

The Heart Beat

Heart of Ukraine Ministries

www.HeartofUkraine.com



Touching the Lives of Hurting Children

Street and Broken Home Children

We have been going weekly now to the Children's Goodness Center in Old City (Vinnitsya, Ukraine) since November 07. It took us some time to find these specific children. The children are either arrested by the police or taken from their homes by Social Services (sexual, emotional or physical abuse, neglect, etc.).

They only stay at this center about three (3) months while the parents are trained, other family is located, or the rights of the parents are taken away. So as you can imagine many of them are difficult to manage and are in desperate need of love. The children range from 2 to 17 years old.

Initially our team was comprised of six people, us, a woman in her 30's (Sveta), and then three (3) translators (Elana, Lena, & Julia). Since then we've added a few more team members and often we have guests who want to join us when they can (a short term American English Teacher, one of Laura's English students, etc.).

The ministry was supported initially by our Ukraine home church, Pogachova (Grace) Church with a small monthly stipend that

allowed us to purchase scissors, construction paper, glue, crayons, etc...

The ministry was supported in a big way by a man from Holland who heard about what we were doing. Through this man's help our team was able to give a small gift of socks (we saw many of the kids had shoes but no socks), an orange and a packet of pretzels on St. Nicholas Day. We were joined that day by the Operation Mobilization's (OM) Puppet & Drama Team.

Then on Christmas (January 7th) we were able to give each child a specific age/gender appropriate gift. Gifts ranged from bead and plastic jewelry making kits for the older girls to cars that transform into robots for the middle aged boys. We played games with the children & spent the time just making more contact individually with them.

Our first few visits were a bit rough as the children (and staff) did not know what to expect from us and our Ukrainian team members had never worked with these type of children before. We had weekly meetings to

review what went good and what we should improve and we did a lot of team building, identifying spiritual gifts, and training. It has been wonderful to see the growth in each of the team members as they are challenged with this new type of ministry.

After gaining some trust in us, the children have blossomed under the love lavished on them by our team. And as new children are added to the center they quickly realize we are 'safe' to interact with. We have all fallen in love with many of the children and our hearts ache when we leave them each time. Recently some of the children were moved to a permanent orphanage and as we consoled the children left behind at the center, we were consoling ourselves.

One especially heartbreaking story was that of a young 14 year old girl. We first saw her during the St Nicholas festivities. She looked a couple of months pregnant and was extremely withdrawn. We found out that her mother and abandoned her and her . . . CONTINUED on p2.

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Bible Groups Have Started In Our Home

Spiritual Gifts and Sunday Fellowship

First we'd like to thank those of you who helped us purchased the needed things for holding small groups, classes, and a fellowship. Of specific note are a Ukrainian man and the Trinity Life Baptist Church, Raleigh, North Carolina. Your specific gifts made this all happen through the purchase of tables, chairs, lamps, etc... Our groups say a resounding "Thank You!"

On Thursday and Saturday night we hold a small group Bible study and the topic we started with was Spiritual Gifts. It is the

same class offered on two (2) different nights a week in order to accommodate different work and school schedules. There is a fairly steady group of 20 students that come and many are seeing their 'purpose' in the 'body of Christ' for the first time and are excited about what the future holds for them.

Sunday nights we hold a fellowship type small group. Many of the attendees are studying English so we try to offer everything in English and Ukrainian. Using a borrowed

projector that puts the words on the wall, we sing in both languages with a guitar. Then a team member leads a topical discussion that helps people discover God's truth. We follow this up by different simple prayer exercises and then fellowship with hot tea and cookies (Ukrainian tradition!). In May we had 18 to 27 attend with 7-10 unbelievers in attendance!

Please pray for those who attend this fellowship and for those of us who are on the team who leads this.

Special Points of Interest:

- 11 Months in Ukraine now ! We've almost made it through our 1st winter here.
- December & January Blogs recovered and were loaded onto website.
- We have a new grandson - Alexander James Stormes born June 12th !
- Thanks to those who helped get our classroom outfitted.
- Our 1st Mission Team coming to Ukraine to stay and work with us! Want to join them?

The Pulse By Rev Mark Bohanan

The Song of Solomon is an amazing book in the Bible. It is only eight (8) short chapters, but in them there is an amazing amount of information.

I remember studying this book in Bible College and at the time I studied it because I had to. My interest was to review the information, pass the test and pass the class. So I did not really spend a lot of time studying this book. I studied just enough. Recently, I found my college text book and began studying this book again, and this time I was amazed at how this book of history is relevant today.

