



Letter # 22 September 2006

# Manna Messenger

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## Fall Youth Ministry Classes at Kiev Theological Seminary

### Semester Course:

August 28 - December 16  
**YM 403 Professional Orientation to Youth Ministry**  
(Seniors) - Mike teaches

August 28 - December 16  
**YM 187 Supervised Youth Ministry Experience**  
(All students) - Mike supervises

### Modular Courses:

September 18 - 28  
**YM 203 Curriculum Development for Adolescents**  
(Sophomores) - Mike teaches

October 2 - 12  
**YM 203 Curriculum Development for Adolescents**  
(Juniors) - Nick Rombough, Nemo Church, SD teaches

November 13 - 23  
**YM 101 Principles of Youth Ministry** (Freshmen) - Mike teaches

December 11 - 21  
**YM 347 Youth Discipleship**  
(Juniors) - Mike Gustafson, Kiev missionary, teaches

## Breakdown in Italy from Judy

This summer, we spent our vacation on a farm in Italy. It really is interesting to drive through Europe, crossing borders of countries as frequently as we cross borders of states in America. We stayed on a beautiful Italian farm for 8 days, leaving only to visit Venice for a day (an hour away). We absolutely relished our time on the farm, and did not want to leave in order to see sights. We especially enjoyed the time to rest and to retreat with the Lord. Oh, what an incredible, refreshing time we had! It was so good for us as a family!

Then we started for home. We planned to spend a few days in Vienna, Austria, where Mandie and Sammie had appointments with a scoliosis specialist. Mandie had worn her plastic corset brace 18 hours a day for an entire year. She needed to be checked to determine if she could take it off. One of Sammie's shoulders was becoming noticeably higher than the other, and we feared that her spine was curving, as well. We also had meetings scheduled in Vienna with another YMI missionary (Youth Ministry International) who teaches the same courses in Nairobi, Kenya, as Mike does here. And in addition to all of this, a missionary couple from Vienna was going to do a day of "member care" with all of us (counseling for missionary families).

About three hours from the farm and just before entering the Italian Alps, the transmission went out in our van. There was a small town just ahead of us on the autobahn. We were able to limp our way to a garage in second gear. The garage was already closed, but one mechanic offered to look at our van. To make a long, truly amazing story short, we witnessed the care and protection of our Lord as He directed our path back home. It was a terribly difficult situation emotionally. We were rendered absolutely helpless because of the lack of language. It was 115 degrees that

*Continued on back*

## Reaching Youth in Small Groups from Mike

Even though the bulk of my time is spent training youth leaders in the classroom, it is very important that I go and see my students' ministries personally. They minister in villages and cities all around Ukraine. Recently we visited Rivna and Lutsk in Western Ukraine. There we saw two of our students leading Youth Clubs with over 100 youth in each group. But not every successful youth ministry has a large youth group.



Mike visits one his student's home Bible studies for non-Christian youth. Left to right: Lena, Mike, Alex (Mike's student) and a few teenagers.

We visited Alex's Bible study for youth. He invites non-Christian teenagers to his family's two-bedroom home every week to talk about a life topic. There he leads them to God's Word over Coke and cookies. Nearly every young person has a cell phone in Ukraine, so he sends each person a text message reminding them when to come and what topic and verse they will be studying. He has led several young people to Christ over the years. In fact, another of my students, Vasya (a former drug addict) came to the Lord four years ago in the same town. Two years ago, Vasya met a special young lady whom Alex had led to the Lord in his small group. They got married. Now Vasya and his wife lead a youth ministry with over 100 college students in attendance. Continue to pray for Alex and Vasya. They are reaching young people for Christ.

### Have you checked our website lately?

We have archives of all of our email newsletters, photos from the past 4 years, as well as Ukraine culture research papers. Check out:  
[www.youthdiscipler.com](http://www.youthdiscipler.com)

### Breakdown in Italy - continued

day, and there was nowhere to get relief from the heat, not even in the hotel. Plus, it was a financial disaster that seemed to continue on and on like toppling dominoes. It happened on a Saturday, and we would need to stay in a hotel till Monday, when the mechanic would look at the transmission and tell us how long the van would take



Unfortunately, our family could not convince our Venetian gondolier to take us all the way back to Ukraine!

to fix. If it was not possible to drive the van home, we would face the expense of an alternate means of transportation on top of what repairing the van would cost. Plus, we thought we would miss the girls' doctor appointments in Vienna, and that would mean having to send them back to the States for check ups. Cha-ching!! (Noise of a hungry cash register.)

