

February 2004

"Give thanks with a grateful heart..." (In Russian, it sounds like: "Hwa la teeba nash Gospode." This is a song we sing around here often. I am trying to keep up with my son in learning these Russian songs, but I believe he's got the mental edge (he's only 8) - I tell him it's because he has sooo much room still for rent upstairs, Ha ha! This is one of the songs that comes to my mind during the past several weeks.

**WE THANK THE LORD AND YOU FOR MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO BE HERE AND DO WHAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO DO.**

Many cards and gifts and emails made their way across the chilly Atlantic Ocean these past two months and have encouraged our hearts. **YOU FOLK ARE SUCH A BLESSING!!** I want to share a story with you along those lines...

Several weeks ago, after a Wednesday evening service, Brother Sirgay was about to leave, and I was talking with him. I shook his hand when he was about to head out the door. I noticed he had these ultra cheapo, cheapo wool gloves that was older than probably both our grandmas put together, I mean old and **NOT** warm. **THE LORD SAID**, "You have a better pair of gloves than that, give him yours." (Now these are the pair of gloves that my mama got me way back years and years ago. These were my good, no - **FAVORITE** pair of gloves that were just worn in to fit my hand. I mean I liked these gloves, do you understand?!) Well, even though part of me didn't want to, I gave him my gloves and he gave me his. Anyway, just a few days ago I met Sirgay on the streets passing out tracts. I was very glad to see this fellow servant of Christ out "spreading the light" of the Gospel. We invited him to eat lunch with us, and after lunch he shook my hands wearing my old gloves. I asked him if they were keeping his hands "teeplo" (**WARM**). And he said yes. He likes them very much. Then he mad an interesting statement: he said, "Brother, these are **YOUR** hands passing out these tracts." I told him that I was very glad to be a part and help the hands that were giving the Gospel. **DEAR SUPPORTING FRIENDS AND FAMILY, WE ARE SOOOO GLAD TO SERVER AS "YOUR HANDS" HERE IN THE UKRAINE** helping people find new life in **CHRIST**.

In January, we took the teens to Sevastopol, Ukraine, for the annual winter conference. We challenged them with Bible preaching, pointing them toward new goals and ministries for this New Year; we also played some zany games (one in which we made Pastor Bob into a "mummy" - we did work around his moustache, didn't want to take away from his identity, you know), and basically we just spent some special time together building relationships and enjoying fellowship. The trip was a reward for faithfulness in the youth group.

Language school is making slow, but sure progress. This past week, we had our first classes where our teacher spoke all Russian and no English. The neatest part is that I was able to understand her (not every word, but enough to figure out the rest). I am trying to memorize some verses from the Russian Bible with my Sunday School Class, and they

enjoy hearing me try to pronounce and mispronounce several of these words, the stresses get me every time. We are enjoying the challenge though.

In my Sunday School class I have three new converts. It is such a thrill to watch them week after week sit there with pen in hand, taking notes and listening very attentively. Some are so eager to learn how to live for Christ.

Every year we ask the Lord what to do for our Christmas gift **TO JESUS**. The Lord reminded me of the passage: "As much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me..." And so we began to pray and seek who to give this gift to. The Lord led us to two elderly ladies in the church who both have serious health problems, but have little or no means to take care of such needs. We gave the gift in January, closer to the day they celebrate Christmas here. Come to find out, these financial gifts were just exactly (I mean perfect timing) for specific needs both these ladies had in their homes and lives. It was sooo neat to see the glory of the Lord shadowing over the whole experience. Praise the Lord!! We could not have helped those ladies if it wasn't for so many of you who help us. Thank you!

I have one more story, but for sake of space and time I will save it for next month. Please be in prayer about the following needs:

1. I need wisdom to fill in while Pastor Bob goes on a semi-short furlough back in the States.
2. Many are sick here and my health has been a bit rough in January. (I caught the flue two days after getting the flu shot.)
3. Pray for a positive spirit. Negativity flows in the streets of this third world country and it is easy to get swept in.
4. I need an extra portion of sufficient grace and supernatural enabling to equip this WV brain of mine to tackle the Russian Language.
5. There are many new converts in my class, one more made a decision to trust Christ this evening in the service, Aaaa-men!!!
6. Please give extra prayer for my wife as she tries and tries to grasp a better hold on the language; she is struggling.

Sure appreciate you and your labors in prayer for us and the work here; please keep up the good effort and know that you are making a difference all the way over here on this side of the world.

For the Harvest-

Tony, Dawn, Marc, Josh, Caleb and Anna Hess