

OVERSEAS FIELD REPORT

A publication dedicated to making known the ways in which God is showing Himself strong on the behalf of those who serve Him.

Volume 3, Issue 2

Written by Joshua & Kelsie Steele

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Nathan and Joshua lead a Bible study in Skole (pronounced sko'-leh). The group is pictured here studying the Gospel of John.

After exiting the tram, Nathan and I made our way carefully across a wide expanse of uneven asphalt, which separated the tram stop from the nearby bus station. We had to navigate through a maze of slush and mud puddles, walking towards a large and seemingly disorganized fleet of minibuses bound for various towns and villages throughout Western Ukraine. It was Saturday morning, and we were on our way to the weekly Bible study in Skole which was started just a few weeks ago. This particular Satur-

day morning was wet, windy and cold, and yet just warm enough to make things messy.

After waiting for about twenty minutes, we discovered that our bus had been delayed indefinitely due to a shake-up in the schedule. We had to wait over an hour before it finally pulled up to the platform and began loading passengers. The Bible study was to start at 2:00, but by the time we actually arrived in Skole it was well past three.

As we walked in the door of Sergiy's home, we discovered that most everyone had arrived

How YOU Can Pray...

- Pray for our first large-scale showing of The Light of the World on April 24th in Skole. (see page 2)
- Pray for the young men coming to participate in CMO 2006. (see page 2)
- Pray that God would continue to bless our growing Bible study in Skole.
- Pray that God would continue to bless our Sunday Bible study in L'viv.
- Pray for God's special blessing and protection on our team as we begin CMO 2006.

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long before. Sergiy had been entertaining them in various ways as they waited for our arrival, and the beginning of the Bible study.

The young people now began to gather every available chair or

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Several of the young men from our Bible study in Skole.

Bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those under the power of darkness, and proving to the world that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

See this section in full color on our website! www.OFReport.com

Our Ministry...



at a glance



Joshua teaches from the Gospel of John in Skole.

Bible Study in Skole

By God's grace, our little Bible study in the Carpathian town of Skole (pronounced sko'-leh) is continuing to grow. There are four young people who attend regularly, and two others have visited. In addition, Sergiy's mother has now begun listening in (as the Bible study is held at their home) and seems very open to the Lord. We are studying through the Gospel of John, and as of this writing, we are in the middle of chapter 5. Please continue to pray for this work. The young people who attend are working to persuade their friends to come and hear the Word of God, and we are excited about what the Lord is doing through their ministry.



Our Bible study in L'viv

Bible Study in L'viv

In addition to our Bible study in Skole, we also now have a regular Bible study in L'viv. Due to work schedules, the best time when all our students can attend is on Sunday. Of special interest are two of Jessie Beal's neighbors, Volodia and his son Igor. They have been attending for about three weeks now and are very open to the Scriptures. We are studying through the Gospel of John and are excited to see how the Lord is opening their eyes. Volodia especially has been disillusioned in the past with the hypocrisy of the Orthodox Church in his village. He has many questions for us (like why do we not pray to Mary) but as we point him to the answers in the Word of God we can see him drawing closer to salvation.



Carpathian Mountain Outreach 2006

With little more than a month remaining until CMO begins, we are very busy making the final preparations for this exciting outreach. We now have eight young men who will be joining us over the course of the summer. The first wave of men will arrive in early May and the second wave will arrive in June. Please pray for these men as they embark on this mission. Their names are Caleb Beasley, Bryan Shufelt, Jonathan Steele, Matthew Ballmann, Jeff Rhoades, Jonathan Rhoades, Kurt Hein, and Evan Hein. Each of them is giving of his own time and money to be a part of CMO. We are very grateful for their sacrifice, and we praise the Lord of the Harvest that He has heard our prayers and is sending forth laborers.



*The Light of the World Film Project

We have now completed our translation and the recording of the sound track for *The Light of the World* film. Although the DVD itself is not ready yet, we are still able to show this film by simply playing the English version simultaneously with the Ukrainian sound track. Our first scheduled presentation of The Light of the World will be on April 24th in the Carpathian town of Skole. Arrangements have already been made to rent the town's only movie theater, and advertisements will be printed soon. Please pray that many people will come to see this film. At the conclusion of the film there will be a Gospel presentation, coupled with an invitation to join our Chronological Bible Course.



New ETO Website

We have recently finished a completely new website for Euro Team Outreach. ETO has undergone many changes since its inception in 2004, and this new site includes much updated information about our ministry, new pictures, info and applications for short-term missions projects, an FAQ section, an electronic newsletter and more. We encourage you to visit our site and find out how you can pray for the work of the Gospel here in Ukraine.

► www.EuroTeamOutreach.org

*The Light of the World film is produced by Chick Publications. For more information, please visit their website: www.chick.com.

