



Ferguson Report



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"Go ye unto all the world"

October 2008

Abakaliki, Nigeria

Having just returned from Ukraine I want to try to play "catch-up" reporting on my last two trips overseas before these events begin to turn into a blur. The first occasion was a visit to Nigeria to the CSMT School of Biblical Studies in Abakaliki. Everywhere on the compound there is evidence of additional construction as different structures progress toward completion. There is still much to be done but the Nigerian brethren are trying to keep their focus on the development of a self-sustaining program to train



These two little sisters with beaming faces are enrolled in the CSMT Primary School.

preachers and church leaders. They currently have 23 students enrolled in the Bible program. In addition, the compound accommodates a primary and secondary boarding school with approximately 200 students in current enrollment.

This trip to Abakaliki that Denton Landon and I made in September was a complete-180 from my last trip there back in December 07. The airport crowds were down. Working our way through immigration and customs was a cinch. Even the weather cooperated with a couple of refreshing afternoon rain showers to cool things down. Denton taught two graduate courses and I taught two undergraduate courses. The men who made up the classes I taught were a combination of both the certificate and degree programs, twenty-three

in all. These guys were all good and attentive students making my job as a teacher a very enjoyable one.

Not uncommon with many African countries is the unreliability of what we Americans often consider to be the necessities of life—dependable electricity, continuous water supply, hot water, and on-site



Undergraduate and certificate students of the CSMT School of Biblical Studies

internet capability. None of these things are found at CSMT. Throughout a typical day the electricity is probably cycled on-and-off a couple of dozen times. Water is only available a few hours per day. Hot water doesn't exist. In fact, I kidded with Denton about counting down the days by saying things like *"Five more cold showers before we go home!"* And email can only be accessed by going to a local internet café where the data speed is slower than dial-up. But the following phrases help to deal with these little inconveniences: 1) *"TIA"* (*"This is Africa"*); 2) *"Slide and glide"* (I picked up that little saying from the security workers at the Detroit airport); and 3) *"Don't sweat the small stuff"* (a useful quote I heard frequently from my good friend Cy Stafford).

Every new work—including CSMT has its *"growing pains."* But this preaching school continues to be one of our most promising foreign extension schools. Located in the most populated country in Africa, its potential for sending out men to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ is tremendous. Howell

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Gorlovka and Krasny Luch, Ukraine

There are many “*firsts*” in life. Just a few days ago, Mary accompanied me to Ukraine making it her first trip to this country. This was my fourth such trip—the first two with Paul Norris and Frances Jones, and the last trip in March with our older two children, Sarah and Seth. Two things I wanted to accomplish on



The church of Christ that meets at Krasny Luch.

this trip was to teach Intertestamental Period in the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Ukraine in Gorlovka,

and to teach a series of lessons on stewardship for the church in Krasny Luch.

The truth is the work in Eastern Ukraine is a slow process. A number of influences from the West—both good and bad—have taken their toll on this former Soviet country. The “*freedom*” that brought in liberty of commerce, expression and religion has also brought in materialism and secular thinking. Longing eyes into western life has blinded the spiritual perception of many people. Yet, there are still signs of honest hearts who will settle for nothing less than the enduring and spiritual life in Christ.

In fact, I just found out in reading Terry Harmon’s report after we returned to the States that Pavel, a visitor at the Krasny Luch church was baptized into Christ. His father whom we studied with is a bishop in the Orthodox Church. This is really exciting news and gives us renewed confidence in the power of the gospel of Christ. Honestly, I had little hope at the time that he was really that interested. But I’m glad to admit that I was wrong.

I want to ask you to please continue to pray for the hearts of the people in Ukraine that God may open their eyes. As I’ve said before, Satan doesn’t like what we’re doing there or anywhere else in the world. But we know what we’re doing is right. And we know that the destiny of lost souls is dependent upon the resolve that we never give up. Please help us. Howell