

The Gazette

OF MUSIC MISSION KIEV

Music/Widows/Orphans and Children/Church/Victims of War

REFORMATION IN UKRAINE



Five hundred years ago Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany, which declared that Scripture is the ultimate authority for the church, not the traditions of man. The Reformation had begun in 1517, and the Western world was forever changed.

Now five hundred years later, the government of Ukraine honored the anniversary of the Reformation with a huge celebration at the National Opera and Ballet Theater, sponsored by the National Reformation Committee of Ukraine and the Ministry of Culture.

The Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus under the direction of Dr. Wes Janzen, joined by the prestigious Ukrainian choir "Dumka," provided the music for this momentous event.

In the first half of the program, Dr. Janzen conducted the "Gloria" from Bach's B Minor Mass, and then the national leaders from the Pentecostal and Baptist churches spoke, followed by the former Acting President of Ukraine, and the Deputy Minister of Culture. A 40-minute video was presented to commemorate this historic occasion.

In the second half, Wes addressed the audience and also conducted the major musical presentation of the evening, Mendelssohn's **Symphony #2 – Lobgesang** (Hymn of Praise), sung in the Ukrainian language, by the combined choirs, accompanied by the orchestra.

It is worthy to note, that Luther is responsible for bringing the Scripture into the language of the people. Similarly, the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus has translated the great works of sacred, classical music into the language of Ukrainian for the Ukrainian people.

After seventy years of Soviet rule in Ukraine, who would have imagined that the Opera Stage would be the podium to celebrate such a religious milestone in the history of Western civilization after twenty-six years of Ukrainian freedom? And that the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus would be the musical centerpiece for such an event?

The hall was packed with members of the religious community as well as the community-at-large.

A member of the audience commented:

"This was a very important event for Ukraine. People who came to this

event could learn about the Reformation from politicians, church leaders and musicians."

Members of the KSOC chimed in:

"I loved singing great music to our listeners along with our friends in "Dumka." We proclaimed the Word of God. Special thanks to Wes for choosing such pieces. Faith in God united musicians and listeners."

"The speakers pointed us to God and the music brought us to the heavens. It inspired us and gave us hope for a future. We need this hope now as the darkness of war is all around us, but we have an eternal hope and an eternal reward for those who know Him."

And, finally, one of our widows who is a former journalist, wrote these comments:

"Such amazing music, played and sung by Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus together with Dumka choir under the baton of professor Wes Janzen! Before the performance Wes, as usual, with help of Sergey Basarab, told the audience about the life of the composers and their works. The crowd was charmed by the heavenly music. Three hours flew by quickly for the guests, who were moved to tears by the beauty of the presentations. With joy we went out, inspired, having received literature about "Reformation 500 years," and a copy of the President's decree about its celebration. If God will be present in every heart, we can build the country we dream about, a new Ukraine, standing tall with the leading nations of the world." – Leonina Nekrasova, member of the Journalists' Union.

The Opera Theater holds 1300 people but weeks earlier, there was a gathering on the main street of the city, where more than 200,000 people gathered to commemorate the Reformation as the festivities began in a season of celebration. Wes and Kim and other leaders were there for this event organized by the churches.



Sunday Children's Club

In September, a new season of the Sunday Children's Club began with thirty children attending. This marked increase was due to the very successful summer camps and the new interest from the families of military widows to whom we are ministering.



Irina Donchenko is pastor to orphans and children

We have an excellent leader in Irina Donchenko, who not only supervised the camps, but also works with orphanages in the East, and teaches Bible in the Sunday Children's Club. She has a heart for children, and a love for God's Kingdom. Here is the schedule she has developed for Sundays:

- 11:30 am The morning begins with prayer and Bible lesson.
- 12 noon The children have their music lesson, including choir and playing musical instruments. We are training them to become independent musicians.
- 1:00 pm Lunch is served by our faithful cook, Valentine.
- 1:30 pm Flannel graph Bible story, and hand chime and hand bell groups
- 2:30 pm The children share their music in the worship service of St. Paul's Evangelical Church. They perform on solo instruments (violin, piano, guitar, percussion), participate in bell choir, or sing with the children's choir in an anthem of praise.
- 3:00 pm A craft class is given, based upon the Bible lesson they have learned.

Thus, the Sunday Children's Club is an extension of the work done in the summer camp. The children enjoy loving relationships, more knowledge about the Scripture, and expanded musical activities.

Most of the children are from one-parent or separated families.

Matthew fled from Donetsk to Kyiv with his mother to escape the war but his father chose to stay behind. Wartime has made their life difficult. But Matthew and his mother Lena are in church and Children's Club every week. Lena also chooses to come to Saturday Bible lessons each week so she can learn more about God. Each week, as she listens to the study of James, tears run down her face.



