decide for herself about adoption." This was good news and inwardly we rejoiced, though we also understood Tanya's logic. In Ukraine, children are considered to be adults at age 16. They no longer need parental consent for decisions about where they will live.

So that is where we left things. We agreed that Katya will go on living with us as she is now, but we said that everything is out in the open. Tanya knows of our desire to adopt, and we asked her to please consider it some more. We encouraged her to think about Katya and her future and not so much about what the neighbors will say. We can see plainly, though, that protecting her reputation with her neighbors is of utmost importance. Please continue to pray. As for Katya, she is happy. She feels security for the first time since joining our family. She just can't wait to be 16!



**N e e d e d : a d d i t i o n a l S u p p o r t**

We would like to give to the training of Ukrainian youth pastors with a pledge of ...

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month / quarterly / semi-annual / annual (circle one)

For  Manna Family  Lena and Vova Yakim (check one)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the above pledge slip to:

Youth Ministry International  
1300 Envoy Circle Suite 1306  
Louisville, KY 40299