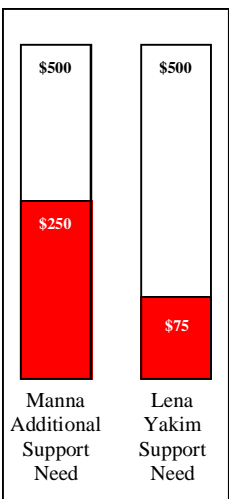
We got word on Monday that the transmission was shot and would take a month to fix. We would need to leave our van in Italy. Mike immediately began making arrangements to get back to Kiev. The cheapest way home started with a 6 hour train ride through the Alps to Vienna. It turned out to be a highlight of our vacation. We felt so covered by the hand of God; so treated to a glimpse of His handiwork! And we made it to Vienna in time for the girls' appointments! Mandie's back has stabilized, and she was given permission to remove the brace for good. Sammie's spine was straight, though one leg is nearly 2 cm longer than the other. She may need an operation to stop the growth in that leg while the other catches up.

The YMI missionaries were at the train station to meet us. We got to spend just a half hour with them before they had to leave. The private home that we'd booked for our time in Vienna was still miraculously available -- for just the amount of time we needed it. And we got to have a day of family counseling with the couple from Vienna, after all. The husband is an adoption counselor! What a surprise gift from God to be able to share about our year with Katya with someone who was able to understand and provide wisdom!

There were no train or bus tickets available, so we had no choice but to fly from Vienna to Kiev. Our taxi driver was late that morning and also missed a turn to the airport. This resulted in us being the last passengers to check in, and our flight had been overbooked. Our whole family was bumped to first class! We were treated to a full breakfast using china and linens, when everyone else got peanuts. Did we sense the Lord's assurance that He was in control?! Truly this experience, though hard, was *good* for our family, as we were forced to trust our Lord and to experience the truth of Rm. 8:28, "All things work together for good to those who love the Lord."

We have never been so thankful to have our feet touch Ukrainian soil! Our van is still in Italy, and Mike will fly to get it in a week. We will sell it as soon as he drives it back to Kiev. Vehicles are so expensive in Ukraine because of the atrocious import taxes. It is worth fixing the van and bringing it back to Ukraine to sell. Mike will soon be flying to Omaha to buy a minivan. Even with shipping costs, it will save us a great deal of money to buy a vehicle in America. We will not have to pay import taxes if we keep our car registered in the States.

### Financial Need



A difficult part of being a missionary is raising finances for our living and ministry. Nobody likes to ask for money! The need to buy a replacement van has occurred at the same time we need to ask for additional monthly support. The cost of living in Kiev has literally doubled since we arrived here four years ago. When we took Katya into our home, we realized that we would face paying for yet another child to attend Kiev Christian Academy. At that time, the Lord whispered to our hearts not to think too much about finances -- Katya was His child, and He would provide for her needs. Last year, there were several reasons that we decided to home school Samantha. We loved our year together, but Sammie is ready to go back. So, this is the first year we face paying tuition for four children. We received pledges for half of our new monthly need, so we still need an additional \$250 per month. Lena, our translator, is receiving \$75 a month of her \$500 monthly need as well. Finances are also needed for our minivan replacement fund. Oofda! That seems too much to mention at once!

We are torn when we face a need. Do we trust the Lord to provide and not say anything to our supporters at home? Yet many people throughout the years have asked us to say something if we have a need. So, our attitude in mentioning the need for financial help is one of prayer. We'll mention the need, but we will trust the Lord to nudge you if He wants you to help. We have been *greatly* blessed through the years by our team of supporters. We'd like to wrap you all in a great hug of thanks for giving so that we are able to minister to the young men and women God has given Mike to train. The Lord is completely in control of this situation.