

# KTS COMPASS

SPRING  
2006

DIRECTING ATTENTION TO THE MINISTRIES OF KIEV THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## SECOND CONFERENCE FOR SEMINARY WIVES

November 16-18, 2005

*Nancy Wooden, KTS Director of Christian Education and Conference Chair*

The first conference for the wives of KTS students and graduates was held in April 2002 at the seminary. It was a huge blessing for all who participated — organizers, presenters and wives. The organizers hoped to have such an event every other year but obstacles arose and consequently the second conference for seminary wives did not occur until November 2005. The wait was worth it.

This time many more were involved in the planning process — faculty wives (both American and Ukrainian), faculty members, missionaries and seminary wives. We began planning in earnest 6 months in advance and to search for a location (since the seminary would be unavailable due to construction), the keynote speaker and seminar leaders. Of course, it was necessary to communicate with the wives; but with so little decided, what could we tell them? We told them that we were planning a second conference, probably November 16-18 and most likely in the Kiev area. With this little bit of information, about 40 women registered! We knew then



*Planning Committee*

that this conference was definitely meeting a felt need.

As each obstacle was encountered, God chose to answer our prayers and lead us step by step. In the end, we had a suitable facility with a swimming pool next door, a keynote speaker who shared basic principles of raising children (information that needs to be reviewed and rehearsed for women whose



lives and children are constantly scrutinized) and seminar leaders who covered topics of husband-wife relationships (when the husband is a pastor/ministry leader), home decorating and women's ministries. There were precious times of worship, special activities for those who arrived early, planned free time activities, the "coffee house" where wives could relax and have uninterrupted conversations and the bookstore where they found new titles, CD's and more.

When the final evaluations came in, the only complaint was that there was not enough time to do everything and to fellowship. Yet they offered many, many suggestions to add to the next conference. The planning committee can hardly wait to start again.

### **SPECIAL NOTE:**

The cost of the first conference was minimal because we held it "in-house" at the seminary. This conference cost about \$4500. If ministry to women appeals to you, a designated gift to KTS Wives can be sent c/o Rick Campana Ministries.

# WIVES SHARING IN MINISTRY

Bonnie Saucy, wife of KTS Professor Mark Saucy

The wives of our students have a special place in our hearts because they are behind the scenes supporting their husbands who are the new and renewed bright generation for the church in Ukraine. As I sat at our wives' conference looking at the crowd of ladies, I was in awe knowing what ministry each one represented and the weight of responsibility they and their husbands carry. At the same time, I was in awe of all the new ministries and churches God has begun thru them in these last 10 years.

After the speaker, the ladies broke into discussion groups according to the ages of their children. I sat observing the young moms group and was drawn to pray for them in my heart. Several with their husbands are part of new church plants. My thoughts went back to when we visited them: one in a church which began 4 years ago and now has over 400 attending; another who is planting their second church; another who has gone from assistant pastor to the senior pastor of a church plant and is helping to plant another church in a nearby village; another who helped plant a church in West Ukraine, moved to Kiev and is planting another new church. The list could go on and on and they are all in their 20s with pre-school children! They were a picture of what God has done in Ukraine this past decade and the bright future. "Lord, they are so young, it's incredible to think of how YOU have used them. Give them all the grace, wisdom — beyond their years, — continued zeal, strength and support that they need to 'run the race' to the end."

It was a privilege to "spoil" these girls/ladies for a few days at our conference. I heard comments like these:

*"I haven't gone swimming in a pool since I was a child! And the sauna, wow!"*

*"I was praying for an idea for our family to do together at Christmas.*

*Your advent idea is from God!"*

*"I couldn't believe I was sitting, relaxing, eating popcorn and watching a movie; with no worries!" We showed Christian novelist Janette Oake's movie "Love Comes Softly" the last night.*

*"It was so helpful to come to a conference that we couldn't do ourselves, so we could get new ideas for our own ministries."*

After the conference, one of our graduates told me with such pride and joy that the conference gave his wife encouragement to start a young mom's Bible study using the book we gave them on parenting. He said it's the first time she wanted to do that, not because a pastor's wife should, but because she really wanted to. It's going great! More than 10 gals have been coming and a few are non-Christians! This is the second church they're planting.

At KTS, we see the husbands when they are in session, coming in from all over Ukraine. It was a rare blessing to fellowship with their wives and meet some of them for the first time at our conference and to see our graduates wives again as well.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Anatoly Prokopchuk



Any team in the world faces at least two potential temptations among its members: first is to blame any shortcoming or failure on someone on the team

and second is to take hasty credit for any realized success. I even have my own saying: "Finding someone to blame brings relief to everyone." I do not have any helpful comparable saying for success situations, because finding someone to credit for success is always a disastrous task. Whatever the objective reasons for the choice, others will be offended and controversy will ensue. I worked long enough in industry to know how acute the problem is in the world; still I also know that Christian teams also are not totally exempt from it either. How many excellent projects fell apart? How many great ideas were buried because one or many felt that credit bypassed them? But, when I see a team situation that is opposite to the customary struggle, I then have an indisputable opportunity to recognize that the Lord is at work, that His grace operates, that God is moving people within this particular team, and it is truly a wondrous sight. I had one of these opportunities in seeing the preparation for the KTS Women's Conference and how the conference itself was guided to its heartwarming success.

