



український  
освітній  
центр



ukrainian  
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Issue 11

Spring 2005

## The Story Continues

By Valeria Cherednichenko

In our last newsletter, we told you the stories of three Ukrainian Education Center visitors and their journey to God. In this newsletter, we continue the tale of God's amazing grace which brings more and more of his lost children back home.

This spring, the UEC staff along with numerous friends had the honor to witness Yulya Idemenko's baptism. Just like many young members of Nivki church, Yulya first came to the UEC in September 2002 to receive a free Bible. Since then, she has become a constant library user. Yulya soon became a regular participant and a great help at Nivki church Student Nights held every fall at the Ukrainian Education Center.

With a certain sense of pride, I experienced some special joy at her baptism since for two-and-a-half years now, Yulya has been a member of my home group, and I have shared a large portion of my own Christian walk with her. Through these years, God slowly but surely has been leading Yulya back into her Father's arms. Now looking back, from hearing her pray with us for the first time to seeing her emerge from the water as a brand new person, I can trace God's hand securing her every step. It has been a long and bumpy way she took to finally give her whole life to God, as it has been a long way afterwards to the actual baptism.



Yulya just before her baptism

Right before the scheduled day, Yulya caught a terrible flu, and for the next four weeks she was sick in her hometown Kirovograd, six hours south of Kyiv. Yulya stayed true to her decision to follow Christ despite the sickness and being behind in her studies with finals approaching.

As she wrote me during that time, she had the strongest desire to read the Bible, and she spent those difficult days studying God's Word in three different translations at the same time!

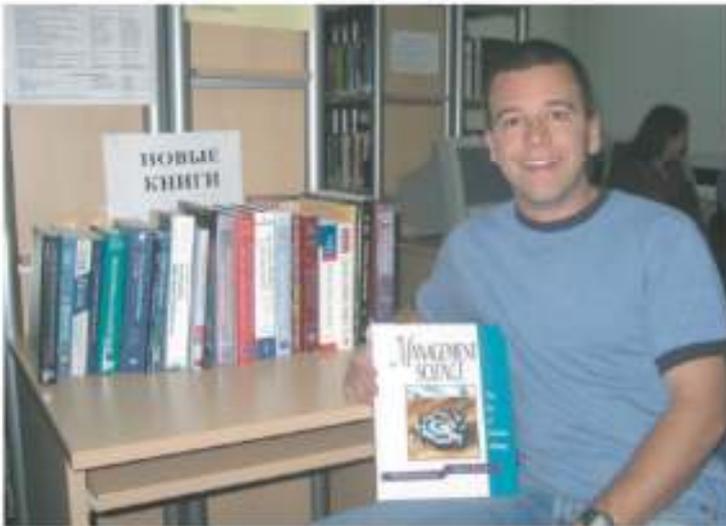
After her recovery and return to Kyiv, Yulya was baptized into Christ by Chris Lovingood. The event took place on a nice April day, when after two weeks of summer weather, we saw snow outside our windows again! This was a triumphant moment of victory over disease and awful weather, a triumph that reminded us of how Christ defeated death, so we could be reunited with him. Those Nivki church members who attended the baptism found both warmth for their bodies inside the church building and warmth for their hearts rejoicing in Yulya's new birth.

Another miracle in Yulya's life and a testimony of God's immeasurable love for us was that her mom recently started attending a church in Kirovograd. Not only did Yulya get her mom's consent on her decision to be baptized (something only to be hoped for some time before), but also her total approval, understanding, and joy.

*(continued on page 5)*

## Summer Visitors

Richard Gurley came for a ten-day Kyiv visit in early May and brought along a large donation of high-quality business books. While staying at the UEC, Richard helped with numerous library tasks and enjoyed visiting with UEC patrons and staff. He is working on an MBA at Duke.



Richard with books he donated to the UEC

Dr. Paul Prill, a UEC board member, visited Kyiv in late May for his annual trip. Paul serves as an elder with the Acklen Avenue Church of Christ which oversees the work of Chris and Lena Lovingood. Paul was also able to bring a large number of books to the UEC. These books were donated by a long-time UEC friend, Joe Stephenson. Joe lived in Kyiv for several years and is now finishing his dissertation at the University of Connecticut. He will join the ACU English Department in the fall.

