

Dearest Comrades;

Welcome to 2013 (almost)! I hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas week. We had a good Christmas here in Ukraine. Christmas day we enjoy opening some packages and a big pancake breakfast. For the rest of the day we did our regular missionary duties and then Skyped home to our families in the evening. This week from the mission we (each companionship) received 200 Christmas-themed calendars. Calendars are really popular in Ukraine, people always put them on business cards and things- to make it useful to people I guess. The calendars are 5x7 with a picture of Christ and a Christmas wish. We have been asked to give them all out while tracting. So, we did a lot of tracting this week. We have noticed that people are a little more open when you begin by offering them something.

On Thursday night, Sister Tamara Podik invited us over to meet with her and her husband, who is a non-member. She has tried to arrange such a meeting before, but her husband drinks a lot and planning it depends a lot on his mood. We showed up and he was not in a good mood, and would not join us in the living room. So, Sister Tamara invited over a neighbor, also a member, and we sang a couple Christmas songs together and we shared a spiritual thought.

Friday we had Zone Conference, which was very good. Sister Erickson gave a special presentation of Jerusalem. She studied at the BYU Jerusalem Center and shared pictures she took that went along with Christ's life. We had a big meal all together and as President Campero's Christmas gift to us he allowed us to watch the movie Chariots of Fire.

Saturday night we continued tracting and giving away calendars in the apartment building we live in. It was about 8:30- we usually stop tracting about that time because people start to get angry. But, from the outside door, I called to the top floor apartment. The call abruptly cut off, but soon a young man came out and opened the door. He explained that his button to open the door was broken, so he came down to see who we were. His name is Kostya. We told him a little bit about the Book of Mormon, gave him a restoration pamphlet and set up a meeting for Sunday night. Unfortunately, he wasn't home at the agreed upon time and when I called he said that an old friend had come into town and he wouldn't be able to meet. But, we have great hope in him.

We didn't have any investigator lessons this last week, but it should be a lot better this week. For the past 2 weeks everyone has been telling us they can meet after New Years, so the flood gates should be opening. Last night, we went tracting when our lesson with Kostya fell through. We decided to do some Christmas caroling to change things up a bit. Ukrainian people don't understand caroling. We started singing and then knocked on the door and they just never opened the door. Also people kept going up and down the stairs in the building, which generally made Elder Page laugh in the middle of our song. So, not the most effective activity, but we had a good time doing it.

I'm glad to be entering a new year, with new possibilities and potential. The past year has gone by quickly. Its crazy to think that I have only a little over 6 months left on my mission. I am going to make the best of it and work my hardest until the end. I am so grateful for my mission. The Lord truly sent me to the place that I needed. Best wishes!

Elder Lewis