



*In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your **partnership in the gospel** from the first day until now....*

Phil. 1:4-5

Praise Reports:

- At our latest mission conference, we were reminded by veteran missionaries to Haiti of the wonderful truth that "God sees ahead" (Jeremiah 29:11). We were blessed by the opportunity to listen and learn from Wallace and Eleanor Turnbull who went to Haiti in 1946 in obedience to the command to love God and love others.
- God's continuing faithfulness in supplying our monthly support (two more churches became partners with us!).

Prayer Requests:

- From Karissa: Please pray that I will have wisdom as I prepare to make the transition to college and know the peace of God as I trust him to guide my decisions (Phil 4:6-7).
- Wise management of time as we seek to maintain the priority of Christ as our treasure in our busy lives preparing for the future and living out our everyday responsibilities (Eph. 5:15-16).

Church Itinerary

- May 13-17 Knox Presbyterian Church—Harrison Township, MI
- June 7 Aboite Baptist Church—Fort Wayne, IN
- June 14 Morgantown Baptist Church—Morgantown, IN

Contact Information:

Jerry, Kellie & Karissa Benge
 37537 Brynford Drive
 Clinton Township, MI 48036
jwbenge@aol.com
www.sendbenge.com



The Many Nuances of May Day!

May has arrived and with it, the (more than!) welcome prospect of summer. For centuries, a popular way of marking this annual milestone has been a celebration on May 1, known simply as **May Day**. People from many countries in the Northern hemisphere have used this day to celebrate the end of the cold, wintry half of the year and the arrival of warmer weather. But that is not the *only* significance of May Day.

When a rally in Chicago for workers who were striking in support of an eight-hour work day turned violent and deadly in early May of 1886, the international labor movement turned May Day into *International Workers' Day*. Three decades later when the communists came to power during the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia (1917), May Day became an important official holiday. Russia, along with Ukraine and other member nations of the former Soviet Union, would celebrate this day with an elaborate parade in the center of their major cities. Who can forget seeing televised news clips of Soviet leaders in Red Square, standing atop Lenin's Mausoleum, waving at the crowds as soldiers marched past and missile-laden trucks rolled by? Since 1992, May Day has been officially called "The Day of Spring and Labor" and remains a major holiday in the former USSR.

May Day is very special to Jerry because of precious memories of past teaching trips to Russia that

frequently coincided with it: memories that included picnics with Russian friends (see below), work days (clearing away tree stumps to make a soccer field for a summer youth camp), and even



May Day Picnic with Russian brothers and sisters in 2004.

watching a Russian military parade.

However, since 1986, May Day has evoked a different kind of memory for Ukrainians. It more likely resembles the international distress signal: "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday!" On May 3 of that year, the worst nuclear disaster in modern history occurred near a Ukrainian town called Chernobyl. At least 50 lives were cut short by the immediate disaster and thousands more by the ensuing fallout—with the cancer-causing effects of lingering radiation continuing to this day. That tragedy has become for us a metaphor of the spiritual plight of a nation where only 2% have a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ—even though it has more Gospel than any other country in the former USSR! Thus,

"Mayday" for us is a reminder of God's call to the Russian-speaking world.

This past May Day, our current monthly support was nearly 75% (for which we praise our faithful God!!) So this newsletter is *not* a distress signal. However, **we do want you to be aware that our departure date of mid-August is looming ever closer.** We hope that our newsletters have helped you to better understand the needs and opportunities that exist in Ukraine for the Gospel. If you have not already decided to partner with us in prayer and/or financial support, would you prayerfully consider doing so today? Just visit our web site at www.sendbenge.com and check out the section labeled "Support."

Monthly Funding Update



Needed monthly: 25%
 (Current status: 75% promised)

Note: Contributions are solicited with the understanding that the donee organization has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.