With the help of my text book, Song of Songs by Watchman Nee (CLC Publications, Fort Washington, Pennsylvania 19034), I realized that there are actually five (5) stories being told all at the same time. First, the story of a King and his bride; Second, the story of passionate love between a husband and his wife; Third, the story of God's

pursuit of Israel; Fourth, is that of church history (Jesus and the Church); and Fifth, is the story of Holy Spirit's pursuit of the individual person. It is amazing how all the allegorical terms unfold to tell all of these stories.

As I studied this book, the Holy Spirit was speaking to me personally of this fifth story, His pursuit of an individual person. When a person first accepts Christ, they are love sick and just want to go tell everyone about this love that they have in their life. After a period of time that love sickness leaves them weary and exhausted, so they need a time of rest. Then again, after a period of rest, the Holy Spirit begins to draw them to a deeper level of commitment. A Christian at this stage is usually involved in ministry, but the focus is ministry through me and my Lord. The fruit obtained through this ministry is usually the fruit that 'I' produced to give to Jesus.

After a period of time, a Christian at this stage kind of grows cold because their ministry, up to this point, is about themselves and what they are doing for Christ. Once again, the Holy Spirit begins to draw the Christian to a deeper spiritual level. At this deeper level, a Christian realizes that it is not about him at all. It is ALL about Christ. This type of Christian understands that bearing fruit does bring a personal joy and fulfillment but that the personal joy and fulfillment belongs to Christ alone. It is for His sake and His enjoyment.

Personally, I am somewhere in this second stage. I do realize that ministry is not about me but as I struggle, many times I feel as if the struggle is about me. I need to make the transition to the third stage, where even my struggles are about Him, and for His glory.

I pray that God moves you from where you are at, to a new level of a relationship with Him.

Touching the Lives of Hurting Children Continuation

step father and that the step father had been sexually abusing her for some time. One of our team members was able to slowly make contact with her, talking about the slightest similarities in their history in order to develop a relationship. After a couple of weeks, she was gone during one of our visits but reappeared the next visit, looking slim and no longer pregnant. We were told

she was never pregnant but in our hearts we don't believe this and grieve with the additional trauma that may have been inflicted on this young girl. Our slow but patient love with this young girl and the special attention of one of our team members brought about a wonderful change in her. Just before she was moved to a more permanent orphanage we presented the gospel fully to the

children and she was one who raised her hand accepting Christ. Afterwards she asked for a Bible and was smiling and full of life.

Please pray for these hurting children. They have been battered physically and emotionally by those who should be protecting them. Pray that we are able to continue to touch their hearts with the Father's love.

A Visit to Fostiv Village Rehab Center - Changing Lives Despite the Odds

A friend, Russlan, in Vinnitsya found out about a Rehabilitation Center in Fostiv (Kiev Obelisk) and shared the information with us. They showed us a video from their first visit to the facility the week before.

We were moved deeply by the testimonies of the men on the program, the Director's (Vadim) own testimony, but even more so by the joy that lit up every set of eyes and face. It was obvious these men were truly free of the bondage of addiction and that they had the light of our Lord living in them. This is so different from many of the rehabilitation centers we have seen here.

One of the comments that struck deep into our hearts was that most of the men, after being led to Christ, went to their local church but soon were confused and offended. They did not see the Jesus in the Bible in the church nor did they see the Bible lived in the church. We immediately set up a trip to go visit it with Russlan.

Mark invited along on the trip a young man Sergey (see A Success Story - Sergey). Sergey's job was to talk to the men on the rehabilitation program outside of the 'story' that will be shared with Mark, the American. (NOTE: often you get the presentation American view and not the 'real' view). Unfortunately Laura's schedule did not let her go on this trip.

Early in the morning, Russlan, Mark and Sergey headed out on the four (4) plus hour trip to Fostiv, along with some of our preserved food and a financial donation.

The Rehabilitation Center is located in a larger garage. As Mark wove through the boards and random supplies in the garage he wondered where in the world was the center. His question was soon

answered as they climbed up a rickety ladder to a loft area above the garage. Here he found bunk beds lining the walls of the narrow room. The room was filled with people . . . just about every bit of space was occupied. Peeking over the railings of the top bunk beds were children all bright eyed and curious. Men on the program and their adult family members were squeezed onto all the bottom beds of the bunk beds like sardines. Some people were standing or sitting on chairs, and except for a small space in the center of the room, it was a sea of faces.

