



# ON ADVENTURE WITH GOD!

**A REPORT TO HIS PEOPLE**

Volume 3 Issue 3

The Gospel Vision Foundation, Inc. is a Christian mission group founded in 1995 by Darrell and Kay Smith as a vehicle to fulfill their God-given dream of winning souls and making disciples.

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Inside this issue:	
Meet Svetlana, GVF Interpreter and So Much More!	2
Summer Camp 2003—Success!!!	3
Alcoholism Widespread in Russian and Ukraine	3
Video Ministry Sees Positive Results	4
Prayer and Praise Corner	4
Buck's Report on Venezuela	5
Pearl's Crosses Touch Thousands of Lives	6

## Phone Call Brings Good News! Huge Milestone Reached!

By: Rev. Darrell Smith

The last week in November brought unexpected but VERY good news from Ukraine. Normally, communication with our missionaries and pastors is done through our wonderful interpreter, Svetlana Potapenko. (see article Page 2 for more on Svetlana) But occasionally we run across a situation when Svetlana isn't available. This was one of those exceptions. Our National Director in Ukraine called us by phone to ask for our fax number. Nickolai speaks very little English, and our secretary, Shelly, speaks absolutely no Russian at all! Finally after a comical conversation he managed to get across the message that he was sending us an important fax.



Nickolai Kostyshin, Ukrainian National Director

We wondered what could be so important that the Ukrainian National Director felt he needed to call West Texas to fax something. We knew something exciting had happened.

When the faxes came we saw that a very excited and proud Nickolai had wanted to share the wonderful news that he had just registered 3 new churches as New Light of Grace Churches!

Last summer, a huge milestone was reached when we were accepted for registration and now the work of 11 years that culminated in that registra-



Oleg and Oksana Tzikra and Nickolai Kostyshin in front of newly registered church.

tion has begun to bear much fruit! GVF had been registered and recognized as a Christian organization. This gives us the ability to operate with much greater freedom and to be able to teach The Truth and discard so many of the legalistic teaching of the old-line churches. Now we can continue our work in Ukraine under the

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Gospel Vision Foundation's umbrella, and not have all the extra rules and trappings of legalism and wrong doctrine.

We teach doctrine such as salvation by grace alone; the sinner saved and kept by Christ, instead of being saved by faith in Jesus, and then kept saved by works. We teach the priesthood of the believer; and the autonomy of the local church, just to name a few.

Why is this so important? Because since 1991 the groups that I have been associated with have witnessed upwards of 200,000 people pray earnestly to receive Jesus as savior and filled out personal information cards to be used in follow up. In the Baptist churches there are now only 146,000 members to date, an increase of only about 60,000. What happened to the rest of the new Christians?...they were not allowed to join a church because

***A huge milestone was reached when we were accepted for registration last year and now the work of 11 years that culminated in that registration has begun to bear much fruit!***

they wore make-up or jewelry, or because they smoked, or because they did not attend every service the church offered! The painful fact is that many of the young people will never affiliate with that type legalism.

I have actually witnessed earrings yanked off women's ears who had worn them to church. Others have had their lipstick wiped off, or I should say smeared off, with a handkerchief in the hands of a reli-

gious zealot. Would you go back to a church filled with "love" of that type? Unfortunately these old traditions which often have no biblical basis only serve to keep the people bound.

Nickolai also sent information that 7 other churches were ready for registration in the Oblast (county) of Kirovograd where there were over 1.8 million people!

Since this conversation with Nickolai in November, we have learned that 10-12 other churches will be ready for registration very soon. This will bring to a total of **26** churches which have been started by Gospel Vision missionaries. So to say that we are excited here at Gospel Vision Foundation would be putting it mildly!

***We thank you for your prayers, your encouragement, and for your financial support that is making this possible. †***



## Meet Svetlana, GVF Interpreter and So Much More!

We would like to introduce you to our dear friend and interpreter, Svetlana Potapenko. Sveta, as we know her, is an absolute necessity when Darrell visits Ukraine, but she also has a very crucial role with Gospel Vision Foundation's day-to-day operations there.

Acting as go-between for us here in the United States and all 65+ missionaries in Ukraine, she translates at least 15-20 emails a day. Since computers are rare, she translates and/or writes endless letters and messages to them for us. Her duties also include mailing 3 theological and practical ministry lessons a month, plus the additional follow up tests. She also must file all of Gospel Vision Foundation's business for the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Odessa. Sveta even teaches an honors English

class and translates for Government officials at various school and church functions. So this dear woman is kept quite busy!

