

Volunteering this summer *Sharing the Gospel in Ukraine*

by Sherri Siebold



Vacation Bible School students at Kagarlyk

This summer I participated in a mission trip in Ukraine with three other Canadians and four Ukrainians. Brenda Haid, Christine McMillan and Robyn Gettle joined me in making up the Canadian portion of the team. The Ukrainian component consisted of Sasha, Yura, Olga, and Anya. On this mission, sponsored by Lutheran Church–Canada and our congregations, we held Vacation Bible Schools in three different villages.

In the village of Kagarlyk the enthusiasm for God's Word that the children exhibited was very exciting. During the discussions about the Bible story many of the children would answer the questions before they were asked. On several occasions they would relate the story of the day

perfectly to other Bible passages. At one point a few excitedly shared a song they knew that related to the discussion of the day. In Kagarlyk two of the team members took the special opportunity to lead devotions in the afternoon for the teens.

It was very exciting to witness God at work within the children.

Next we went to the city of Krasna Pericopsek. First I'd like to share a bit of background about the city. As we understood, two factories built and a city of apartment complexes to accompany them. In order to have employees for the

factories, people who were serving a sentence were sent here to work. As a result many of the men started new families and then, when their sentence was up, went back to their original families leaving many broken homes.

The men and women of the church in Krasna Pericopsek were extremely open and welcoming. They wanted to hear as much as possible about our congregations in Canada and would love to communicate with one. Here the children were shy and opened up slowly. At the beginning of the week there were a lot of sad faces and some fighting. By the end of the week the church was filled with smiling faces belting out the songs. It was very exciting to witness God at work within the children. Some of the children, who initially did not pay attention, gradually became the ones at the front of the

church who wanted to hear more. The women who run the weekly Sunday school wanted more ideas and songs to sing with the children. Our donation of craft supplies took them by surprise and they looked overwhelmed. They are very excited that they now have the capability to have crafts for the children all year. One of the women sat in on all of the activities throughout the week.

Then it was off to the village of Zoya where a team of Lutheran Church–Canada missionaries had visited last year. In this village there is no Protestant church. When we arrived on Saturday we received word that many of the children were already excited and thought that we should make it more than five days long. It was amazing to see the numbers grow; starting the first day with 17 and ending five days later

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Singing an action song at Zoya.

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visit our web site at <http://personal.nbnet.nb.ca/gsheplc/clms>

New projects take shape

*with updates from Dr. Edwin Lehman,
Director of Projects and Ministries*



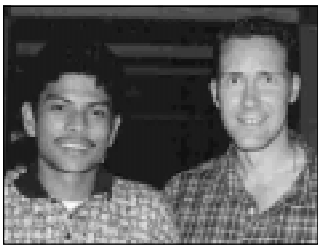
Our team with Christian brothers and sisters of the church at Krasna Pericopsek.

Volunteering, continued with 102. Boys as old as 15-16 years of age participated and made sure they got to make the crafts. At first I thought that it was a cultural difference but one evening Yura expressed that he was very excited about the growing number of children among whom were children considered to be delinquent. One day we were told there might be communist activity next door and as a result we

would be unable to take the children outside. Through God's protection and guidance everything went well.

I found God's presence during the Vacation Bible School's and camp very comforting and strong. Through this trip God has become more significant in my life. The most important aspect of the trip is a renewed closeness and relationship with God. (See also the projects report.) †

From Nicaragua



Harold Ristau, above right, graduate assistant from Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, who recently taught Old Testament Introduction in Nicaragua with his interpreter, Roberto Acuna. (See also the projects report.)



Pictured below are three participants in the theological training program in Nicaragua. The young man on the left is preparing to become a Lutheran pastor; the two young women are leaders among the children and women of the congregations. (See also the projects report.)

NICARAGUA – TRAINING CHURCH WORKERS

As many as fifty people are ready to be trained as pastors or evangelists in Nicaragua. Lutheran Church–Canada will work with the new mission in Nicaragua to offer four, two-week sessions per year. Funds are needed to provide for the guest instructors, educational materials, food and lodging for the participants and related expenses. Each four-week session will cost about \$10,000. LCC's budget includes funding for only one session. CLMS will assume funding for one other session.

Total cost — \$10,000

Comments: So far, about \$6100 has been contributed towards this project. Pastors Ron Abresch and Harold Ristau, the second team this year, just returned from a two-week teaching assignment. Another team is scheduled for December. About 60 people have been involved in the studies.

UKRAINE – VACATION BIBLE SCHOOLS

Each year a group of young people from LCC has gone to Ukraine to conduct Vacation Bible Schools in places selected by the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Ukraine (AELCU). The funds supply local costs, educational materials and supplies, hall rental, and, in some cases, transportation for the children. The VBS leaders are expected to pay for their own travel.

