



Letter # 15 September 2004

Manna Messenger

Mike & Judy Manna, Eurasia Director, Youth Ministry International

Mailing Address: Mike & Judy Manna
(all caps) DPAGOMAHOBA 17, KB. 149
KUEB, 02068
Ukraine
Email: manna@youthdiscipler.com

Support Address: Youth Ministry International
1300 Envoy Circle Suite 1306
Louisville, KY 40299
Website: www.youthdiscipler.com

Mike's Fall Training Schedule

September - December
Mike will teach three 1-hour classes each week to the sophomore youth ministry students on "Programming in Youth Ministry (YM201)."

September 6-16
Mike taught a 40 hour class to his beginning Freshman modular students on "Principles of Youth Ministry."

September 24-26
Mike leads games for 70 missionary teenagers (Luke and Mandie included) at their school's Fall Retreat.

October 8-9
Mike is organizing a Marriage Conference for Regional Youth Directors and their wives from all around Ukraine. Randy (YMI board member) and Leann Hunt will be speaking.

October - December
Mike has been asked to share in several regions since we have returned. Pray for wisdom on which opportunities to say "yes" to.

Do you get our email newsletters?

We send email updates every 2 weeks about what is going on in our lives. If you would like to receive these emails, please let us know by writing to us at:
manna@youthdiscipler.com.

An Evening Walk with my Husband from Judy

Sometimes I like to write to get the experiences of the day and my thoughts and feelings down on paper. In many ways since returning, we almost feel like we're experiencing life in Ukraine for the first time. Our impressions aren't so muddled by the lack of language. We're not as bewildered or exhausted all the time. We can interact with our surroundings, because we're beginning to understand what is going on around us. We're beginning to understand the Ukrainian people and how they think more and more. We can interpret what

they are saying...even anticipate what they *will* say...more and more. And God is instilling an even deeper love in our hearts for the people that surround us.

Mike and I went on a date our first Saturday night home. It was very special to be alone with my husband. Did I say alone?? After dinner at TGI Fridays which is our favorite restaurant because it serves American food, we walked on Kreshatik (the main street of Kiev) amidst hundreds of others who were also enjoying the evening. It was dark, and we were surrounded by such beauty as we walked along the lamp-lighted street. We blended in

continued on back

My Second Group of Youth Ministry Students from Mike

I was excited to get back into teaching. When I arrived at the seminary, I felt a new and wonderful sense of belonging. Over the summer, the seminary had allowed us to move our office from an apartment nearby into their building. If you ever come to visit, just ask for the National Center for Youth Ministry at the front door, and they will be happy to direct you to our small, but adequate offices on the third floor.

Classes began on August 31 at the seminary with a total of 21 residential students (the maximum they are able to house) and 52 modular students. Of these students, I am continuing to teach my 7 residential youth ministry students which I had last year as well as 11 new youth ministry modular students. The "modular" students will come in four times a year (2 weeks

each time) for intensive class work. This modular program is especially set up for people who are already in ministry and therefore can't get away full-time. They come from all over Ukraine and from all different situations. One of my students is Tima, who many of you met this past summer. He worked at Trail's End ranch where he completed a four month

continued on back



Mike and translator Lena with new students. *Standing left to right:* Kolya, Senya, Mike, Vladimir, Lena, Tima, Pyotyia, Ivan, Vlad, Pavil. *Seated left to right:* Ratislav, Vasya, Andre

A Evening Walk with my Husband — continued

with the Ukrainian people as we had dressed up for the evening. (Ukrainians always dress up.) Friends from home were in my thoughts as we walked. I reflected on our summer and how much we had enjoyed our time home. For three precious months, we had soaked in the beauty of the country and the fellowship of dear family and friends. Now we were walking on the streets of Kiev again.

I thought I might feel sadness over returning to the city, but instead I sensed the edges of joy swelling in my heart as I quietly observed our surroundings. This is the beautiful part of Kiev at a beautiful time of the year—cobblestone Kreshatik lined with stately chestnut trees and old stone build-

ings, fountains that are turned on in the evenings, street lamps, couples walking together. I was chilly in my sleeveless dress, so Mike kept his arm around me as we walked. I was enjoying the romance of this special evening with my husband, when I began to study the multitudes of people around us and the thought came, “How many of these people know Jesus? What good is life and beauty and even romance if you don’t know Jesus? It’s meaningless.” I grew sober inside and prayed from the bottom of my heart that the Lord would help us to be faithful to the task He has appointed for us. I surrendered my heart anew to serve the Lord in Ukraine. I prayed that we might shine brightly the love of Jesus and the *life* found in Him. The Lord gently reminded me that it is *He* who will lead us. We need only to be faithful to follow His leading.

The following day was Sunday and our first day back in our church. Pastor Andre greeted us joyfully and Sergey, one of Mike’s students, practically leaped into our arms. There were no greetings from other Ukrainians in the church. This did not surprise me. I shared in several churches over the summer that in our church family, despite our feeble efforts to reach out in Russian, people rarely even say hello to us. This is an example of the language barrier. I had mentally prepared myself for this, and I reminded myself to be patient. Relationships will grow as our language grows.

It was a joy for each of us to find ourselves understanding much of the greeting and opening prayer. And then we had a treat—an American missionary who spoke in English using a translator to talk about Jesus being the light of the world. It was so good, and the Lord used his words to pierce this truth into our hearts: When you are surrounded by complete darkness like in the depths of a cave, everything is overcome by that darkness. You can’t see your hand in front of your face. But if you strike a match; is the light of that little flame overcome by the darkness? No, the darkness is ALWAYS overcome by the light. Jesus is the Light. I reflected back on Mike’s and my walk and the masses of people that surrounded us. I took courage in the thought that God can use His children to bring the light of salvation to a world that is filled with spiritual darkness. One tiny match can pierce the thick darkness of a cave. One life devoted to God, Christ shining forth from within, can make a difference—may that thought also fill *you* with courage as you interact with your world today.



Our departure from Rapid City Airport to Ukraine: Mandie with Chloe, Luke, cousin Cody, Judy’s Aunt Norma, Grandma Weiss, Aunt Nancy, Judy’s Uncle Gordon, Uncle Roger and Grandpa Weiss.



Our missionary dog, Chloe, traveled with us 9,000 miles this summer in the States. She often looked out the front window as we drove. Her favorite activity was chasing wild turkeys and whatever else would run from her, even a donkey named Babydoll!!

My Second Group of Youth Ministry Students — continued

camping internship.

Another of my new students, Ratislav, has been a youth leader in a church where they just began a contemporary worship service. This is very unusual for Ukraine. He has 60 young people in his youth group, whereas Ivan is just starting youth ministry in a village on the Ukrainian / Slovakian border that has a population of only 560. His church has only 3 youth, but he is meeting with them one on one, trying to get something started. Another

student, Senya, is a Regional Youth Director where he networks over 100 youth groups and their leaders. Vasya is in a 2-year-old church in Rivna (5 hours from Kiev) with 100 new Christians from the city’s university.

At times I have been brought to tears in thinking what a privilege it is to train these men. They have been so appreciative for the teaching, and I am so thankful to be used by our Lord.