The school officials in Odessa have a lot of respect for Svetlana. This brings about an added benefit, for she is able to use a lot of the information in Darrell's sermons and teaching presentations in her English class. As a result, many of her students are hearing the Word of God, in a non-threatening forum and responding to the call of Christ!

Sveta's dedication to the cause of Christ and her determination that her Countrymen be given the truth about the saving grace of Jesus Christ is the driving force in her life.

Darrell had the privilege of



Svetlana with  
Rev. Darrell Smith



baptizing Svetlana in 1997. Since that time, not only has she grown in her spiritual walk, but also in her willingness to coordinate all of our work and ministry in Ukraine and does it with outstanding expertise. With an intuitive understanding of her people and culture, Svetlana is invaluable to us and to the work and ministry in Ukraine †

## Summer Camp 2003 ...Success!!!

This summer, some of our missionaries took time to host Summer camps for kids. One such team was our missionary Pavel Cleyston and his wife Lena from the Kirovograd oblast. This team hosted Day Camps for children in 4 villages. In all, over 240 kids attended them and heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

We'd like to share just a few of the letters written by the children with you so you can hear, in their own words how much the camps meant to them.

- *"Thank you for holding this camp. It's here that many kids learned about God, and His wonderful love. I thank the people who donated to this camp. May the Lord bless them! Thank you for the tasty meals made by our cooks. I thank the people who worked with us. We are looking forward to the camp*



Smiling faces from one summer day camp.

*next year! I think many children will invite Jesus into their hearts."*

- *"My name is Tanya. Let me send you my greetings and words of gratitude. I am having a wonderful time at the Day camp and I like it greatly. Thank you to our dear leaders for your enthusiasm in the work with us kids. Thank you to the cooks for the delicious meals."*

- *"Hi, my name is Ann. I am having a great time at the camp. Lena and Pavlik tell us interesting stories and we learn Bible songs and verses. Thank you to Vanya who taught us many fun games. Thank you to everyone who helped organize the camp and give of their own money so we could have the camp. It is here that we learn to love God and protect ourselves from the evil one."*

This was just one of many teams who had summer camps this year. We have heard similar reports from them all!

**Thank you to all of you who helped make this time possible through your donations to Gospel Vision Foundation. †**

## Alcoholism Widespread in Russian and Ukraine

Alcoholism, one of Russia's oldest and most widespread social problems affects one in every three Russians. Poverty and high unemployment are major reasons why alcoholism is a lasting and ongoing condition in Russian and Ukraine. A report on Russian television declared that 30% of the deaths in Russia are from alcohol poisoning.

This last November, a news item reported that a vodka-drinking competition in a southern Russian town ended with the winner dead and several others in intensive care. The winner downed three half-liter bottles of vodka in 30-40 minutes, went home by taxi and died within

***Russians drink an average of 15 liters of alcohol per person each year, one of the highest rates in the world.***

20 minutes. The shop owner, who organized the contest and offered 10 liters of vodka to the winner, has been charged with manslaughter. The article said Russians drink an average of 15 liters of alcohol per person each year, one of the highest rates in the world.

Though not as bad as Russian, alcoholism is a large problem in Ukraine, too. That is why we at Gospel Vision Foundation want to add **the 12 step program** in dealing with alcoholics as part of our ever growing teaching ministry. We are hoping that Christian Alcoholics Association can be started in some of the larger cities.

If any of our readers has ideas on how best to start these centers and would like to become active in this important ministry-based program, please contact our office at 325-942-9989 †



## Video Ministry Sees Positive Results



In 2001 we officially began a Video Ministry which has seen great results. Video is a very effective way for a new missionary to make contacts and get the Gospel out to the people of Ukraine. Also, many people in Ukraine are illiterate so the videos target a segment of society that might otherwise be missed or overlooked. We purchased some televisions with VCR's and Christian message videos in the Russian language.

We received this testimony of the effectiveness of this video ministry from a young lady named Tanya. She wrote:

"Dear Brother Darrell,

I'm twenty years old. I was born to a gypsy family and was raised according to gypsy laws. They consider themselves to be Russian Orthodox but they steal, fool people and tell fortunes. All that science (Gypsy ways) I learned in my childhood.

In the summer you came to



Tanya with her Bible and smile!

Maiorskoie. From the very first time after the meeting you conducted, I felt something had changed in me. I wanted to sing and pray to God.