## DVDs Needed!!!

The UEC started offering our patrons DVDs. We now have 22 DVDs; some are in English, Spanish, French, or German while others are in Russian. We hope that our visitors will find our DVD collection helpful. Many people who come to use our services study English, so they now can watch DVD movies with subtitles or change the language while watching a movie in order to understand English, or another language, better.

As practically everything we have in our library was given by our generous donors, we ask you to help us grow the DVD collection. We need everything: Christian films, lectures, movies, cartoons, etc. DVDs can be mailed to

Paul Prill  
5156 Ashley Drive  
Nashville, TN 37211.

We and those who will benefit from our growing DVD collection thank you.

## UEC Family Update

As our UEC family grows, we thought you'd like to know how some of our former staff is:

**Katie Boyer** is finishing her master's degree in comparative literature at the University of Washington. **Maurie and Joshua Hanauer** are still working in Cincinnati. Joshua just completed his training with the Cincinnati City Fire Department. **Bogdan Andriychenko** finished his MBA at Pepperdine and is working in southern California. **Monica Moreland** is in Memphis and came for a Kyiv visit in May. **Inna Boyko** finished working for the UEC in May and headed off for a summer of work and travel in Memphis.

Tragically, **Jonathan Shaub** was hit by a truck in February and though he suffered serious trauma, continues to recover at New York Presbyterian Hospital. A weekly-updated blog detailing his recovery is kept at [www.kievster.blogspot.com](http://www.kievster.blogspot.com). Cards are appreciated and may be mailed to:

New York Presbyterian Hospital  
ATTN: Jonathan Shaub  
Baker 17, Room #1732  
525 E 68th Street  
NYC, NY 10021

## Happy Birthday, Dr. Craig!

The UEC wants to wish Dr. Mack Wayne Craig, a very active UEC board member, a happy 80th birthday. David and Marnie Ferree recently made a donation to the UEC in honor of Dr. Craig. We thank them and Dr. Craig for their support!



## A Thank You From Kyiv

UEC manager Sergiy Lyakh recently asked one of our regular patrons to write a letter and express his thoughts about the UEC. We were somewhat shocked to receive the letter we have translated below. We share it in its entirety.

*Dear friends:*

*I want to call you friends because this is how you treat us. I am one of the many patrons of this library created by you. I am forty-four years old and work in a university. I am a physicist. But now I work as a manager. I have a 20 year-old son; he is a student. My wife is an English teacher. A year ago I said good-bye to atheism and now believe in a living God and his Son Jesus Christ, our Savior. I am glad he extended his hand to me.*

*In this letter, I want to thank you for the work you have begun and want to ask you not to quit. It's great that we can freely buy Bibles now (without fear of persecution). The Bible provides us with spiritual milk that gives growth. I love to read the Bible study materials at the Center because everything becomes more clear and easier to understand. I also like to read the words of different Christian writers who know how to explain the material and create a fiery tunnel to connect the Old and New Testaments and bring together different topics, the sayings of Jesus, his commands, etc. For example, I enjoy Alexander Men, C. S. Lewis, Josh McDowell, Charles Spurgeon, and others.*

*Unfortunately, in Kyiv where the apostle Andrew supposedly preached, in the city that recently celebrated its 1,100th year anniversary, and where the Kyivan Rus were baptized 1,000 years ago, it's not easy to find Protestant books. Of course, historically, Orthodox Christianity takes the first place. The second place in bookstores and markets is taken by secular writing, the occult, black magic, etc. People who were freed from the chains of Communism and atheism now hungrily read these lies. Christian books that aren't Orthodox are sold in only a few stores and demand is not very strong. Unfortunately, not everyone can afford to buy good Christian materials. If you buy 5-7 books, you can spend half your monthly salary. And it's very difficult to find some authors (like Lewis or Chesterton). Even though some books are on the internet, it's hard to access.*

*Then, there was a miracle. In February of this year, I attended English classes for ten days and a girl in those classes happened to be one of the UEC's patrons. She told me*

*about the Center. Your library--a sea of books in Russian and English--is a real invaluable gift for a believing person. It's my dream. I would never have been able to acquire even one-thousandth of what you have and probably wouldn't even be able to find many of the books that the UEC has collected over the years. All of this happened in the time I needed it most. I have only read "The Chronicles of Narnia" to my son but here in the UEC I found not only "The Screwtape Letters" and Lewis's trilogy but also Lewis's deep theological works. I am overwhelmed by the wisdom of this writer and very often find how Lewis gives words to my thoughts and helps me to formulate my beliefs and principles. Thanks to Lewis I also found Chesterton.*

