

REPORT FROM MARIUPOL, UKRAINE

September 2006

Dear Brethren,

Greetings from Mariupol. The hot weather appears to have ended for this year and has given way to days in which neither fans nor heaters are called for and we are very grateful. Usually, with the turn of the weather toward cooler days, the city government kindly restores our hot water. This year they have not yet been so gracious – which means that Amanda and I have now been without for 3 months! They have promised to restore it by October 15. We hope that they keep their word but must admit that this hope is more desire than expectation by a significant factor.

In addition to this, several factors have made the weeks following my last report among the most difficult of my time in Ukraine. I mentioned in my last report our hope that my sister and brother-in-law would be interested in moving here and sharing in the work. They informed us halfway through their visit that they were actually not interested in being here at all and had decided to move instead to Budapest, Hungary.

This, of course, was a bitter disappointment to us both. I have stressed from the beginning the need for a second worker here. This was less of a need in the beginning when brethren from the States were coming regularly to help out on a short-term basis. As many of you are well aware, this all but ceased after my first year here as the preachers who had been coming found their attention focused elsewhere. Lee and Marcie were our best hope for resolving this problem. These hopes have been dashed and we are currently without prospects for future help here. If you or someone you know would be interested in helping in this regard, please let us know. Also, please pray that the Lord will send us the help that we need.

A couple weeks after Lee and Marcie's departure, Galina went on vacation with her daughter's family. This left Valentin to fend for himself for several days. When we arrived for Bible Study that Wednesday, we found him acting rather strange but did not become suspicious that anything was wrong until he began laughing uncontrollably as he led the opening prayer and asked the Lord that I would live to be 900 years old like Noah!

Afterwards, I made sure to smell his breath, which left little doubt as to his condition. His wife later confirmed that in her absence, Teresa had managed to influence her sister Elnora as well as Valentin to drink with her. This was, of course, a disappointing fall for Elnora and Teresa, but especially so for Valentin as he had been clean the longest – almost 2 years. Furthermore, he and Galina seem to be the ones the other Christians look to as examples. If either of them relapse into sin, it has the potential to destroy the church here. Valentin and Elnora have since come back and made things right. Teresa has not. Please pray for her that she will come back and start struggling to defeat this addiction once again.

Our studies have continued to go forward in spite of this and Valentin especially has shown great progress since his return. He has worked especially hard on the memory work for the book of Exodus and, since he was a builder and carpenter himself, has taken special interest in the plans for the tabernacle and its furnishings. It is hard to believe that we have already covered the first two books of the Old Testament and a substantial part of the Gospels. I pray that the applications available from these studies will continue to take better hold.

I am happy to report that we are doing the final proofreading on the maps for Bob Waldron's history and Geography of the Bible and should have printed books ready to distribute very soon. (To my fellow evangelists in Russian speaking countries: go ahead and let me know how many copies of this book you can use so I can make plans to get them to you as soon as they are available). Vera has also already managed to get a quarter of the way through Donnie Rader's book on Divorce and Remarriage. Both of these will be an excellent resource for brethren in this part of the world. Thanks again to all those who have helped in getting these translated.

Due to the problems mentioned above as well as the general fullness of my schedule, I have had a little difficulty bringing the newspaper project to completion. I do, however, hope to have it done within the next few weeks so that Amanda and I can get out on the streets with them before the weather turns bad. Please pray that this effort will bear fruit. I had hoped to be able to use the family connections of the brethren to get studies with the lost. So far, this has not been the case. Thus, my secondary goal in doing this is to get the Christians here excited about talking to others about the gospel. Please pray for them as they take this step in their spiritual growth.

I apologize for being so late in getting this report out. Thank you for your patience and concern for the work here. Please continue to remember us to our Father as we try to grow up into all things He would have us to be.

In Him,
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