



# Ferguson Report



Vol. 4 No. 9

“Go ye unto all the world”

September 2007

## Ukraine Visit September 07

A week had barely passed and the contents of my Peru/Denver trips were emptied from my suitcases that they were filled back again with contents this time destined for Ukraine. Paul Norris, Frances Jones and I headed for Memphis Tuesday morning Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> to catch our 12:40 p.m. flight to Charlotte and then to Munich with the final flight destination being Donetsk. After landing in Donetsk and clearing customs we were greeted by Sergey Saenko, the preacher for the Krasny Luch congregation, who had transportation ready to take us to Krasny Luch.

The purposes of our trip were in some ways similar to last year's. We were sent there by the North Jackson (Jackson, TN) congregation which has been involved in this work for a number of years. They have conducted yearly campaigns in the city of Krasny Luch which is located in eastern Ukraine near the Russian border. But for various reasons the membership of the church in Krasny Luch has been steadily decreasing. There is still a good “core” membership, but the elders of the North Jackson church which is heavily involved in missions felt that they simply are not able to provide the kind of support the church there really needs. As a result Paul and I traveled to Gorlovka to relay the North Jackson eldership's request asking that the *Bear Valley Bible Institute of Gorlovka* under the directorship of Terry Harmon accept the ownership of the property where the Krasny Luch congregation worships. Furthermore, we were asked to request Terry's and the school's assistance and encouragement of the Krasny Luch church by means of campaigns, VBS's, seminars, and other special programs. Unhesitatingly, Terry warmly accepted the challenge pending an appropriate title search of the property and the authority from the Bear Valley eldership in Denver.

While I have some “mixed emotions” over this transition, it is probably the right decision. And I commend the North Jackson eldership for wanting to give the Krasny Luch church greater and more frequent opportunities and resources for Christian service and growth. I am beginning to see that this may indeed be a good “marriage” of opportunity between Bear Valley and the Krasny Luch congregation. The

recent move of our Bear Valley extension school from Kramatorsk to Gorlovka is I believe good timing for the church at Krasny Luch.

The other major purpose of the trip was to conduct a one-week campaign. During most days we had Bible studies while in the evenings we had lessons most of which I preached on the subject of “Equipping the Saints.” To begin the campaign we invited Terry Harmon and Denton Landon who was teaching graduate classes at BVBIG. Denton delivered the Bible class lesson with Terry translating; then Terry preached to the congregation in their native Russian tongue. We believed this would give Terry the opportunity to “connect” with the brethren at Krasny Luch in a good way since very few of them know English. During the campaign one brother was restored asking for the prayers of the church for offences in his life. We met a good number of new prospects just in our course of spending time in Krasny Luch – many of them people we met on the streets and in the local bazaars. There is so much potential for good to be done there that it was very difficult to leave. I ask you to pray for the survival of this small struggling congregation and the city of Krasny Luch that God may open their hearts by the gospel of God's grace (Acts 16:14).

Howell

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## Chimala Bible College

Please don't forget about our 24 new students who will soon be enrolling for the new January 2008 session. We have already approved them and committed to their arrival at Chimala. We are still quite a bit short on having their monthly support raised but we are not looking back – God will provide! We have no choice but to believe that. Please, if you have been even slightly considering helping with the training of local men in their own country to become evangelists, preachers, teachers, and church leaders will you let me know? We at the Bear Valley Bible Institute *honestly believe* that the future for sound and faithful congregations not only locally but around the world depends upon the faithful training of faithful men in the simple unchanging and eternal principles of God. There is so much at stake!

Howell

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## CSMT School of Biblical Studies, Abakaliki, Nigeria

You will recall from last month's newsletter that I announced that we now have a new preacher-training extension school in the Ebonyi state of Nigeria. I will be working as the coordinator for this school assisted by Keith Kasarjian of Pikeville, Kentucky. Sometime in the near future Keith and I plan to make a survey trip there to familiarize ourselves more with the operations, personnel and needs of the school. Our Nigerian brethren have ambitious goals and are investing their resources to achieve them. They do not want to be dependent on American money indefinitely. They have asked BVBID to coordinate the School of Preaching because of our reputation of providing a quality program with balanced and experienced staff from the U. S. But in the meantime we are currently investigating new sources of funds for student support. But let me give you a little general information about the country of Nigeria.

Nigeria has been estimated to contain between 140 and 150 million people and it has one of the highest population densities in the world. One out of every 3 Africans is a Nigerian. The religions in Nigeria are roughly 45% "Christian," 45% Muslim, and about 10% "everything else," including traditional religions and beliefs. Though the government supports

the different religions, the past rulers have usually been Muslim. While the three most popular ethnic groups are Yoruba, Ibo (also spelled Igbo), and Hausa-Fulani, there are 250 different languages spoken in Nigeria.

Nigeria now consists of 36 states and had its capital in Lagos until 1991 when the more centrally-located city of Abuja became the new capital. Located between the equator and the Tropic of Cancer, Nigeria is consistently hot.

There are 2 main seasons in Nigeria: the rainy season lasts from about May until September in the North; and about March to November in the South. English is the official language, though French and tribal languages are taught in the schools. I'll say more about this new school in future newsletters. Howell