*I own a tape recorder and regularly check out audio tapes. I discovered for myself many new Christian artists. That exceeded all my expectations were the video tapes. You can check them out for a week and I have watched several movies about the Bible. I recorded the soundtrack from the movie "Matthew" and listen to it now on a walkman. In this way, I can imagine Jesus and other people. I listen to it when I read the Bible or just when I walk on the street, and it makes me want to repent of my sins and accept God's grace and peace. It's a very powerful movie which changed my life.*

*I hope I have been able to fully express how I feel about the UEC and everything I found here. Let me tell you exactly what I am thankful for--through your actions and through you God sends joy to believing people in Ukraine and gives joy in believing. All of our expectations can be exceeded by God, and we cannot even begin to imagine what God can do. As I thank you for what you do in God's work, I pray that God gives you strength to continue the work that you have begun.*

*With sincere respect as your debtor, one of your many readers, and friends,*

*Mikhail Statkyevich*

*P.S. When the disciples of John asked Jesus if he was the one, he told them to look at his actions: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are resurrected. I also think people will judge us by our actions, not by our words. Even though we are not saved by works but by grace, I believe our faith gives us strength to do good just because you can't act in any different way. Thank you for what was created at the UEC and that it continues to live.*



Mikhail at the UEC

## Another Story

Like with Yulya (see page 1), God's story continues in the life of another UEC patron, Ira Ryzhenko. Ira also came to the UEC as a first-year university student. She received a free Bible and used our computers and library resources. After attending student night regularly, she eventually began coming to Soup Group every Friday at the UEC. Jonathan Shaub was leading the discussion and they became friends. While becoming friends with Nivki church members, Ira slowly began attending church services. Faith gradually emerged and besides numerous informal discussions, she also began regularly meeting with Lena Lovingood for Bible study.



Ira's baptism

On February 26, 2005, she took an enormous step and gave her life to Christ in baptism. Ira remains active in the life of Nivki church and almost daily visits the UEC. She is spending the summer working in Wisconsin Dells with 5 other church members.

We praise God that the UEC can be a beacon of light for many who seek truth and meaning in life.

Please visit our on-line gallery to see more pictures of Ira's baptism: [www.uecenter.org/images](http://www.uecenter.org/images).



Ira with her small group after the baptism

## Winter/Spring 2005 Activities

Weekly events at the UEC involved over 110 people:

Monday	Study Center course: Heaven and Hell
Tuesday	English Outreach, a church small group, and two Bible study groups
Wednesday	Two church small groups
Thursday	English Outreach and a church small group
Friday	TOEFL study group, Soup Group, Student Movie night, and a church small group
Saturday	TOEFL study group and ICU student board meeting



Our current UEC staff flanking Paul Prill during his recent visit (L to R, Valeriya, Chris, Paul, Lena and Sergiy)

On average, the UEC receives 121 patron visits per day. So far this year, 217 new patrons have registered; now, we boast 2,585 registered patrons. Over 9,000 library items have been checked out, and thanks to our staff's diligence, we have a 99% return rate. 2,439 hours of computer use were logged along with 3,033 hours of room use. All these numbers represent people who are served in a meaningful way thanks to your generous support. To God be all the glory.

# UEC's Outreach

By Sergiy Lyakh

The Center has almost 9,000 items in the library now, provides 268 hours of room usage and receives about 720 patron visits per week. We are capable of working with more people though. Thus, we decided to promote the Center in Kyiv Churches of Christ and other organizations.

The main purpose of our promotion project is to inform people of the possible ways the Center can be useful in their lives, especially to let Christians know we have a dynamic collection of literature, CDs and videos about Christianity.

Our staff planned to visit four Kyiv Churches of Christ. By May 1st, we had made presentations at Vinogradar and Obolon Churches of Christ and had negotiations with Ukraina University and several other organizations.

service. Many were interested in our presentation and more brochures were given away. Obolon church has many people over the age of 30, and we hope they will use the Center's library more often. Only students from Obolon church are visiting the Center now. This church has a small library, and we strive to develop a relationship with their church librarian to better help meet their church's library needs.