When I told my parents what had happened to me, I underwent great trial. My aunts and uncles and other relatives wanted to beat me. They didn't let me go out. I spent 6 weeks as a prisoner in my own room. My mother thought I had lost my senses. But I was happy because Jesus is always with me.

When my folks finally unlocked me they continued to make fun of me and hit me for no real reason. They are poor and uneducated people who cannot read nor write.

Then just before Christmas Pastor Victor came to visit me. He had brought warm clothes for all of my family and Christmas gifts for the smaller children. You cannot imagine the joy and wonder my family experienced. They simply could not believe that someone from Texas, USA would care about them, much less give them the winter clothes they needed!

Pastor Victor also brought with him the TV/VCR and Christian stories on tape you gave him. This was a great turning point in the life of my parents. They did not understand the love you showed toward us...that is until they watched the Jesus film. They were both joyfully saved. They told Pastor Victor that they wanted to invite their brothers and sisters to come see the film for themselves.

These same aunts and uncles who had laughed and poked fun

*(Continued on page 6)*

## OUR PRAYER and PRAISE CORNER

For those who have been asking how they can help, here is a great way to do it! Our missionaries send monthly reports and at the bottom of the reports they add their prayer requests. So please, if you are able, please keep our missionaries and these, some of their many requests close to you and remember them as the Lord brings them to mind.

- Prayers for the new teenage group formed as the result of summer camp~ Pavel Kuzenko Jr.
- TV and VCR for Video Evangelism ~ Pavel Kuzenko Jr.
- Prayer for salvation for new group with many non-Christians ~ Oleg Tzikra

- **PRAISE REPORT FROM IVAN GORYANSKY-** 10 people came to know Christ in September!
- Prayer for awakening in Herson villages; ability to feed the many hungry there; **PRAISE FOR 6 new believers in Jesus!** ~ Victor-Drozdz.
- **PRAISE FOR THE NEW BUILDING AND HEATING SYSTEM FOR THE ARTZIS ORPHANS!**
- Pray for Ostropol (village) awakening! We need your prayers badly!~ Alexander Grabar
- **PRAISE-**I'm happy to report that we had 6 bap-

- tism ceremonies in Kotelve ~ Leonid Pinkas
- Pray for Oleg Tzikra's helper (Timothy) He is from a family of non-believers and the climate at home is killing. His parents have now abandoned him. He stays with his grandmother and simply starves.
- Pray for Vladimir Ropavka, our missionary from the nuclear area of Chernobyl. His health is failing due to radiation exposure.

**Thank you for all your prayers and support! †**



# BUCK'S REPORT ON VENEZUELA



## GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD!

Dear friends and family,

I am writing this on Dec. 1, 2003. We had family here for Thanksgiving this year. What a wonderful experience as each one shared why they were thankful.

I am thankful for health and strength to be able to travel to Venezuela and the Amazon on two occasions this year. My first trip was July 3-22, 2003.

I was grateful to take 160 Bibles, 1800 Gospels of John and 200 Life of Jesus booklets, all in the Spanish language. (Thank you to all of you who helped with the purchase of these fine materials!) I was also able to work with a four-member construction team from the Colonial Heights Baptist Church in Kingsport, Tennessee. We started the foundations for a new educational building for the Central Baptist Church in Puerto Ayacucho. As you can see from the middle picture on the right, the building is coming along quite nicely!

My second trip was October 9th through November 8th, 2003. That time I was able to take 200 Bibles and 500 Gospels of John, a set of maps for the Bible Institute in Puerto Ayacucho and bought Old and New Testament commentaries and other reference books for a group of pastors in Iniridia, Colombia. Pedro Pablo Pacheco,

teacher in Iniridia was extremely grateful for these gifts. I then worked with a seven-member construction team from Aliceville, Alabama First Baptist Church and continued the work on the building for Central Baptist Church.

Another week in Puerto Ayacucho was spent with Ray Turner who led very effective conferences on Stewardship. The teachings were very well received and he was invited to come back by the 35 pastors and leaders attending the conference.

Give thanks with me for the purchase of the new residence for Pedro and Elena. (see top picture ) It is next door to the Bible Institute property and has become a valuable asset.