Let's start with the simple fact that one of the principle organizers of the conference — the one who invested a tremendous amount of time in its preparation, who made every imaginable effort to produce a quality result — knew in advance that she would not be able to participate and to enjoy the fruits of her toil. Other responsibilities would take her away from Ukraine right at the time of the conference. There would be no compensation or forthcoming gratifi-

# SEMINAR LEADER

## IRA SAFAROVA

*Donna McDonnell, wife of KTS Professor Mark McDonnell*

ation; no standing ovation or special award. These facts did not change her attitude or her efforts to do her best. At the same time, there was no struggle among the conference team in deciding who would be called leader and who would take secondary roles. Each woman on the team brought her best to the table, supporting other's ideas, praising her partners, while at the same time taking a retiring attitude toward personal importance and accomplishments. Finally, at the conference itself, this overwhelmingly attractive spirit of common work came to full fruition. God's blessings and His grace became fully visible. The conference went at one breath, exciting, friendly, and unforgettable in its outpour of serving love from beginning to the end when women were presenting others, not themselves, as the best, the most able, and the most important.

There is nothing more breathtaking and encouraging than to see our Lord clearly working in people around us. I often feel discouraged seeing political squabbles in Ukraine — violent clashes between human egos. It hurts me painfully when I see these traits even in church and its leaders. It also terrifies me because I know myself, I am in flesh too — I am susceptible to the same temptations. Still, the power of flesh may sometimes blur for us the simple truth that our Lord Jesus Christ is more powerful than our fallen nature and the Holy Spirit leads His people to ultimate victory. It helps me immeasurably to see that God used our Women's Conference preparation to send us a clear message: "I am not absent, I am all-powerful, I am right here beside you in those who work and minister close by." It reminds me that I just need to follow what God told me in His Word, Phil. 2:3 "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself."

When we were considering seminar/workshop leaders, I immediately thought of Ira Safarova. She is a young gal who goes to my church and one of the most clear-headed women I have met here. I had heard her speak a couple of times and each time I came away thinking, "That gal is solid!"



*Seminar Presenters*

We were looking for women who could address the attendees' needs, whether felt or not. We had considered lighter topics and had even concluded that since our main speaker would be covering some serious material, perhaps the seminars should have lighter themes.

But my thoughts kept turning to Ira. Whatever she spoke on, it wouldn't be light. I couldn't help thinking that whatever she said (if she could participate) would be so on target. She is so grounded in her Bible; she has a clear understanding about her role in her marriage and has been settling into learning about parenting.

After praying, I called her and explained what we were looking for, then immediately felt silly. Ira's husband hadn't gone to our seminary, why would she want to participate? She agreed to pray about it. Although she was hesitant, she agreed to ask her husband for his input. How wonderful it was when she called and said he thought it was a great idea and that surely she could find a babysitter for her one day of participation!

One of Ira's concerns was that she would not be appropriately qualified to speak to this particular group of women. True, her husband had not attended our seminary and she was young. She did not want to be teaching older women, especially since the Bible seems to indicate that it should be the other way around. She also believed that she should be taking care of her son not farming him out so she could "do ministry." But she believed her husband's go ahead and after settling the babysitting, made this something she should do.

As we talked about topics, I expressed my desire to help the ladies go beyond hearing what they might have heard in the past, to asking questions about how they were doing in their roles at home and in ministry. It's so easy to tell women what they need to be doing, but it's harder to slow down and ask deeper questions which challenge thinking that isn't lining up with what the Bible teaches. So often, I see ladies agreeing with what they've heard, only to come back and ask how to deal with the big problem at home, revealing a huge gap between teaching and applicability.

Ira readily agreed that we should challenge the ladies to not just gloss over the "standard women's role stuff." We both got excited about a neat opportunity to meet ladies where they are and to help address the questions we had been hearing regarding difficulties in the home, especially in a ministry home. At one point, I was questioned as to Ira's suitability and I found myself wondering if I had made a mistake asking her to speak.



When I sat in her first seminar, there was no doubt in my mind. Every lady was following every point, as if it had been tailored just for her. Ira spoke confidently, easily, and with great grace. Every point had solid Biblical support and the illustrations were vivid and practical, driving the points home. Afterwards, different ladies came up to talk and ask questions. I heard again and again how helpful Ira's seminar had been. What a blessing it was to hear this one woman's knowledge and "lived-out" experience shared with others who were so hungry.