Besides inviting people to use the UEC's library, we also promote our large meeting room as a place for classes, small conferences, and Bible studies. We had some success in talking with an assistant dean of the interpreting department at Ukraina University. Starting in September, the Center will host one of their university's classes for 20 or 30 students once a week, where Chris Lovingood, the UEC's director, will also give a lecture. We see this as a great opportunity to meet students and share the gospel.

After we gave these presentations and before we finish the promotion project, we pray that God will bring people to the Center to help them grow their faith in Jesus by using our library, our computers and our rooms. Please pray for this promotion project, for its success, and for everybody who visits the UEC. The Center has a great potential of serving more visitors every day, so we try to do our best at reaching out to invite new people.



Lera distributing UEC brochures at Vinogradar church

The first presentation at Vinogradar Church of Christ, a young church attended by around 20 people on Sunday, was led by Sergiy Lyakh, the UEC's general manager, who gave a brief speech, while Valeriya Cherednichenko and Chris Lovingood distributed information brochures to all that were interested. Among others, Tanya (see picture above) showed a particular interest in looking for information on youth ministry since she works with teenagers. Jim Noyes, missionary at Vinogradar church, already has made a request to use the UEC's large meeting room twice for a July seminar. We hope that more people from Vinogradar will be able to see how they can spiritually profit from using the Center's resources.

Obolon Church of Christ is a much bigger church - more than 80 members attended the Sunday

## The Story Continues

*(continued from the first page)*

At present, Yulya is a home group leader and a participant in the Nivki church ensemble. She is a great encouragement and support both for believers and those who only have started learning about God. I find inspiration in watching her serve others and in knowing that her walk with God has only started.



Yulya holds her flowers after the baptism

The story continues.

# Highland Street Sings

By Sergiy Lyakh

The Highland Street Teens choir, chaperoned by UEC board president David Ralston, visited the UEC in January 2005. After arriving to Kyiv on January 16th, the group performed in Bila Tserkov Church of Christ, the Ukrainian Education Center, and International Christian University.

Highland Street Teens bless many people who attend their concerts at the UEC. Not only Nivki or Livoberezhna Church of Christ members come to listen to wonderful songs and clear voices, but also many non-religious people come to give it a try and see what a Christian singing group is like.

I am always amazed at how people find out about the date and time of the concert. Many of those who came to the Center January 19th at 7PM come only once or twice a year – only to participate in events like this one. This year, considering that the hall where the choir would perform is a little smaller than before, we decided not to invite anyone besides church members and their friends. We thought that would allow us to see how many people come from churches and would give us an idea of how many people can reasonably be put into the new hall.



Choir performs for more than 80 people at the UEC

When only about 10 people had come by 6:50PM, ten minutes before the choir was scheduled to arrive, I became worried that not many people would come at all. At 7:10PM, though, I could not find a moment to relax – more than 80 people had come to participate in the joyful event!

This year, not only did the Highland Street teens make the evening special, the Nivki church ensemble and the International Christian University choir also performed to the glory of God. The concert lasted almost two hours. It was hard to find a spot, even in the corridor, to listen to the beautiful music. As always, the evening concluded in a spirit of unity while everybody got a chance to become friends with the singers and get a free CD of songs that had just been performed.

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[www.uecenter.org](http://www.uecenter.org)  
[manager@uecenter.org](mailto:manager@uecenter.org)

## Thank You!

### Library Donors

In 2005, we have already received 518 library donations. The collection exceeds 8,800 items. The library is an important part of the UEC's ministry to Kyivites: more than 9,000 items have already been checked out this year.

Bogdan Andriychenko  
Michael Armstrong  
Valeriya Cherednichenko  
Mack W. Craig  
Vladimir Figol  
Amy Gregg  
Richard Gurley  
Alexei Kuzmenko  
Olga Lemish  
Chris and Lena Lovingood  
Sergiy Lyakh  
Oleg Skutsenya  
Joe Stevenson  
Andriy Umanets  
Otter Creek Church of Christ

### Financial Donors

Thanks to our financial donors, we are open 12 hours a day, six days a week. Many visitors are shocked to find that our services are free. Financial gifts may be mailed to the address below or made through our on-line donation system at [www.uecenter.org](http://www.uecenter.org)

James Brown  
Jerry and Sandra Collins  
Mack W. Craig  
David and Marnie Ferree  
Paul and Mary Anne Haubereich  
Gary Jerkins  
Kenneth and Victoria Kibry  
Victoriya Kyrymova  
Paul and Valery Prill  
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