Rejoice also with me in that we were able to take 75 of the Chronological Storying Scarves this year. (see bottom picture)

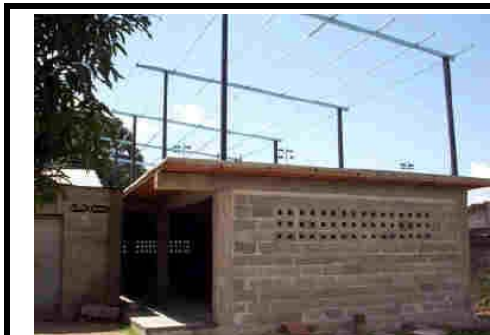
***“Look at the nations and watch, and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.” Habakkuk 1 :5***

†

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This is the house we are buying for \$25,000. Located adjacent to the Bible Institute it is the home of Pedro and Elena Yosuno, Director and secretary of the Institute which is in it's third year with 39 students.



Construction continues on the educational building of the Central Baptist Church of Puerto Ayacucho where Wilibaldo Alvino is pastor. (Picture taken Nov, 2003.)



This scarf tells the Bible Story from creation to Christ's ascension through a series of 21 pictures. Telling the Good News through "Chronological Bible Storying" is the greatest change in missionary strategy in recent history and we are excited to be part of it!



## Video Ministry Sees Positive Results (continued)



(Continued from page 4)

at me saw the film and were deeply moved. Some came to trust Jesus Christ that first night,, others came later.

My life and the life of my family has been eternally changed because you and the people of The Gospel Vision Foundation did love us, even before you saw us, and were faithful in service for Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanks for the video and TV programs. We had never watched such wonderful, life changing programs. For my folks who cannot read, it was, I believe, the only way they would have come to God. We

are blessed by HIM!

We wish your family and all Christians, brothers and sisters of The

"For my folks who cannot read,  
 it was, I believe, the only way  
 they would have come to  
 God."

Gospel Vision Foundation strong health, great spiritual joy, in our unique faith!

Please say thanks for us to everybody who participated in demonstrat-

ing the love of God to my family and me. Thanks also for the much needed warm clothing and gifts to make our otherwise gloomy Christmas happy. I can never thank God enough for sending you to our country to tell people about Jesus. Please don't stop, there are so many people who are just like I was, lost and helpless. May God bless and continue to use you to reach the people of Ukraine with the message of forgiveness and love.

May God bless you and The Gospel Vision Foundation!" †

## Pearl's Crosses Touch Thousands of Lives Around the World

Meet Pearl Wilson. Pearl is a delightful 89 year old widow who lives in San Angelo, Texas. Pearl has decided to use her love of crafts and sewing as her ministry. For over 4 years she has personally crafted over 10,000 Needlepoint crosses. These crosses send a message of love and concern to all who are blessed to receive one.

Some of these crosses can be found years later adorning rear-view mirrors in vehicles or are still in use as Bible bookmarks. Pearl, who is basically homebound makes thousands of these crosses each year. We take hundreds of them with us when we go to Ukraine and Pearl also sends them with other Christian ministries to be given away as gifts for the people.

Each of the crosses have an evangelical message with their symbolic use of color. Each is a white cross with red threads. She says this is to symbolize our scarlet sins that become white as snow after coming to know our Lord Jesus Christ. It is thought that her crosses have reached every conti-

nent of the world. Some of the many countries to receive them include Ukraine, Mexico, Brazil, Pakistan, Africa and India.

This year she has kept busy making 1300 crosses for the House of Faith, a San Angelo based outreach program for youth.

But Pearl doesn't limit herself and her ministry to just making crosses. She has also sewn towels for the local Boy's Ranch, and knitted and crocheted baby blankets and pillows for single mothers through the Girl Scouts.

When asked why she does it, she responds that she's working for the Lord and will do all that she can while she can. Pearl also says that she wants to have something to show for her time on earth. Consequently, she doesn't have much spare time to play cards or dominoes or many of the other activities her retired friends enjoy.

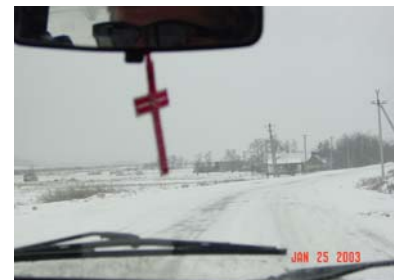
But as you can see, her gifts of love touch many thousands of people, from young to old throughout the entire world, and will do so for years to come. Thank you Pearl! †



Pearl amidst some of her many crosses.



A rural church in Ukraine with Pearl's crosses



One of Pearl's crosses hanging on rear-view mirror years later.