

# News from the Lighthouse of Hope

## *The Маяк Надії Newsletter*

### OVERVIEW OF 2015

#### **Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ! Merry Christmas and Happy New 2016!**

**We would like to share with you, Brothers and Sisters, how God led us through the past year and how He continues to lead us. So below is an overview of our ministry in 2015.**

As you know, **we visited the village of *Bushcha* and continued meeting with children.** At the end of spring we wanted very much to continue meetings with children, not just as Bible lessons, but as home Bible study meetings and to carry out a home service. *Misha* and *Zhenya* used to spend the night in one house of the grandmother of *Vadim* and *Tanya*, the children who have visited Bible lessons. The main goal was not just to make friends with the children but to meet with adults and understand their problems, their lives, and to preach the Word to people of all ages. The team began to pray and meet with children, but the main priority was reading the Bible. There were about 5 children. God also showed us the need of an older lady – she needed to repair the upper part of her well. The neighbors and people from the village came to observe how *Misha* and others did their work, so God allowed communicating with adults and sharing the Gospel with people.

**Then God put into our hearts to pray more for the villages and neighborhood areas in our city. We pray for revival of peoples' hearts.** The guys walked around neighborhoods and prayed for each house and street. Then they did the same in the villages of *Buscha*, *Zalisyia* and *Borshchivka*. God sent them new friends, and renewed old acquaintances and meetings with people who really want to meet together and read the Bible. We have two small groups where people are happy to meet with us and want to read the Bible together. One group is in the village of *Bushcha*, the other one is in the village *Borshchivka*.

Also the Lord blessed us with **renewing the outdoor library ministry in our city.** Twice a week the guys stand on the street with Christian books and meet people and talk to them about God. The purpose of this ministry is not just evangelization of people, but getting to know them. Pray that the Lord will bless it and that maybe two Bible study groups would begin. We are praying for repentant hearts of the people, that they would come to faith in Jesus, through His Holy Word.

**God has prompted us to pray also for our country as there is a war in the east of Ukraine,** a lot of grief, despair, broken hearts, as well as a lot of needs both physical and material. But the main thing is the spiritual hunger and need people have of the saving grace of the Gospel. The Lord has blessed us so that we can in turn **serve the people in the East.** We were able to collect and send parcels with humanitarian assistance to Eastern Ukraine for people who still live in the war area, both believers and non-believers. We provided help to the church in the city of *Dimitrovo*, *Donetsk* region, where *Igor Tunik* is the pastor. We sent Christmas gifts for children there. We pray for the repentance and the awakening of the people in the East, and that there would be more of God's people who would serve these people in the war zone.

**From the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, the Lord blessed us by allowing a trip to the East of Ukraine in *Donetsk* region to visit Pastor *Igor Tunik* and his churches.** This trip filled our hearts with different feelings - from joy to sadness. We were willing to serve and see the whole situation there, to meet people, see the ministries which take place near the war area and to see that area through the eyes of Christ. Days were filled with various meetings in different localities, both with believers and non-believers.

**We were surprised by the different attitudes of the people.** People in the areas hit by war are open to the Gospel. But where there is still even small stability or material well-being, people are cold-hearted and violent. It is also painful to realize the fact that there is a coldness in the hearts of some Christians too; some are willing to have active ministries, but there are only a few of them who are willing to stay and serve in dangerous areas where God has birthed new churches.

**This trip was a test of our own hearts: Are we looking for God's direction or our own?** We visited five areas, where there are already Bible study groups. Those are 5 young churches where there are no pastors, or anyone who would lead people to Christ through the Gospel. There is one *rehab center* in the village of *Zhuravka*. In this village there is one minister, who helps *Igor* in this ministry. Igor is spread very thin with 6 additional ministries as well as his own local church. It is sad and encourages us to pray more with the prayer of **Luke 10:2** - this is a direct commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that the Lord of the harvest sends out laborers to His harvest. The question arises whether we are ready to be obedient to the Lord, even when we need to sacrifice our own comfort. **23 He also spoke to all: If any man will follow me, go, let him deny himself and take up his cross, but every day, and follow Me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; who will destroy his life for me, and he shall save it. (Luke 9:23-24)**

Another thing that we noticed in Eastern Ukraine was that the situation reminded us of when the curtain fell, and people were ready, open and hungry spiritually. If only the children of God would not miss this chance and do right, as Lord teaches us in the Great Commission in **Matthew 28: 18-20**.

These are the names of places where there are young churches: *Avdeyevka, Orlovka, the village of Ochereteno, Krasnoarmeysk, Shevchenko*, the village of *Zhuravka* where the Rehab center is, and *Dimitrovo* where Igor Tunik lives.

*(See the following pictures from the Donetsk region in Eastern Ukraine)*



City of *Avdeyevka*, 4 km from Donetsk airport



*Avdeyevka*



Small church group in the village of *Shevchenko*



Bomb shelter under the school in *Avdeyevka*



The place where people were sleeping and hiding during the bombing, *Avdeyevka*



The school in *Avdeyevka*. Helping in giving the packages with food and Bibles from different missions.



City of *Ocheretino*, close to the war zone.  
Humanitarian support (clothes)  
from the Western part of Ukraine.



Church service in *Dimitrovo*.



The rehab center in the village of *Zhuravka*.



Small church group service in *Ocheretino*.

**Speaking about surviving in trials and testing our hearts** in faithfulness to our God and trusting Him in every life situation He admits for our sanctification—**the end of the year wasn't easy for us**. In order to have knowledge of the truth about Him, it isn't enough just to have knowledge in the head; it must be in our hearts and become a way of life. It strengthens us when we think about it and rejoice that our God is always with us. Nothing can separate us from God (**Rom 8: 37-39**).

**When Misha and Zhenya were in the East, health problems hit our families, especially our children**. But we all see in this God's leading hand, more than ever in our lives. Our trials today are connected with health too. Zhenya is sick with chronic hepatitis B. He has started medical treatment, which God blessed him to be able to receive. He is undergoing a course of therapy. Since late November, our families, our children, have been ill several times. In Ukraine, especially in our region, there is a very serious quarantine because of the strong flu. Unfortunately, there have been many deaths, both of adults as well as children. And they say that it will continue for some time. So we have a viral epidemic through which the Lord leads us and our country. Because of this virus and illnesses, we have stopped our ministries, which means not being able to go out to the village, go out with the library, or have a house church service. We even tried to carry out the service via Skype. Being at home, we continue to make efforts for our spiritual growth through Bible study courses. Now we are studying "How to keep your balance when your dreams are shattered," learning the story of Joseph. We have many questions to God of why, and for what? But we believe that our God is good and all things are for our good. This period we call "the re-evaluation of values in our lives." God put us on the path of much prayer—a deeper personal relationship with Him and learning more truth about Him. **Our real desire is to love Him with all our hearts and follow His ways.**

God is merciful. We hope that soon God will help all of us to be able to renew our ministries, our daily life and communication with each other and others. And we pray for new ways for us to reach people. We want to hear God's voice and His will for us.

**We are thankful for you all, your open, sensitive and kind hearts. Hope you and your families are healthy and well. Be blessed by our God every day!**

Team of the Ukrainian mission, "Mayak Nadii"  
*Zhenya, Misha & Lena*