The Pastor Vadim talked of God's calling on his heart to create a center and the many trials and tribulations they had faced. These included the local Orthodox church forbidding them to set up a center, a neighbor causing problems, and during a trip out of country to work and earn money for the center, someone burned the building.

Despite all this persecution, they focused on God and His calling, and God has rewarded them with the honor of leading many to Christ and changing the lives of not just the addicted but their families. (This is what we want in our ministry!) One story that stood out was that of a young man who was so miserable in his life of addiction that he went to hang himself after a binge of drinking and drug use. As he stood there with the rope around his neck, ready to kick away the stool, a picture flashed through his mind of his mother crying over his body. It broke his desire to die and he removed the rope and ran home to his mother. As he knelt with his head in her lap weeping, she told him about Jesus and His saving grace. The young man accepted Christ and the next day went to the Fostiv Rehabilitation Center.

In return, Mark shared about our ministry and his salvation and ministry testimony. Vadim and his men were extremely excited about the vision that God has given us for the Vinnitsya area, and then all of Ukraine. Some of the men who have been at the center for a few years, training to be leaders in rehabilitation, immediately offered to work at our Homeless Shelter/Rehabilitation Center when it opens in Vinnitsya. Isn't God good? We have been praying about God raising up (native) x-addict leaders to work with us!

Vadim had one of the men share about an awesome community ministry they do. Some of the men go to the local village hospital and volunteer their time. There the nurses are few and their work load heavy, so the men assist by cleaning and washing the male patients who are bed ridden, along with cleaning their urine and feces soaked beds. It's a difficult ministry to say the least, but these men love and care for the patients through God's strength. Many are witnessing the true love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through these men.

After the testimonies, there was singing. Not just singing, but full out, open hearted, joy of the Lord singing! The children sang a few songs and were so excited to be singing to the Lord some of them were almost 'shouting to God.' (As I (Laura) type this my eyes are watering up at the thought of God's powerful work at this Center.)

We wish we could share more of the testimonies of the young men and how their lives and the lives of their families have been changed. Please pray for Vadim and his men as they continue to share God's love and Jesus' saving grace with the hurting and addicted around them.

The Vinnitsya City Government (VCG) - Hoping for a City Homeless Shelter/Rehab Center

God continues to lay out a plan for us with the Vinnitsya City Government (VCG). He has put specific people in specific positions, laid burdens and desires in their hearts for the addicted and homeless and have opened their thoughts to a new vision. Here are a few of the most recent updates on our work with the VCG:

1) MEETINGS: We continue to meet weekly with a number of VCG staff, building relationships, growing the vision of a Homeless Shelter/ Rehab Center, and learning how VCG works. ***Please pray that these meetings continue to be fruitful.

2) CHANGING ATTITUDES: We have met several times now with a man who works directly for the Mayor. He has had some bad experiences with some churches and religious leaders and his is very cautious. Recently, in telling 2 stories, he let us know that he sees we are different, likes what he sees, and he wants to work with us. This is a major victory by the Lord. He is interested in traveling with us to America to view some rehabilitation programs there, to include one that works with the local government and is considered one of the best in the nation. We are planning for August or September 2008. ***Please pray for this growing relationship; that we can raise funds for the trip; & that VCG will fund their staff's travel.

3) BUILDINGS: The VCG has found several buildings that are empty and possibly available for a Homeless Shelter/Rehabilitation Center. We have looked at the first floor of a building that is available. It's small but doable. We've viewed a

number of building but they were either occupied or too small; interesting law here - if a building is abandoned someone can move in and file for ownership. The VCG have suggested that we look for suitable empty buildings and that the VCG will track the status of the buildings. This may prove to be a faster and a more efficient search. ***Please pray that we find the building that God wants for us.

4) CHARITY ORGANIZATION: With the assistance of the VCG Social Services Dept., we have formed a Charity Organization named Vinnitsya-Heart of Ukraine; like a non-profit organization in the USA. We have had our first meeting of members and the Board of Directors were elected, along with a Watch Committee. We are in the final filing phase with the Obelisk government. This will help the VCG work more easily with us. ***Please pray that the final filing goes well.

5) MEDIA COVERAGE: We were involved in a meeting in January with numerous media present. We have been informed by others that they saw news clips on the TV and have heard parts of it on the radio. In May we were interviewed by a woman who works for a local radio station and a newspaper. She wanted to do a special on us and our work in Vinnitsya for both the radio and the paper. ***Pray that the interest in this work will grow, not just in the VCG workers, but in the media, and thus the public. Help us educate others that addicts are not worthless & not 'human trash.'