# RETREAT AT A SOVIET SANITARIUM

*Judy Manna, wife of Mike Manna KTS Program Director for Youth Ministry*

It was a treat for the seminary wives of both staff and students to attend a 3-day retreat. The seminary hosted the retreat at a “sanitarium” in a small town outside Kiev. In



Soviet times, most businesses gave their workers the benefit of a vacation with their families at a sanitarium. Therefore, sanitariums can be found all over Ukraine. They are like conference centers, more like camp facilities than hotels. They are usually 4-5 story buildings with long hallways of bedrooms, each room containing 3-4 narrow beds and a private bathroom with a sink, shower and toilet. Most sanitariums have a swimming pool, library, theater and large dining room. I’m sure there are high-class sanitariums in the country, but the ones we’ve been to are well kept, but quite old.

We had a speaker from the States who shared parenting principles from God’s Word, with a special emphasis on the importance of prayer in our parenting. Teaching on Christian parenting principles still seems to be rather new here, and these dear women clung to every word. It was a very positive time in the lives of our seminary wives, since most are in varying stages of raising their families.

I was in charge of the game time each night and was nervous, because big youth group type games aren’t common here in any ministry — much less with a group made up of only women! It was challenging to explain everything and have them “get it” even with Lena translating for me. We ran a tournament the first night with 4 different games going on at once, the 50 women divided into 8 teams. Two teams competed at each game station for 20 minutes. After every 20 minutes, the two teams rotated in opposite directions to the next game. It was a little rough getting them to understand what was going on, but then they LOVED it. We did a group relay the second night, and it was great fun to see our very well mannered Ukrainian wives become cheering, screaming, wildly running competitors!

It was a relief to me that the games went well, and I was deeply encouraged by the speaker, — but something even more special happened during these 3 days.

We had set up a little “coffee house” in one of the meeting rooms so ladies could come in, sit at tables and fellowship over hot drinks and snacks. Thursday was a fairly lonely day for me. I sat at meals with the Ukrainian wives, but I was shy about using my Russian. The women pretty much acted like I wasn’t even there. The



same thing happened when I mustered the courage on Thursday afternoon to join a group of women at a table in the coffee house. I made a couple of attempts to contribute to the conversation in Russian, and the gals answered me but immediately went back to talking with one another. I again felt politely ignored.

I went to my room and called my husband on my cell phone. I shared my discouragement with him and my fear that, due to the wall that always feels so solid because of a lack of language, I would NEVER be able to make true, close relationships with Ukrainians. My heart has often ached with these feelings during our years here. Mike understood my pain and gathered the children to pray for me.

After leading games later that evening, ladies came up to thank me. They were excited to take these game ideas home to their husbands who are involved in ministry. Then, after the evening session, I participated in a discussion group with mothers of teenagers. Wives shared honestly about problems they were encountering with their teens. At the time of the retreat, it had been 5 months since our family had taken in our 9-year-old foster daughter, Katya, from an orphanage. Our experiences with Katya provided good examples of the need for consistency in parenting and the importance of giving consequences for disobedience. I suddenly found myself surrounded by several women who wanted to talk, and they didn’t seem to mind the fact that I stumbled over grammar. Nor did they mind repeating things at times or speaking more slowly than normal — and I made some friends!

Friday was a wonderful day, as my courage to use my language grew more and more. I felt as if a whole new world was opening up to me. I was communicating with women on a heart level! That night I shared (with Lena translating) at the evening session. I shared about the fact that we have lived here for 3 years already, but it has taken this long to learn enough language to be able to communicate on even a very basic level. I told them about my phone call to Mike only the day before — telling him about my fear that I would NEVER be able to have true fellowship with Ukrainians who didn’t know English. I said that because of the conversations I’d enjoyed with them for only one day, I had experienced a change and now felt like I COULD develop relationships. They applauded and some even cried, because I had become their fun “game lady” and they couldn’t imagine that someone as outgoing as me had been lonely for Ukrainian friendships.

Praise the Lord for His work in our lives! Sometimes changes seem to come slowly, but “He who began a good work in you WILL carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 1:6.)



# INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES



“The Special (unique) World of Women” was the name proposed for the Second KTS Seminary Wives’ Conference. Special and unique describes the meaning for the women who left their families, work and other activities to come from different places in Ukraine. Some had to make a 16 hours trip to the conference.

Indeed, we felt God’s blessing during all of the conference. The lectures were interesting, fun and helpful with practical applications. The women learned more about motherhood, being a good wife, about how to decorate their homes and make them open for friends and neighbors.

At the end of the meeting we had many thanksgiving prayers for the special time we had together. The ladies took many gifts home but most importantly; they left with encouragement and joy. They also took many ideas from the conference to apply at home in everyday life.

