

Hello, Mark

Below is some news for GNIF supporters:

We continue regular visits to the orphanages where we spend time with orphans communicating, studying the Bible with them, singing Christian songs and praying. When weather will get better in late spring we'll have some outdoor activities as well. This month we have covered following topics during our visits with kids:

**Forgiveness** (The Bible often talks about us forgiving others because of the forgiveness we have found in Christ (Matthew 6:12-15, Luke 6:37). We are specifically commanded that we should forgive others before we ask the Lord for forgiveness (Mark 11:25).

**Controlling the Tongue** (The Bible often talks about the tongue being a destructive power (Jeremiah 9:8). Controlling the tongue is a difficult thing (James 3:6-8). The tongue can pour out blessings and cursings (James 3:9,10). It is unnatural for a well to give sweet and salty water, yet we do it with our tongues.);

**Take A Look at Daniel** (Daniel, the guy in the lion's den knew how to really listen to God throughout the day. Daniel 6:10 says: "But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.")

We also got some T-shirts, candy and fruit as usual, and some boxes with gifts through the program "Samaritan's Purse" and gave it all as Christmas and New Year's gifts. The kids were really happy and excited. It was a real blessing to see genuine joy on their faces. The orphans practically don't have any material possessions and so they really value any gift and sign of attention. I am attaching here some pictures from the orphanage. We also bought them trampoline because the director has been asking about it for a long time. It will help kids to use some of their energy because during the cold season they can't do any outdoor activities and sports.

Along with some other brothers in Christ we visited a front-line village of Maryinka and delivered bread to several homes with elderly people who live alone. We gave them New Testaments and prayed with them. These people were not able to move to any safe place because they have no means for it and therefore they have endured through all horrors of the war during 2014-2015. They talked to us about their lives near the front-line – the hope in Jesus is all they have. In particular there was one old lady, Valentina, and she takes care of her grandson Danil. The boy has a severe form of cerebral palsy and epilepsy: he cannot sit or speak, and he can only eat mashed food like puree. We brought them some food and personal hygiene items. I've attached their pictures here too.

As far as the situation in Donetsk is concerned: pro-Russian fighters continue to shell Ukr. Army positions from mortars/tanks/RPGs and machine guns. They are not attempting to gain any more territory but are just firing at the positions most of the time. The OSCE inspectors monitor this every day but according to their rules they have to be at their hotels by 5PM and stay there for entire night, so that's why most ceasefire violations take place during the night.

Last week in Donetsk there was a series of arrests of several people linked with church – people who had any connection with church (including Church of Christ), civil society activists, scholars, NGO representatives, etc. The separatists who are in charge now label any church except Russian Orthodox as “CIA- sponsored sects” and will keep a close eye on any activity there. One of the more known figures who has been arrested last Wednesday is Igor Kozlovsky. He was taken in the middle of the street and then they searched his home and took out some stuff. He has a severely handicapped son at home who just stayed there alone without any care until other relatives arrived a day later. It really looks like an abduction rather than arrest because they don't provide any information as to charges, his location, etc. Igor was a humble scholar and never led any political activity. Several people have been abducted just for their Facebook posts. As far as one other person is concerned – a group of people is already preparing to pay ransom for her.

So if everyone thought things were tough there – they just got a lot tougher now. Please continue to keep this situation in your prayers.

Eldar