



“The Most Excellent Way”

INTERNATIONAL

UKRAINE

Report by Pastor John Townsend

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John’s missionary ministry is “MATTHEW 25:34-40 Ministries” —

Jesus said:

“Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink;
I was a stranger and you took Me in;

³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me;
I was in prison and you came to Me.”

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying,

‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?

³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?

³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’

⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”



The Most Excellent Way International ~ UKRAINE

MINISTRY BACKGROUND

When **Ukraine** became independent from the Soviet Union in 1991, nearly 97% of adult males were alcoholics.

“**The Most Excellent Way**” (TMEW) was introduced into Ukraine through **Vision Ukraine** and the **Ukrainian Family Institute** (UFI) in 2000. UFI was a Canadian-led ministry partnered with Focus on the Family (and others) in Kiev — UFI closed in 2008 but established a network of churches working across denominational lines to work toward healthy families.

Vision Ukraine is a mission arm of “**MATTHEW 25:34-40 Ministries**”—a partner of The Most Excellent Way Christian Fellowship. The TMEW Ministry Manual was obtained in Russian from Perm, Russia, by Vision Ukraine and compared to the English edition. Some corrections had to be made in the translation to make it easier and more correct to read. About 100 copies were made for a week-long conference held by the UFI in November 2000. Some 55 churches attended the conference, and TMEW was taught by Pastor Dan Shaw, who had become familiar with TMEW through North Park Christian Fellowship in San Diego, CA.



Most of the churches in attendance established one or more rehabilitation centers for the treatment of addictions to drugs and alcoholism, as well as holding TMEW meetings within their congregations. The UFI sponsored a second conference in 2004 which expanded the church network; again, Vision Ukraine’s Pastor Shaw provided instruction in TMEW. (Pastor Shaw died in 2006, but the mission continues under the Ukrainian leaders he trained.)

When the UFI closed (having met most of its objectives), Vision Ukraine adopted and expanded the church association network begun by UFI. Through this church association, more than 350 Christian rehabilitation centers have been established across Ukraine. At least 500 churches

now sponsor TMEW meetings. (Although there is no central coordination of meetings, word of mouth advertising has proven successful.)

In addition, many churches have successfully gained entrance to the government hospitals treating addictions (there are 150-plus hospitals specialized in psychiatric care in Ukraine). It is estimated that 15-18% of the government hospitals currently have a TMEW-based program based upon reports from the churches in the network.

CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES

In 2009, Ukrainian government statistics showed the use of alcohol below 75% and the per-capita consumption of alcohol reduced by 60% (more beer and wine, less spirits, especially vodka). Alcoholism among women is now higher than among men. The use of alcohol among young people (under 30) is substantially less, but the use of drugs is increasing.

Drug usage is very high among young, unemployed, single people (some estimates are as high as 70%). Efforts by evangelical churches to reach these young people are being actively opposed by the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine. However, the use of drugs and alcohol within the evangelical churches has been reduced substantially (to less than 8% from numbers that had been comparable to the national statistics).

Vision Ukraine remains active in helping Ukrainian churches establish TMEW ministries and rehabilitation centers. Virtually every church in the association conducts multiple TMEW meetings and 60-70% have rehabilitation centers. About 20% of the churches also have TMEW ministries to children under 10 to help them deal with alcoholic/addicted parents. In May 2010, one of the Ukrainian Baptist associations (over 150 churches) partnered with Vision Ukraine and has been provided TMEW Program Manual. Training in the use of the manual will take place over the next year.

Vision Ukraine has missionary churches in Kartaliy, Russia, and a ministry to Russian speaking people in Czech Republic. Each of these outreaches also use TMEW in their ministries. ■

About Ukraine

Geography & Location — Ukraine (meaning: The Borderland) is located in Eastern Europe and is surrounded by Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Belarus, Russia, and the Black Sea. Because of its strategic position, Ukraine has long been considered a crossroad between Europe and Asia. With a total land area of 603,700 square kilometers (slightly smaller than Texas), this former Soviet republic is Europe's second largest country. The capital is Kiev with 2.8 million residents.



History — Once a powerful force on the European scene, Ukraine's fate in modern times has been decided in far-off capitals. As a result, Ukrainian history, for the most part, has been defined by foreign occupation.

In the 1930's, under Soviet rule, and later during the Nazi occupation of World War II, many irreplaceable architectural, cultural, and artistic treasures were destroyed. During this same time, millions of Ukrainians paid with their lives as they suffered at the hands of their invaders.

In April of 1986, Ukraine became the site of the world's worst nuclear disaster after an explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power facility.

On December 1, 1991, Ukraine gained its independence after the break up of the Soviet Union and formally adopted a democratic constitution in June of 1996.

Religion — Ukrainian Orthodox — 85%
Roman Catholic — 10%
Protestant (mainly Baptists) — 3%
Jewish — 1%

Languages — Ukrainian is a Slavic language (similar to Russian), which is taught and spoken throughout the country. Russian is also widely used within the major cities and eastern oblasts (counties). Among the youth there is a great eagerness to learn English and other western European languages.

Economy — After Russia, Ukraine is by far the most important economic component of the former Soviet Union, producing about four times the output of the next-ranking republic. Its fertile black soil once generated more than one-fourth of Soviet agricultural yield. Today, about 50% of the people live below the poverty line with the average reported income around \$80 per month. Economic reforms introduced in the mid 1990's have started to take effect, but inflation and unemployment still plague the country.

Education — Literacy is 98%. Educational policy favors the study of science and technology. At present, schooling is compulsory for ages 7-16 with university-level education open to anyone who can pass an admission test.

People — Population — 49.8 million (1999 est.)
Ethnicity — Ukrainian-73% | Russian-22% | Jewish-1%

**Pray for the people of Ukraine, the ministries mentioned above,
and for "The Most Excellent Way" ~ May God continue to be glorified!**