



Fifth Update 2012 Trip

PHOTOS: Left - Graduating class of the Christian Music Academy in Irpin; Center photo - teaching pastors in Zaporoshye in March; Right photo - Irina, text editor for textbook.

Dear praying friends,

This is being sent from the Chicago airport as I wait for my flight to Vancouver. Two more flights and then I will be home in my own bed - the first night in 75 sleeps! It will be great to be back. Although I can honestly say that every day has been special, I will be glad to be home. The time of disciplined planning and writing has come to an end. So much of the work now lies in the hands of the Ukrainians.

However, I leave with a heavy burden on my heart. Sound theological worship resources for Ukrainian and Russian speaking Christian musicians and church music ministers are almost non existent. Two examples indicate the dearth of material. At the Irpin Seminary library, I asked to see the section on worship and music. "Nothing of worth here" was Olexandr Korchevniy's terse reply as we looked at a few books on the shelf. Olexandr gives leadership to then Christian Music Academy at Irpin. A trip to the main Christian bookstore for all of Kiev resulted in a similar reply from my guide: "Nothing trustworthy or valuable here." For most of the people I meet, their library consists of hand written notes and handouts from various conferences. As great as our glut of resources is in the English speaking world is, so great also is the dearth of their resources. The urgency grows. I will do what I can.

In light of this urgency, I ask you to join me in prayer.

FIRST FOR THE TEXTBOOK:

Pray for Irina as she reviews almost 300 pages of text for the music history textbook, carefully looking for any inconsistencies, grammatical and spelling errors.

Pray for Guennadi as he begins the process of graphic layout of the book.

Pray for me as I work on suitable graphics and coordinate the process from a distance.

One typo in the last update. The Christian Life Press is in Lutsk, not Lviv.

THEN FOR THE DVD:

Pray for Guennadi as he translates leaders notes, participant study guide and does the layout of this material.

Pray for Evgeniy as he does the final edit on more than 3 hours of video.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

It was interesting to see that even during the time with Walli in Europe threads of ministry kept appearing unexpectedly. Again and again I encountered Russian speaking Christians whose story and present reality parallels the reality of the believers that I work with in Eastern Europe. And I should add - also parallels the reality of churches in North America of German, Ukrainian or Russian ethnic background.

Easter Sunday with relatives from my mother's side was not only inspiring but gave an additional insight to Russian German families. My relatives came to Germany from Karaganda in Kazakhstan. The patriarch Jakob Braun passed away a number of years ago but most his children and their families and grandchildren live in the same area. The Unruh family has many wonderful musicians. Among them some conductors who provided fascinating discussions that reminded me of my work in Eastern Europe.

In our return to Korntal where we lived during my sabbatical 2002-2003, we heard a Russian mass choir and caught glimpses of a different group of Russian German churches at Licht im Osten's annual conference.

In Berlin, after visiting Walli's relatives from former East Germany, I began a dialogue with EBTC (Europäisches Bibel Trainings Centrum) on behalf of Steve Benham of Music in World Cultures. Steve and I have collaborated on many projects in Eastern Europe. Given my knowledge of German and the culture, Steve recommended that I join the conversation. This discussion continued this past week as I attended their [Hirtenkonferenz](#).

Again I met Russian German Christians with the same values, struggles, strengths and needs. In the process I was amazed to learn that there are 5 Million Russian speaking Germans in Germany. 10% are believed to be evangelical Christians. My first thought when I heard this was "What an incredible missionary force has come to Germany." Of course, many Germans don't consider them to be 'real Germans'. Their work ethic, fundamental beliefs and conservative lifestyle tend to create barriers with other Germans. But I believe that the younger generations have a great potential to influence Germany for Christ. Pray that these churches will successfully navigate the sometimes perilous waters of adaptation to the so-called motherland.

In closing I want to give credit to SEND Canada for their support in providing receipting for donations and for making it possible for project funds to be released in Ukraine. Although I make most arrangements directly with my contacts in Ukraine there will always be this strong sense of connection with the mission that brought the original invitation from Dr. Birenza, Irpin Seminary in 1997. Present Canadian director, Robert Magwood, was the on-field missionary that facilitated the first Ambassador Choir tour in 1999 where this all began. I appreciate the partnership and the work done behind the scenes to make my trips possible. www.sendcanada.org

Once again, I thank you for your partnership in prayer. Safety and good health during all the miles and locations is not to be taken for granted.

In His Service,

James

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