Yelena and Matthew

Eleven-year-old Olya and her mother were invited to our church by one of our widows. They are very poor, and Olya must live in an orphanage five days a week. Olya was a very shy, distressed child when Irina met her, but as Irina worked with her, she began to participate in games and discussions. "Today I am very joyful," says Irina, "to witness what God is doing in Olya's life. She is a happy young girl."



Bogdana

Bogdana, who is fifteen, is considered a "social orphan." She lives at the orphanage because her alcoholic father is abusive, and her mother cannot care for her. She arrived at summer camp, shy and withdrawn. She would sit away from the other children. But one of the leaders engaged her in conversations and encouraged her. She began to smile, and have fun with the other children. At the end of the camp, she gave her heart to the Lord. Now she comes each week to Sunday Children's Club, and is completely engaged in the activities. She takes private violin lessons. She loves learning about Jesus and God's love. And as one of the older participants of the club, she seeks to include and help the younger children. She is our youngest Christian leader.



The Sunday Children's Club is preparing a special Christmas Eve service which they will perform for their parents and the congregation of St. Paul's Evangelical Church.



Curtain Call



Here I am, in Carson City, Nevada, where Roger has undergone back surgery to repair the pain which has plagued him for years. All has gone well, and he is recovering for three months in our little rented apartment where a physical therapist comes three times a week. I am glad to see him getting stronger day by day, and we look forward to returning to Kyiv in late January.

In my quiet times during these days, I have time to write, and here are some thoughts I share with you concerning my book *Curtain Call*:

Upon first glance, a curtain is a barrier. However, it is not so rigid that it cannot be pushed aside to reveal what is underneath. When Roger and I were called to Ukraine, the remnants of the Iron Curtain of Communism lay in our path. But God miraculously swept it aside for us and on the other side were countless thousands of people, yearning to know about God and His Holy Word. It began with music, because any religious message in music had been forbidden for seventy years. And that music penetrated the hearts of the people, and gave them a thirst to know the Lord.

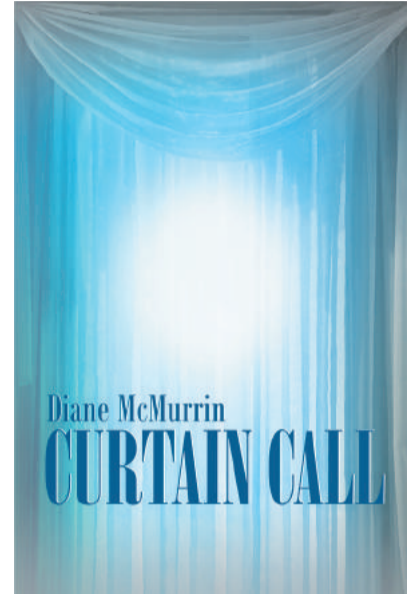
For me, the image of the curtain also represented the continued revelation of God's purpose for my life. When we first came to Ukraine, we were not entirely certain what we were to do. Roger worked with the choir and orchestra almost daily, but my activities were taking care of

the small apartment, shopping for food, and teaching English to three students in a private school. After we began the church, opportunities for teaching the Bible to the widows opened to me, and I loved these lessons which continued for over 20 years.

That was only one curtain. I taught English and the Bible to children at Orphanage #21. Together Roger and I experienced new ministry in Russia and Kyrgyzstan. We welcomed our son Matthew and family as partners in Kyiv ministry for a time. We met Wes and Kim and witnessed their call to Ukraine. We were able to buy a piece of property outside of Kyiv where hundreds of our people would come for fellowship and worship.

Walking through these experiences was like walking through a series of curtains, with the whisper of our Savior, urging us forward. Ultimately, the last curtain will be removed, when we will see Him face to face.

In this Christmas season and for the beginning of the New Year, Music Mission Kiev is offering my book *Curtain Call* at the reduced price of \$5 per book. It is the continued story of the above events connecting the dots of the last 15 years. To obtain a copy, just call the Orlando office at 1-800-467-5051.



Christmas Joy in Ukraine

Beginning the first week in December, we will have widows' Christmas banquets every Tuesday and Thursday. Our active widows and pensioners (450 in all) will come to the office for a special Christmas dinner, devotional program, and Christmas gifts. This year we will be giving items for the kitchen along with personal items that our elderly enjoy and need, including a Bible flashlight. This Bible is a beautiful recording of the Scripture. So many of our pensioners have a difficult time reading their Bibles because of limited vision. This way, they can listen to God's Word. This Bible is also a flashlight and charges by solar power. We are so excited that our pensioners will receive such a useful gift. Thank you so much for making this possible.

Our concerts are scheduled as follows: A Concert of Prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication) with musical selections



on December 11, and a traditional Christmas concert in January.