Total cost — \$3,000

Comments: About \$2100 has been designated for this project. A story elsewhere in this issue gives more information.

THAILAND – TRAINING CHURCH WORKERS

LCC is assisting the church in southern Thailand to train its own pastors and evangelists. LCC hopes to send four teachers during 2000, each one staying for an intensive two-week course. This follows up on the four sessions of three months each that were conducted last year. The Thai church looks after local expenses, but airfare for each instructor comes to about \$2000. CLMS will pay for one of the teachers.

Total cost — \$2,000

Comments: We have completed our commitment of \$2000 for this project. The work in Thailand is very difficult, but the local workers who are being trained are a great help. A few years ago CLMS contributed \$5000 to help purchase land for a small church in Takuapa. That church was dedicated this summer. The Lutheran church in southern Thailand is now looking at expanding work into new areas.

AFRICA – FRENCH THEOLOGICAL BOOKS

The Synod of France and Belgium is prepared to donate about 1000 French theological books for the use of French speaking countries in Africa, provided someone will pay for the shipping. There is a great need for such theological material. A similar project last year saw books go to Chad, Madagascar and Cameroun.

Total cost — \$1,000

Comments: Only a few dollars have been contributed for this project so far. We very much want to take advantage of the

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When we, as Christian individuals, are first taught the basics of stewardship it is recognized that stewardship is a growing process. As our faith grows, so true stewardship principles can be recognized and become a part of our faith lives. Our motivation for stewardship matures from doing and giving because God says we should and doing our share, etc. (law-based concepts), to doing and giving in response to what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

Along the way our faith recognizes that we were bought at a price, that we were dead and are now alive, and that we live and move and have our being solely through the grace of God. After acquiring these faith concepts, we recognize two stewardship concepts —

- All that we have and own are God's and from God. We are only returning a portion of what he has given us.
- We place God first in our stewardship life not because of the first commandment, but rather because he has first loved us. God's Spirit within us is making a difference. Our relationship is now close and intimate. We are now motivated to do and give out of a

Stewardship is suddenly no longer a burden.

newly created loving and unselfish nature growing within us; and as an act of worship.

There are, of course, many other stewardship concepts that we

come to know on our Christian walk. It is easy, however, to tell when a Christian's stewardship maturity gets beyond these two beginning concepts. Stewardship growth is both fast and obvious, and stewardship is suddenly no longer a burden.

Think now about your congregation's **outreach** stewardship. Where is it in this maturing process? Has the congregation's stewardship motivation for outreach moved beyond law-based concepts? Does it model these two beginning faith concepts?

For most congregations the largest outreach stewardship item is the mission budget for the district. How this mission budget is arrived at, and how it is managed, indicate how far the congregation's stewardship motivation has moved through the following theoretical stages.

- 1) The mission budget is at the end of the budgeting process. What everything else costs must be determined first. The balance is for missions. The congregation's budget grows, but the mission budget does not.
- 2) The mission budget is set somewhat lower than the district suggests. It is a burden, and always seems to be behind. The treasurer pays the bills and sends what is left to the district at the end of the month. A special appeal is made at the end of the year so that the mission budget can be met. Although the congregation feels guilty, if the funds do not materialize the mission budget is not met. The next year no attempt is made to increase the mission budget, since last year's budget was not met.
- 3) The mission budget is a percentage of the total budget, including the organ fund and building fund, etc. The congregation is challenged to increase this percentage regularly.
- 4) The mission budget is regarded as a pledge to God, not to the district. Regular monthly payments are sent in. The mission payment is sent in "off the top," before any other payments are made. The mission budget is a joy that flows from the faith life of the congregation.

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New projects take shape, continued

opportunity to ship these books to French-speaking Lutheran churches in Africa.

UKRAINE – TELEPHONE AND FAX, KIEV

LCC's new missionary in Kiev needs communication and office equipment, for which there is insufficient funding in LCC's budget. The first requirement is a telephone and fax machine.

Total cost — \$550

Comments: A single donor has underwritten this project and it is therefore completed. The equipment is of great help to Missionary Russell Anderson.

BRAZIL – DEAF MINISTRY

Our partner church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil, does excellent work among the deaf, especially in the urban area of Porto Alegre. In recent years, it has launched deaf work in some of the more outlying centres. One such place is in Recife, on the northeastern coast. This work is done among native people and provides an excellent opportunity to share the Gospel. This project will support a special outreach effort planned for deaf children.

Total cost — \$2,500

Comments: We have made a start on this project, but are still looking for donors who have a heart for deaf people and would like to support the work of our sister church in Brazil.

