

# BENGE BULLETIN



WINTER 2019



Every year our SEND Intl. teammates in Kiev and their families gather together to celebrate Christmas.



In December, thousands visited the Christmas Market at St Sophia's Square to enjoy live music and visit various kiosks featuring holiday crafts and food.

## God Continues to Develop Ministry Partnerships



Jerry teaching **Introduction to Pastoral Leadership** to first year KTS Pastoral Leadership students.

### Upcoming classes

- Jan. 28-Feb. 2: Pastoral Ep. at KTS
- Feb. 13-15: Homiletics in Rivne
- Feb. 27-Mar. 3: Psalms at KTS
- Mar. 27-31: Gospel-Centered Peacemaking (KTS)

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Co-teaching **Biblical Counseling** at KTS with Andrei Murzin (who is preparing to assume this responsibility).



In Lutsk, training couples in **Family Peacemaking** who will be mentoring other couples in Ukraine.



While vacationing in Edinburgh, we met with Lewis & Susanna Macaulay (Niddrie Community Church) and discussed some networking opportunities.



At a satellite program in Rivne training young church leaders in the **9 Marks of a Healthy Church**.



# Healthy Churches: Are They Really *Essential* for Missions?

If you have been receiving the Benge Bulletin for some time, you know that we devote a lot of attention to this topic. Occasionally we are asked questions like: 1) Are healthy churches really *essential* for missions? 2) Isn't it possible to risk becoming so obsessed with your church's health that you develop an *inward* focus that distracts you from fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20)?

These are fair questions. The Great Commission cannot be ignored for any reason. It is at the heart of the message that runs from Genesis to Revelation: God's determination to save a people for Himself from every tribe, language, people, and nation (Gen. 12:3; Psa. 2:8; and Rev. 5:9). Even the fact that a church may find itself in an unhealthy condition in no way exempts it from its Great Commission *responsibilities*.

Ironically, the problem often lies with our *definition* of the Great Commission itself. Without getting into minute detail, we simply must understand that Matthew 28:18-20 encompasses *everything* from *proclaiming* the Gospel ("Go...") to *living* the Gospel ("teaching them to observe all that I have commanded"). To summarize: We are to be Christ's *messengers*, but we ourselves must be continually transformed by its *message*.

Jesus gives a brief but comprehensive plan—one that involves not only Gospel instruction but also intentional life-on-life modeling and practicing. The NT epistles take this model and apply it to various situations that local churches faced *then* and that we face *today*.

Romans, for example, is all about the Gospel. But to whom is Paul writing this letter? To *members* of the church at Rome (1:7, 15). His point is to drive home the Gospel (all that God has done to rescue and restore sinners) in the first 11 chapters so that his readers (Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome) will deal

with their differences in light of what God has already done for them through their faith in Christ (12-15).

Yet Paul had another reason for writing this majestic epistle. It's found in Rom. 15:22-24. He wanted the Roman church to be a Gospel-saturated (i.e. healthy) church so that they could provide him a *strategic partnership* for taking the Gospel all the way to the unreached peoples of Spain! Obedience to the Gospel we proclaim is necessary for the ongoing advancement of the Gospel!

There is **no either/or** here. If the Gospel we *proclaim* is not *penetrating* our daily lives and *lubricating* our mutual relationships, we will contradict the very evidence that a watching world is waiting to see (Acts 2:42-47). That is a legacy that we cannot afford to export or reproduce in faraway places.

Please pray for us as we teach, resource, and mentor young Ukrainian leaders and network with likeminded co-laborers (see pictures on right) in the promotion of biblically faithful and missionally effective churches in Ukraine.

## PRAISES AND REQUESTS

### Praises

Family – God continues to teach us more about how the Gospel works in our lives.

Health – Jerry's sleep apnea is improving with use of a bi-pap machine.

Ministry – Networking opportunities are increasing as God introduces us to like-minded Ukrainians and ex-pats.

### Requests

**Jerry**: That new relationships will develop into long-term networks of fellowship and mutual encouragement.

**Kellie**: Wisdom in setting priorities for ministry with Jerry first, then others.

**Both**: Wisdom in developing redemptive relationships with Ukrainian unbelievers.



Two of our promising young church leaders were greatly impacted by the first 9Marks conference in the Russian-speaking world at Russian Bible Church in Moscow. Pictured with them is Pastor Mark Dever.



Jerry with Benjamin Morrison (opposite of Jerry). He is a co-leader of City-to-City of Ukraine, a ministry of Redeemer Church in NYC.



Jerry and Kellie with Pastor Conor McNamee in Chernigov. The church he pastors also is the headquarters for In Lumine publishers, one of our partners in providing Russian and Ukrainian resources. They are currently working on the translation of the individual 9 Marks books. Please pray for their small but highly productive staff (Marina Padiy and Olena Lisnichenko on right) as they diligently labor in completing this project.