6) SPECIAL PROGRAMS: We have attended a number of events and projects through the Social Services Department. Some of these were the Vinnitsya Obelisk Special Olympics, an art display by several charity organizations that work with the mentally and physically challenged, and to attend a special viewing of the new movie release 'Ironman'. In the future we will attend a Soccer Competition of teams of x-addicts from different rehabilitation programs around the Obelisk (state). ***Pray that we can continue to expand our network of contacts and that God continues to put people in our path that we are to love and to possibly work with.

7) CONFERENCE: We are planning a conference for August or September 2008 that addresses issues of homeless, addicts, and HIV/AIDS. The planning committee will be made up of VCG staff, us, International Partnership, and representatives from other Christian rehabilitation outreaches. We hope to invite all the Obelisk Pastors, business men and women, and government representatives. ***Pray that the diverse group on the committee can act in unity and coordinate this conference. Pray that many will attend and that a new awareness of these hopeless people can be restored.

Please pray for us as we continue to work on this God sized project. Things move slowly here and we struggle with discouragement on some days. Pray that we will stay true to God's vision and calling on our lives and not be side tracked.

A Success Story - Sergey - The Changing Power of Christ

Just 1 or 2 months after moving to Ukraine we met a young Christian woman who was struggling under the emotional load of a father and a brother who were alcoholics. As she opened up to us we were able to speak into her life regarding her family and her co-dependent behaviors which were encouraging some of their addictive behaviors.

After a few of months, an event arose where we were able to meet her brother, Sergey. At once, we felt that Sergey was being drawn to us - and he had no idea why. We also saw great potential in him and what God could do with his life.

Mark asked Sergey if he would be willing to help us evaluate different things in regards to establishing a Homeless Shelter/Rehab Center. Sergey agreed and guardedly shared that he had sought help through a number of Rehab Programs but that all were run by greed driven people and the staff despised and neglected the clients. He stated that at each place he had to pay to be admitted, pay for treatment, and then pay bribes to stay. He indicated that most the programs were only about detoxification, often using other drugs to wean people off the illegal drugs.

After visiting the Fostiv Rehabilitation Center with Mark, Sergey was energized at the prospect of a good rehabilitation center but was not interested in going to it himself. Shortly after the visit to Fostiv, Sergey relapsed into a drinking binge after staying clean for almost 2 months.

Over the next month or so Sergey would occasionally visit our Bible studies and talk with us. We saw him binge drink a few more times, once with him showing up at our house at 12:30 am

drunk and needing a place to stay (his sister achieved a personal victory in not letting him stay at her house). We gave him a bed, blanket and pillow for the night with Mark only stating (in Russian) "This is not good Sergey. What's going on?" The next day he seemed shocked to be at our place. With normalcy we fed him breakfast and interacted with him. He left our house confused at why we had not condemned or lectured him.

A week or so later and through a translator, Sergey asked to talk to Mark. Mark agreed but said that Sergey would have to find a translator. Eventually they met and Sergey said he had many questions. Interestingly enough he did not really ask any during their meeting. It's like he just wanted to talk to Mark and know that someone else had struggled through and conquered the same addiction.

Later Sergey had another binge drinking session and came back to his sisters hearing voices and seeing delusions. He was really scared and sought out Mark. Mark went to him with a translator and talked really straight to him and told him he needed to go to a Rehabilitation Center. **They then went to Pastor Stepan's house where the saving grace of Jesus was shared and Sergey accepted !!** We saw a new joy in Sergey's eyes that day. Afterwards, Mark brought him to our house where he stayed for a few days until we could arrange to get him to a Rehab Center. We focused on loving, but not pitying him; supporting him but not enabling him; and treating him like a man and not mothering him.

A day before Sergey was supposed to go to the Center, satan attacked in full force - of course.

Mark was at the Internet Café filing taxes and I saw agitation, confusion, and a relapse racing in. Sergey had not slept all night and the voices were back, telling him he was no good and telling him how horrible he was. Mark came home quickly and he and Sergey went on a walk to visit Stepan. This short visit and being with Mark seemed to calm Sergey down but there was still a spiritual unsettling upon him.