We will also be having Christmas celebrations for our young military widows and their children to help bring God's love, peace, and comfort to this hurting group.



The Gift that Keeps on Giving

One of our very dear friends, Reverend William Stevens, gave a legacy gift to Music Mission Kiev which has greatly enhanced our ministry. We first met Bill and his dear wife Sylvia when Roger and I worked at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. They sang in our choir, and participated in all the major concerts. During our time in Ukraine, they supported us financially and with their prayers. We often visited them when we were in Fort Lauderdale. Bill even came onto our board for a few years and help to shape the ministry into what it is today.

When Bill died, he left a sum of money to Music Mission Kiev in his will. This generous gift has supported our widows and orphans and has

allowed us to expand the widows ministry in numbers, and also to add two vital staff members, Irina Donchenko for orphan and children ministry, and Oksana Polevichenko in the ministry to young military widows, their children, and to orphans. Through this gift, we have been able to minister at and help an additional orphanage "Stara Basan" and have expanded the number of summer orphan camps.

A legacy gift is a gift that keeps on giving. Have you considered naming Music Mission Kiev in your will?



Have You Visited our New Website? Musicmissionkiev.org

There is much to see. To find stories like Oksana's, click on "more" in the upper right hand corner, and then choose BLOG. Lots of treasures are here.

Also, please visit our Facebook page: Music Mission Kiev and give us a 'like'.



With God All Things Are Possible

Oksana Polevichenko serves as one of Music Mission Kiev's children's ministries pastors, sharing the gospel with orphans, fatherless children, and young widows. Her own story of coming to faith is one only God could write. Read on as Oksana shares her heart.

At the age of 13, I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblast leukemia. Those were difficult times for my family. My parents had already lost one child — my older brother died of leukemia.

A painful and complicated chemotherapy began. For some reason, I believed that I would not die; I would be cured. After spending a year at the hospital and another year taking supportive medicines, my disease went into remission. My troubles seemed to be over, but then another misfortune struck when I began to experience severe pain in my legs. It turned out that chemotherapy destroyed my hip joints.

Impossible circumstances

Due to my ongoing medical problems, I refused to let myself even think about ever getting married. Who would want an invalid for a wife? Yet sometimes I dreamed I would be able to walk as before, and I could lead my child by his hand. I drove these dreams out of my mind, knowing it would be impossible. All I could do was share my anguish with the Lord.

Then one day a young man named Serhiy entered my life. I loved him at first sight and he told me he liked me too. But I asked him to leave me alone and to not contact me. He couldn't possibly want an invalid for a wife! He wouldn't listen to me. He said he needed me and continued to pursue me.



Oksana and Serhiy

Soon after that, doctors indicated that a surgery to clean my hip joints would allow me to walk again. After my family raised the needed funds, I had the surgery but it only made things worse. Every movement caused terrible pain and I was unable to walk without crutches. My hope of becoming a "normal" person disappeared.

My doctors suggested replacing my hip joints with metal prostheses, claiming all my pain would disappear and I'd regain the ability to walk freely. But our family had no money for this expensive surgery.

Healing and eternal hope

A short time later, several Swedish missionaries visited Stara Basan, our village, looking for poor orphanages in need of assistance. They connected with the orphanage where my mother worked at as a cook, and she told them about her disabled daughter who needed help.

These missionaries not only told me about living faith in God, but they also showed it through their deeds. They invited me to confess my sins and say yes to God. And I did. They also helped with the finances needed to replace my hip joints. And this time, the surgery was a success.

During this time, God worked in my heart. I began to read His Word, and my love for Him strengthened and grew. I started to pray earnestly for



my beloved Serhiy, asking that God would lead him to repentance and faith in Jesus.

God answered this prayer. I received a letter from him saying, "I was blind! The sins of this world blinded me. I couldn't see God's love." His eyes opened, his sins forgiven, and his life surrendered to Christ meant that all the roadblocks to our marriage were removed.

Serhiy and I were baptized on the same day and married within the next month. God has blessed us with two sons, even though we were advised against having children. He has performed so many miracles for my family and me.

New possibilities

The pastor of a Baptist church in a nearby town asked me to join his team serving orphaned children in Stara Basan. I began training as a "lay" minister by attending different seminars, conferences, and courses. That's how God prepared me for ministry to children.



Oksana and children from Stara Basan orphanage

I prayed that God would send someone to minister at Stara Basan permanently. Little did I know that one day I would become that minister through Music Mission Kiev.

MMK provides fellowship, Bible clubs and humanitarian aid (clothes, healthy food, and health care) to the children. I feel honored that I can give back to these precious ones and share the love of Christ with them.

With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND SUPPORT!

Our address: **Music Mission Kiev, 286 Wilshire Blvd., Casselberry, Florida 32707**

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