



Letter # 23 December 2006

Manna Messenger

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Youth Ministry Classes at Kiev Theological Seminary

Spring Semester Courses:

January 23 - March 8

YM 448 Youth Mission
(Seniors) - Mike teaches

March 20 - May 10

YM 448 Youth and Family
(Seniors) - Mike teaches

Spring Modular Courses:

February 5 - 15

YM 102 Youth Culture
(Sophomores) - Brent Carl,
Youth Pastor, NY

February 19 - March 1

YM 223 Youth Homiletics
(Soph.) - Mike Gustafson,
Youth Ministry Trainer, Kyiv

March 5 - 15

YM 101 Principles of Youth Ministry (Pastoral Students) -
Mike teaches

March 5 - 15

YM 351 Camps & Retreats
(Juniors) - Bob Anderson,
Trails End Ranch Director, MT

May 14 - 24

YM 202 Youth Ministry Programming (Sophomores)
Mike and Randy Smith,
YMI President, KY

Dad's First Christmas with Jesus from Judy

Many of you know that my dad, Donald Weiss, passed away on October 9. I flew home on Sept. 28th, so I spent a couple special weeks with him before he died. It is very hard to say goodbye to a parent. We have all missed him so much. The timing of his death was a gift, as Mike had already scheduled that time in America to buy a minivan. He was able to be with us for the funeral. Mom flew Luke home at the last minute, too, so that all eight grandsons could be Grandpa's pall bearers. What a blessing it was to have one of our children there! Dad's funeral was a celebration of the life he lived for Christ. It was so good to have the support and love of our neighbors, friends, and relatives during that time. Dad is celebrating his first Christmas with Jesus. Wow!

I was in the States for a month, so our children were more than happy to have me back as chief cook and bottle washer — not to mention laundry maid and the packer of school lunches! Mandie did well at keeping things up at home, and we did have two single missionary gals stay with them while Mike was gone.

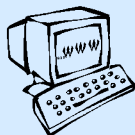
Luke and I flew home two weeks earlier than Mike. Mike went on to Omaha to buy a van, and we experienced the Lord's hand of guidance and protection in a mighty way. Dove Auto in Omaha took care of us. They bought a 2006 Grand Dodge Caravan at an auction of over 1,000 vehicles. It has only 19,000 miles on it, and they got it for \$14,000 — the price we were expecting to pay for a van a few years older than that. Between the sale of our van here in Ukraine and some amazing help from supporting churches and friends, we are facing very little debt from what we call "The Italy Disaster," though we all agree that it was one of the best experiences of

35 Youth Ministry Students! from Mike

We were blessed to have 11 freshmen start this year as youth ministry students bringing our total to 35! I have been concentrating on equipping my seniors to teach this past semester since they will be graduating soon. Our last class, Professional Orientation to Youth Ministry, teaches them Biblical leadership principles and practical skills such as writing a resume. I had each of the seniors teach part of my freshmen class on "Principles of Youth Ministry" as well. They really did a great job of teaching, and I know that some of them will be Youth Ministry Professors some day. My goal is to replace myself and move from my position as a "teacher" to the position as a "coach." Another part of their class was to prepare a personal portfolio and be interviewed before a panel. We had the mock interviews last week. We pretended that they were applying to be the youth ministry professor at Chernobyl Bible Institute. We tried to ask them tough and personal questions so they will be prepared for anything. I am very proud of my six seniors who will be graduating on May 26th. And we will be celebrating something else at their graduation too - that we will have completed the translation of all twelve college-level youth ministry courses!



Our fourth year students in our apartment for a Christmas party.



Have you checked our website lately?

www.youthdiscipler.com



Dad's First Christmas with Jesus - continued

our lives. "What Satan intended for our harm, God used for our good." Mike drove the van to a port in NJ, where it was loaded onto a ship. It was scheduled to arrive in Odessa, Ukraine, on Friday, Dec. 15. It takes some time to process the paperwork. We expect to get a call any day to come and pick it up. Please pray for all to go well in getting it through customs. We hope to get it just in time for Christmas. It is loaded with all kinds of goodies from America.

Our deep thanks goes to all who have helped us with this situation, as well as the whole financial side of living here. We want to express our awareness of and our gratitude for your part in this ministry. It feels like Satan has thrown so many arrows our way, and several of them have come with a big price tag. Yet God has continued to provide. So we are still here. It seems obvious that despite the trials, we must be exactly where He wants us. We could NOT be here without you. Thank you. We love you. We wish you a wonderful, joy-filled Christmas!



What are some things you have enjoyed most about living in a family?

"1) To color as much as I want; 2) To have a doll to play with; 3) To have someone to take care of me, to feed me, and to wash my clothes so I don't have to wash them with my hands; 4) To go to school and learn English; 5) To be clean; 6) To have presents on Christmas and birthdays; 7) To have pets; 8) To have a real family with sisters, a brother, and a mom and a dad who love me."

- Katya, age 10, 2nd grade



What are you looking forward to in the spring?

"I will be thirteen on April 3rd. The next day, I will fly by myself to America and go to Uncle Roger's ranch. I will help with lambing his sheep. I will finish my school year home schooling with Aunt Kendra. I also found out that cousin Cody just got a new horse. I am hoping that Cody will want some help to keep him in shape! :) My family will be coming to America in June."

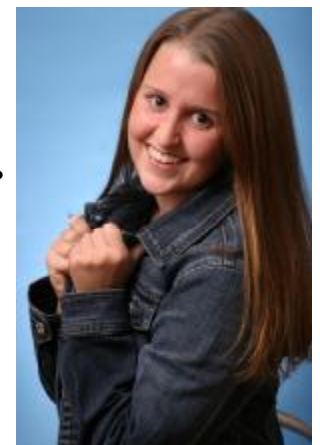
- Samantha, age 12, 6th grade



What do you like about Christmas in Ukraine?

"Well, first is the break, and the ability to travel by subway to the center of Kyiv where I like to hangout with my friends. Also, our family has lots of fun with two other families, the Stoddards and Sullivans, in our Christmas team meeting. Through Christmas break, I get to have basketball practices twice a week followed by scrimmages with the dads. On Christmas Day, my family spends the morning opening presents and simply hangin' out together. In all, I love Christmas, especially in Ukraine!"

- Luke, age 15, 9th grade



You are halfway through your senior year. Any thoughts?

"It is hard to believe that I am living out my final months at home. Our family is so close. It is hard to imagine an ocean separating me from them. I want to build some lasting memories with each of them before I leave home: coffee dates with Dad; a Beth Moore Bible study with Mom; a few outings alone with Luke; sleepovers in my room with Sammie to mentor her in a couple areas before I leave; playing dolls, a tea party, fixing hair and building some special sister memories with my Katie girl."

- Mandie, age 18, 12th grade