

Come into the field, and meet “servants for Jesus’ sake” in Ukraine.

by Muriel Threinen

IT WAS ON THE BRIGHT SUNNY MORNING of Monday, August 23, when the first day of classes began for nine students attending Concordia Seminary, Odessa (located in Kamenka) Ukraine. For the next nine weeks the students would take three courses taught by Concordia Lutheran Seminary Edmonton professor emeritus Dr. Norman Threinen.

Three students of the seven first graduating class in 2001 serve congregations not far from the seminary: Alexey Nadrozku, Sasha Yurchenko, and Yuri Maskov.

Kagarlyk

Pastor Alexey serves Kagarlyk Lutheran Church, about a 20-minute ride from Kamenka seminary. They completed their new church building last year. Pastor Alexey also knows some English and helps the seminary in many ways.



Pastor Alexey Nadrozku, Kagarlyk



Nikoliav

Pastor Yuri Maskov serves the congregation in Nikoliav. Nikoliav is about a four-hour ride from the seminary. They are in the midst of a large building project. Christians from LCC and Germany have provided funding. Many volunteers from Germany are also helping in the actual construction, which should be completed this year.



Pastor Yuri Maskov, Nikoliav



Savron

Missionary Sasha Yurchenko is working in the Savron area. He has established three congregations in Otcheretnya, Ostrovka and Savron. Savron Lutheran Church is also in the process of building. Construction should be completed by this summer. When the students graduate, and serve these congregations full-time, Sasha will move into another area and continue the Lord’s work much like St. Paul did.



Missionary Sasha Yurchenko, Savron



Seminary studies

The students at the seminary spend six months taking courses and the other six months serving congregations in their area. They return home every second weekend.

Of the nine students, three are from Krasnoperekopsk, a seven-hour drive from the

seminary. Sasha Brodt serves the congregation in Armansk; Victor Gorst serves the group in Krasnoperekopsk, where they are busy renovating a building they purchased; and Zhenia Frank serves the congregation at Pervomaisk.

Three more students live in the Nikoliav area, about a four-hour trip from the seminary. Victor Maskov, assists his father Pastor Yuri Maskov, in Nikoliav; Sergey Bondarenko, also serves in Nikoliav; and Ury Artemien. Student Ury Artemien doesn't get to go home often, because he serves the small group at Kamenka. This group uses the seminary for their activities.

The last three students live in the Savron area, located about half way between Kiev and Odessa, a five-hour drive from the seminary. Each week when Missionary Sasha makes this trip he puts about 1000 kilometres on the van. Volodya Popel serves the congregation at Ostrovka, Sasha Kostyuk, works with the people in Otcheretnya and Nikolay Smokvin serves in Savron, where they, too, are engaged in a building project, which is just about completed.

More room needed

People in Ukraine are growing out of their current worship areas, whether a room in a member's home (house church) or rented space. As one man from Krasnoperekopsk stated, "It is sad to see people come to church, find the room full and leave." Because of increases in membership, worship areas are too small, looking for more space is a constant concern. People here are actively involved in sharing Jesus with others and with God's help, growth is inevitable.

Many things stand out in the lives of these people. One of them is music. They love to sing, a capella or accompanied by piano or guitar. They have memorized many hymns and so printed music is not always needed, even for the accompanist. When *Lutheran Hymnals* were sent out, every group received 10 copies, if they had 20 or 100 members!

These nine students look forward to their graduation and ordination so that they will be full-time pastors—servants for Jesus' sake. And their congregations are looking forward to regular worship and communion services.

Through the efforts of Dr. Threinen and the men who help teach the courses, and translator,



Sasha Brodt, Victor Gorst, Zhenia Frank from Krasnoperekopsk



Victor Maskov, Sergey Bondarenko, Ury Artemien from Nikoliav



Volodya Popel, Sasha Kostyuk, Nikolay Smokvin from Savron

Olga Kosheleva, the second class of students of Concordia Seminary, Odessa will graduate (God willing) on August 20, 2005.



Translator Olga Kosheleva with Dr. Threinen

God's people in Ukraine are busy working on building a seminary and mission centre near Odessa. The basement section is completed. It is hoped the entire project will be finished in 2006. It could be possible for volunteers from Canada to assist in the completion of the seminary in the summer of 2006. If you are looking for a mission experience—travelling out into the field—and are handy with a hammer or paint brush, contact the Threinen's.

Muriel Threinen is a writer and author in Edmonton. She is a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church. She spent nine weeks in Ukraine last year with her husband, Dr. Norman Threinen.