

The Messenger

March 2008

A Message from the Executive Director...

As one of the newest members of OBI, it has been my privilege to represent OBI at a number of venues in recent months. Clearly OBI is making a difference.

Trust & Credibility--These are two vital factors that characterize good relationships and successful organizations. Due to the progress I witnessed recently in Ukraine, OBI has invested heavily to develop both. As a result, we have gained unprecedented access to influence the military and their communities through our four programs: Chaplain Development, Club Ruth Women's Ministry, Civilian Clergy Training, and English Camp. Certainly OBI's history has been rich, but it is upon the future that we must now fix our eyes.

Trust & Credibility--These are two factors that we cannot afford to overlook as we continue emphasizing the "I" or International in OBI and launch programs in Mongolia and Uganda later this year. Please join me in seeing to it that our actions continue to line up with our words, especially in this season of transition, growth, and fruitfulness.

Victor Salazar



Vic and Cherkasy Regional Hospital Director-Ukraine

Taking the Lead in Suicide Prevention

Chaplain Dr. Richard J. Stiliha, Major (U.S. Army, Retired) has been working with Olive Branch International for twelve years teaching on counseling issues and skills to military personnel, students, doctors, and church leaders from around the world. His early military career started in the Navy after which he attended bible college and seminary. He had experience with the Billy Graham Crusade prior to entering the U.S. Army as a military chaplain. **Dick's life experiences and years working with troops in the area of pastoral care have prepared him well for his current work with the international military.** As a staff counselor with the Navigators, Dick met Bruce Kittleson and joined the work of OBI when it was established in 1994. He has been OBI's Director of Education since that time.



While on the Olive Branch team, Dick has taught in multiple military venues including military academies, hospitals, prisons, universities, and missions organizations internationally. He has taught in **many locations** in Eastern Europe (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus), in Africa (South Africa, Swaziland, Rwanda), South Asia (Sri Lanka and Vietnam). In 2008, Dick is slated to work in Asia (Mongolia and Taiwan). Dick's work has been translated and presented through interpreters in Russian, Ukrainian, Zulu, Vietnamese, and Senegalese. In addition, Dick teaches at the Keystone Project in South Dakota at a semi-annual training event for church leaders from around the world. Through this program, Dick has taught representatives from **over twenty countries each year.**

He has been a presenter on suicide prevention at the European Symposium on Suicide and Suicide Prevention in England and Slovenia. He is also a member of the American Association of Suicide Prevention, The International Association of Suicide Prevention, where he serves on an

international task force on police and military suicide prevention. He is also certified trainer with the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation in Pastoral Crisis Intervention. ***A large Ukrainian command had no suicides for three years as a result of his training.*** This was cited in the professional publication, "Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention." He also co-authored a chapter on military suicide prevention that will be part of a text book used in England to be published by Oxford Press in 2008.

Currently he is working with the Ministry of Defense in Sri Lanka in the areas of post-tsunami crisis intervention, basic leadership counseling and other educational programs for their Army and Air Force personnel and staff academies. In 2008, he will lead the efforts to develop a Chaplain Training Track for Kyiv Theological Seminary in Kyiv, Ukraine. He will also conduct teaching and training sessions to lay counselors in Mongolia for work with their military.

Dick is a frequent ***guest speaker on Christian radio and has been an expert commentator*** on suicide presentation for a CNN newscast on the issue of military suicides. In his free time Dick enjoys golf and reading. He and his wife, Ruthie, have been married over 40 years and have two grown children. ***It has been the privilege of Olive Branch International to have this internationally recognized expert in suicide prevention serving with us around the world.***

English Camp 2008 Planning Underway

For the last seven years ***OBI has supported the Ukrainian Military Christian Fellowship in conducting English Camp*** for about 100 military teens and adults. Bruce Kittleson and Vic Salazar attended this year's reunion. Seeing and hearing the joy expressed by so many only strengthened OBI's resolve to see that the ***English Camp program in Ukraine continues*** to draw the family members of military teens. We will continue to focus our efforts on supporting this vital group because they will carry the ***banner of hope*** to its generation. ***But to continue we will need committed supporters, generous givers, and constant prayers on behalf of the Ukrainian military and their***

families. If, as you read this, you feel a tug at your heart for Ukraine, ***please consider playing a role*** in the life-giving work of English Camp. Plans are already being made for the 2008 camp and the OBI teachers and leaders are busy raising the funds they need to cover their travel costs. You can pay online through our website or send your donation go the OBI office. Be sure to mark it for English Camp 2008.

Uganda on the Horizon

Dr. Martin Mikaya and Col(R) Bill Barko will travel in June, 2008 to Uganda in Central Africa to do an



initial assessment for potential Olive Branch work. Our objective is to develop a better understanding of what the Ugandan military understands to be the key areas for future work with

OBI, as we continue to develop a relationship of mutual trust and understanding.

Our visit will be coordinated by ***COL Charles Angina*** (Defense Attaché, Embassy of Uganda, & Washington, DC). We are being invited by Lieutenant General Edward Katumba Wawala, Commander of Land Forces in Uganda. Dr. Mikaya is Chief of Emergency Medicine at Memorial Hospital, Towanda, PA. He is Sudanese and his parents and relatives now live in Uganda. ***Five potential project areas*** are as follows:



- Response to Natural Disasters. Training preparing both military and communities
- Medical Training and assistance related to Preventive Medicine – i.e. HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Hygiene and Water
- Destruction of Trees and Deforestation.
- Christian faith and military life
- Vulnerability of widows and spouses of active-duty military

The assessment should serve as a basis for future program development in Uganda. This will then require the ***recruitment of an OBI team to assist in a 3-5 year project.*** Please contact the OBI office if you would be interested in participating in a program like this.

UPCOMING EVENTS in 2008

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| JANUARY | <i>English Camp Reunion and 2008 Planning Meetings in Ukraine</i> |
| FEBRUARY | <i>Counseling Training, World Partners USA, Keystone, South Dakota</i> |
| MARCH | <i>Senior U.S. Army Military Chaplain's Conference, Hilton Head, South Carolina</i> |
| | <i>Ukrainian Women's Entrepreneurship Seminar, Ukraine</i> |
| | <i>Kyiv Theological Seminary Chaplain's Program Collaboration, Ukraine</i> |
| APRIL | <i>Lay Counselor Training, Ulan Bator, Mongolia</i> |
| | <i>Semi-Annual OBI Board of Directors Meeting, Virginia Beach, VA</i> |
| | <i>Fellowship of Christian Military Ministries (FCMM) National Conference, Norfolk, VA</i> |
| MAY | <i>Disaster Relief Conference, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, HI</i> |
| JUNE | <i>National Program Assessment, Uganda</i> |
| JULY | <i>English Camp for Ukraine Military Family Teens</i> |