Overseas Field Report is written and published by missionaries Joshua and Kelsie Steele, currently serving in Ukraine.
Sending church: Fairpark Baptist Church, 6000 Crowley Road, Fort Worth, TX 76134 Subscription is free upon request. www.OFReport.com



A Word to Women...

Kelsie was recently asked to write an article for a young ladies' ministry, describing her role as a keeper at home on the foreign mission field. In this article, she speaks of her experience as a new wife and mother, and the many things God has taught her as she serves her family in Ukraine. Whether you are married or single, serving overseas or keeping your home in the US, Kelsie's testimony, and the experiences she shares, will doubtless be an encouragement to you. Although the article is too large to include here, we have made it available on our website. Just log on to www.OFReport.com and click on "A Word to Women."



BY THE WORD OF TRUTH...

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stool in the room, with the exception of one broken one which they affectionately call the "Accident Chair."

As we sat down, I noticed that someone new had joined our group - a young man of about fifteen named Volodia. He had been invited by Yura (also fifteen) who has been attending the Bible study from the beginning.

We began as usual by praying and asking the Lord for wisdom to study His Word. We have emphasized repeatedly that God gives wisdom to those who ask Him (James 1:5-6), and that we in fact need His wisdom very much if we are to correctly understand the Scriptures.

Then we all opened our Bibles and began to read the fifth chapter of John. After finishing the first section about the lame man by the pool of Bethesda, we discussed various aspects of this story and I answered their ques-

tions. I always begin by asking if they have any questions about the passage we have just read, and in case of a long silence, I assure them with a grin that I have plenty to spare.



Today there were several questions, especially after it was pointed out that the Pharisees failed to honor Jesus for the miraculous healing of the lame man, but instead heaped accusations upon Him because He did

not conform to their religion. If ever a culture was entrenched in lifeless religious traditions which enslave and deceive people, it is Ukraine. The similarities between Israel's hypocritical Pharisees and Ukraine's Catholic and Orthodox priests are often striking.

Notwithstanding, the religion practiced here is all that most people have ever known. Traditional Christianity, that is loyalty to either the Catholic or Orthodox church, is held in high esteem; not as the best way to heaven necessarily, but as an integral part of Ukraine's heritage. For many, to deny their religion is to deny their family, friends, and perhaps even their identity as true Ukrainians.

Thus as we read this passage in John, the question understandably came up: "Are traditions bad?" This question stems from the hope that one can become a true follower of Jesus as described



in the book of John, and yet avoid a painful divorce with traditional religious practices such as prayer to Mary, confession to the priest,

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BY THE WORD OF TRUTH...

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or kissing icons.

In answer to this question, I pointed the students to Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees in Matthew 15:3-9: *"Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?...Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."* I explained that on the one hand, traditions in and of themselves are harmless. "For example, we meet at 2:00 every Saturday," I said. I went on to explain how our little tradition is acceptable because it passes the two tests given in Matthew 15. First, the tradition itself does not violate God's law. *"Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?"* Second, we do not set forth our tradition as a doctrine. *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."* If another group wants to meet at 3:00 on Thursdays, more power to them. The time we have selected is convenient for our group, but is not sacred. Having said this I went on to affirm the necessity of rejecting fully any tradition or religious system which does not pass these two tests.

We also looked at the fact that

as believers, we can expect persecution. We cannot become true followers of Christ and be loved by the world. We are as different from them as light is from darkness, and because our stand for Christ condemns their wickedness, they will hate us.

This is a sobering reality for these young people, but to my great joy I saw them receive it,



Joshua teaches from the Gospel of John.



Volodia is one of Jessie Beal's neighbors, and has shown a great interest of late in the Bible.



Joshua speaks with Halya, one of Sergiy's friends, about the Gospel of John.

not with sadness, but rather with conviction and a determination to follow Jesus no matter what.

In addition to our Bible study in Skole, we are also continuing our L'viv Bible study. We are especially grateful for two new students that have joined our group: Volodia and his son Igor. They are neighbors of Jessie Beal's, and he began witnessing to them back when he was remodeling his house in their village. Volodia has become disillusioned with the hypocrisy of the local Orthodox priest in their village, and has asked Jessie many questions about the Bible. Now he and his son are studying through the book of John with us. Our other students (Sergiy, Timothy, Igor, etc.) still study with us as they are able.

Just two weeks ago, Sergiy brought over a young lady from his university to whom he has been witnessing. He wanted her to meet Kelsie and me with the hope that maybe she would start studying the Bible with us. She responded positively and is supposed to begin studying with us soon.

In summary, we are thrilled that God has given us the opportunity to teach His Word. It is His Word of truth, coupled with the power of His Spirit that is changing lives here in Ukraine and turning sinners to Jesus Christ.

To God be the Glory

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