UKRAINE – HUMANITARIAN AID

Our partner church in Germany has been very helpful in providing humanitarian aid to needy people in Ukraine. The German church donates the items, arranges for the truck, fills it with fuel and sends it off. It costs an additional \$3,000 to pay the driver, the balance of fuel costs, etc. Missionary Roland Syens receives the goods and arranges for their

distribution. They try to get three or four shipments a year. LCC has funds for only one shipment. We would provide for another.

Total cost — \$3,000

Comments: Only \$200 has been provided for this important work. Recently a large shipment of goods from our sister church in Germany reached Ukraine. Missionary Roland Syens is actively involved in ensuring the best possible distribution of the humanitarian aid received.

UKRAINE – COMPUTER AND PRINTER

LCC's new missionary in Kiev also needs a computer and printer, items for which LCC does not currently have funds. These items are essential for his effective work, and for internet communication.

Total cost — \$3,000

Comments: We have not yet been able to provide the funds for this project. LCC has advanced the funds, but we are committed to reimbursing LCC.

Total Budget — \$25,050

Last year CLMS raised about \$16,000. Altogether, we have received about \$14,900 this year. This is close to the entire amount we received last year. With a concerted effort in the remaining two months of the year, we should be able to pay off all the projects for which we have committed ourselves. What a blessing that would be!

In addition, we continue to support the young seminary in Kamenka, Ukraine. Next summer, seven pastors will graduate and be ordained for service in the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Ukraine. This year's instructors included Dr. Milton Rudnick, Dr. Garry Dombrosky, Rev. Albert Schmidt and Dr. John Wilch, each teaching two courses in a six-week period. †

Concordia Lutheran Mission Society (CLMS)

A Listed Service Organization of Lutheran Church-Canada

Greetings from CLMS. Your mission society is moving along at a blistering pace (for a bunch of retreaded volunteers that is). We can boast the second edition of The Mission Advocate, a web site that is being updated quarterly by volunteer Rev. David Milete (<http://personal.nbnet.nb.ca/gsheplc/clms>), and a data base has been created for our mailing list by volunteer Elroy Mann. Thank you to all who responded to the appeal for help. We will be having elections at our spring of 2001 annual meeting. If you would like to become involved in front line mission work check out the job descriptions on our website. We are looking for mission-minded people who feel their experience or skills match these job descriptions; and people to serve on committees with us. Contact information is on the website. If you have not visited our website recently David has added some links to other websites so you can get more mission information.

In reference to the congregational stewardship article contained on the previous page, I hope that you

can look back and see the maturing of your stewardship life as your christian faith has matured. If you can, you probably also share a common trait with us at CLMS. That same Spirit within you that has been nurturing your faith has probably created a special zeal for missions. Your heart kind of wells up from within when hearing of God working to accomplish the great mission through us, like the four young volunteers who went to

the Ukraine this past summer. If you share this zeal, join with us as we work to ensure our church does more and more of what God commissioned us to do. Do what you can to ensure your congregation takes a mature attitude toward the mission work we do together (district pledge), and respond with a generous gift using the response form below (project details are on the previous page). I know I do not have to plead with you. Mature

stewards count it a privilege to serve. *“Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.”* 2 Corinthians 8:4b
 Terry Goerz, President
 phone 1-780-523-4126 after 6 p.m. MST or email tgoerz@hpsd48.ab.ca †

Three Nicaraguan children proudly display their new Spanish Bible (left) and copies of Luther's Small Catechism. (see projects report pages 2 and 3)



Congregational stewardship, continued from page 3

Many congregations in our synod are mature stewards. If your evaluation of your congregation sees room for growth, keep in mind that poor stewardship is a symptom of immature faith. The real solution is found not in more appeals, but in growing the congregation's faith, first individually, then collectively.

☺ Send the monthly mission pledge **before** other bills (even the pastor's salary) are paid??!! Are you nuts!! ☺

“And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.” 2 Corinthians 8:5 †

Response Form

Please make cheques payable to "Concordia Lutheran Mission Society" and mail to: Doreen Haberstock, Treasurer – 33 Victor Place, Yorkton , SK. S3N 2H3

Please indicate your preference:

- Nicaragua – Training Church Workers
- Ukraine – Vacation Bible Schools
- FUNDED Thailand – Training Church Workers
- Africa – French Theological Books
- FUNDED Ukraine – Telephone and Fax, Kiev

- Brazil – Deaf Ministry
- Ukraine – Humanitarian Aid
- Ukraine – Computer and Printer, Kiev
- Wherever is needed most

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Rev. Dr. Other (e.g. Rev. & Mrs.) _____ First name(s) _____
 Last name _____ Address _____
 City _____ Prov. _____ Country _____ Postal Code _____
 Home Congregation _____ Circuit _____ Phone _____
 Fax _____ Email _____ Work Phone _____

(the last four spaces are optional)