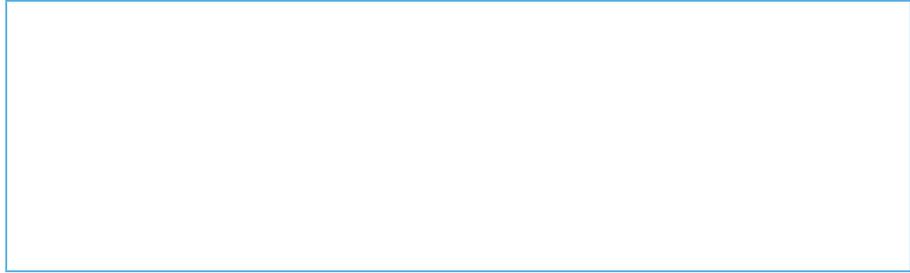
Later that night Stepan, another Pastor and a Deacon came to visit Sergey. They reaffirmed his salvation with him and shared more on what it means to be a 'child of God.' Mark had asked a translator over to talk about the very same thing, so he was excited at all this ! They told Sergey many of the things Mark had been wanting to say and Mark was able to share a few additional things. They had a wonderful meeting and the joy came back into Sergey's eyes. During the meeting I was in the kitchen praying and getting others to pray.

The next day Sergey left for the Rehab Center. He was very thankful to us for helping him and the joy was still in his eyes. We were able to say a few things to him in Russian to encourage him before he left. We have since heard that he made a public profession of his faith at the church that supports the Rehab Center. Several months and visits later, Sergey is still full of joy, loves working at the center and loves his new freedom in Christ.

Please pray for Sergey: that little irritations don't promote leaving the program; that he is assured over and over that he is a 'new creation' in Christ; and that his sister can pay the 300g (\$60) a month it costs for him to stay at the Rehab Center.



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<h2 style="color: #00AEEF;">Visiting Different Local Churches</h2> <p style="color: #00AEEF;">Building a Network of Resources</p>	<h2 style="color: #00AEEF;">Ministry Needs Current and Future</h2>	
<p>We continue to visit a number of churches in the Vinnitsya Obelisk, that include Baptist, Pentecostal, Charismatic and others. Pray that we can build good relationships that will lead to these churches' desire to work with us at the Homeless Shelter/ Rehabilitation Center by providing daily evening chapel services, volunteers, etc....</p> <p>Unfortunately many denominations are afraid of each other and are not willing to work together at this point. Misinformation and a fear of the unknown are the greatest obstacles. Please pray that we help them focus on what they have in common and not their differences, for we know that God blesses unity.</p> <p>A recent victory in this focus of unity are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That a Baptist Pastor finally visited a Nazerene (non-denominational) Rehab Center and was surprised and very pleased; so pleased he has already referred someone to the program. 2) Mark recently spoke at a Baptist church where the other person giving a sermon was a member of a Charismatic Church. 3) Pastors are starting to seek to work together crossing denominational lines. Please pray that the coalitions formed are those that edify and love the people and focus on God's calling. 	<p>As our ministry continues to grow, we find ourselves with a growing list of needs. Please pray over the below to see IF and WHERE God is calling you to help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel sized toiletry items for homeless and the poor. • Bed sheets, blankets, and pillow cases. Greatest need is for twin sized, but also a few queen and full size. • Towels and wash clothes • Keyboard for our Sunday night fellowships • Laptop or new hard drive for current laptop that is dying. • Bibles in Russian and English (Slavic Gospel Association) • New or Used small group and Bible study DVD sets • Money to purchase a large TV to show DVD's • Vehicle; approx \$3,000 <p>FUTURE NEEDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dental chair and dental equipment for office (for dental university students who will do practicum at homeless shelter) • Medical table/bed and basic 'sick call' and emergency type equipment and supplies (for medical university students who will do practicum at homeless shelter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen items (i.e., large mixing bowls, serving utensils, etc...) • Tables and chairs for classrooms, dining rooms, etc... • Bunk beds and mattresses • Pillows • Lockers, stand alone closets, or dressers <p><u>Items donated can be shipped a number of ways:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clothing, household items, etc... can be shipped via a humanitarian aid ministry that we started but now Nadia Ivanstova runs. She can be contacted at: 916-247-1127 or 916-458-6152 2. We are starting up a relationship with Boxes of Love and they are able to send a wide range of items. Their contact information is: (715) 892-4152 or www.boxesofloveltd.org or boxesoflove@excite.com 3. Bethia Estevez can ship items via a private company from Sacramento to Ukraine, however the cost is approximately \$2.50 a pound. She can be contacted at: 916-719-6489. <p>Please consider supporting our work on a monthly basis; any amount would help ! You can send it to PO Box 60126, Sacramento, CA 95860, payable to: Mark or Laura Bohanan/Heart of Ukraine Ministries.</p>