The conference was possible through the help of American friends and I would like, on behalf of all Ukrainian sisters who attended the conference, to thank all who contributed to the conference with prayer, funds, ideas, work and things. But most of all I thank God for directing our hearts to make such a wonderful conference for the Ukrainian sisters in Christ.

**Angela Goncharova**

wife of Konstantin Goncharova,  
KTS Vice President

I was really surprised and amazed how grateful all the ladies were for the opportunity to attend a conference. I know in the states, conferences like this are quite frequent. Here, this event happens only once every two years and it is really a very special time and a rare opportunity for women to attend something like this. They even seemed to have a hard time choosing which seminar to attend because they wanted to attend everything and not miss anything. This puts things in perspective, because whatever was given was met with lots of gratefulness and appreciation. I hope events like this will be held more often in the future.



I am wondering if there is a women’s club at KTS? Seminary students are busy studying, and it would be great if their wives could get together and become friends. During the conference they were all very glad to see each other, making friends and talking all the time! That was very neat to notice.

Finally, it seems that seminars on counseling, parenting, child upbringing and family issues would be very beneficial to student wives. In my seminar, the material was quite basic (I didn’t go too deep because of the time limit), but some of them were unfamiliar even at that level. It would be very helpful, if women would be more educated in these important areas.

**Oksana Verkhohlyad**

Conference Presenter

What better place to sit around and talk than a coffee shop? Well, that’s exactly what happened during our conference. Josie Oldenburg was the instigator of this nontraditional (for Ukraine) idea. Together we transformed



a drab room into a “Coffee House” where women — student wives, visiting speakers and faculty — could sit and fellowship.

The idea behind this was an alternative to attending a workshop so that the participants would be able to take a break and process some of what they had been listening to. It was such an instant hit that the women stopped in between workshops and even when it was closed! It may have been the aroma of the coffee and the chance to have tea and cookies that drew people through the doors, but it was obvious that the opportunity to sit and fellowship together was what kept the women there. In a society that values fellowship over the busy pace of life, it was a blessing to watch these women (who are busy with families and ministry) take some time to relax together.

As I served coffee, I watched women who are most often serving others: a speaker answering the agonizing questions of a woman with 2 small children; older women encouraging younger women; acquaintances becoming closer friends; women from different parts of Ukraine talking about their lives and ministries; foreigners and Ukrainians with the same concerns in life finding their unity in Christ.

There were many requests to have another wives’ conference — sooner rather than later. And we repeatedly heard that the coffee house was a favorite aspect. As I serve here in Ukraine, I was filled with joy to watch these women, the wives of my students, encourage one another as they sat around a table drinking coffee.

**Lois Thorpe**, KTS Professor

**KTS COMPASS** is a publication of Kiev Theological Seminary, associated with the Evangelical-Baptist Union of Ukraine.

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## AN AMERICAN OBSERVER

*Cheri Strahm, Equippers Network International Mission*

I stood in the lobby watching pastors' wives arrive at the conference. They were quiet, orderly, and a little nervous. Some arrived alone; some came with a friend or two. Most had traveled overnight by train and then via several buses to get to our meeting place, a sanitarium (rest facility) outside of Kiev. There was luggage, but not much by American standards.

I was there as an American observer and tried to assist wherever I could. But my Ukrainian sisters handled things just fine: registration, room assignments, and distribution of information packets. I marveled at how calmly they dealt with problems: one woman lost a key; another had no roommate. "Don't worry," the leaders said, "we're here to help you." They worked together and straightened things out.

As the conference unfolded, the women relaxed and warmed to the fellowship. Soon there was laughter and conversation everywhere, in corners, at tables in the dining hall, around the bookstall. Conversations became intense following seminar sessions as the women discussed what they'd learned. I observed women praying together spontaneously, heads touching and arms around each other's shoulders. Such sweet unity!

In the drafty auditorium we all sat close to the front,

taking up six or seven wide rows. Everyone sang together; lovely female voices lifted in praise to God. One guest soloist tried to sing while the sound system kept breaking down. She nervously hesitated several times and then stopped singing altogether. A pastor's wife stepped to her side and encouraged her to continue. The soloist bravely restarted her song, finished strongly and the women burst into

applause unanimously supporting her efforts.

In small group discussions, in our improvised coffee house, at the swimming pool, around the craft tables and



everywhere, I observed women living out the truth of Philippians 2:2, "... like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." This was truly a conference I will never forget.

Editor's Note: Cheri is credited with being the brains and force behind the first Wives' Conference. Although she and her husband no longer live in Kiev, they spend a considerable amount of time in Ukraine. Although she modestly refers to herself as an observer, she was again the organizing force behind the second conference, inviting the keynote speaker and providing many prizes and gifts for the conference attendees.

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