



Mukachevo Minutes

Prayer letter of George & Sarah de Vuyst
Serving with Christian Reformed World Missions in Ukraine

May 2009



**CHRISTIAN REFORMED
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Our vision

We see healthy congregations emerging through church planting and leadership training as well as in partnership with existing Reformed congregations in Ukraine in order to bring healing and transformation to lives and communities throughout Ukraine and beyond her borders in the post-Soviet countries of Eastern Europe so that more and more people hear the gospel and lives and communities are transformed.

Points for praise

- We have been offered a vehicle to use during our home service in Michigan
- God's blessing on the church retreat and service project

Points for prayer

- Seminars on June 20 & 23 on "Psalms in the Midst of Suffering" and family/marriage
- Our financial support needs would be met
- Land for the Mukachevo congregation and temporary facilities from July 1.
- Preparations for our home service Sept. 1- Dec. 4.

Money is a Hot Topic at Church Retreat

For the third year, the Mukachevo congregation spent the May 1 holiday together on a church retreat. The fellowship time was fantastic and we studied together personal financial responsibility and first-fruits giving. The dis-



cussion challenged some people's thinking

such as whether it's right to give money to beggars or not. We are encouraged to see a healthy church emerging which wrestles with cultural traditions and seeks to discover how to use money to glorify God and serve others.

Serving Our Community

The service project organized by the English Bible Study group surpassed expectations. That Saturday afternoon physically disabled adults played games that were new to them such as Taboo and Pictionary, competed at foosball and ping-pong, and attempted bowling and golf on the Wii. Our guests were reluctant to come in the building

at first and their leader was concerned that the program wouldn't be interesting for them. Three hours later, however, we were asked to organize something again for them! Many

of the Bible Study members had never participated in a service project before. The experience has left most of them wanting to do more.



Video online at
www.devuysts.com

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More stories and pictures at
www.devuysts.com



Abigail as flower girl in friends' wedding.

Support Report

We are nearing the end of our fiscal year and our support is behind the minimum fund raising goal of \$66,000. As of April 30, we need an additional \$14,700 by end of June. Please consider if you are able to contribute to this need. Gifts can be made at World Mission's improved online giving page at www.crwmm.org/donate or by mail to CRWM, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560. Please indicate that the support is for George de Vuyst—Ukraine. **Thank you for your support!**

"When Will Ukrainians Respect Each Other?"

If you had been able to listen in to the conversation at this week's book discussion, you would have heard a lot of talk about how people cut in line at the grocery store, doctors have patients wait for hours, hairdressers charge more than the posted price, and city officials repeatedly say "come tomorrow" to avoid a citizen's request. One participant aptly pinpointed

the problem. "Ukrainians don't respect each other," she said. Another person commented that there is no hope for Ukraine to change. Sarah challenged that statement: "This is where the Christian Church can influence all of society! There are two things we can do. First, respect others. If we tell the cashier that someone else was there before us, people will notice. Secondly, we have a responsibility to stand up to injustice and mistreatment of ourselves and others. We can't just sit back and say, 'There's nothing I can do.'" As the Church begins to act differently, there is hope for societal transformation.

Church Refuses to Bribe

For the third time in three years the Mukachevo congregation has appealed to City Hall for land. By law, churches are entitled to city land but corruption has blocked the church from receiving a small plot of otherwise unwanted property. The church elders have repeatedly petitioned city officials for this land and have been told uncountable times to "come tomorrow" or "we'll consider it at next

month's session". When the elders speak of their frustration, people often comment, "The only way to get anything done is to line the pockets of these city officials." One elder responded, "If the Church feeds corruption, it will have no moral foundation on which to stand." We are proud of the elders' commitment to doing things right even when it's to their disadvantage. Pray with us that God would honor their resolve and provide land. Meanwhile, the elders are searching for facilities to rent since the agreement with the landlord of the present facilities expires on June 30.



Building Relationships

George has been able to meet new pastors as he distributes copies of John Calvin's *Institutes* to various churches in

Ukraine who are interested in Reformed teaching. Many of the pastors have expressed interest in trainings, seminars, and a stronger relationship with George and the Mukachevo congregation.