



**REV. KEN SEARS**

Commissioned April 18, 1993

Home church: Mohn's Hill E.C.

Birthdate: November 24

Ken was raised in an Irish Catholic family, the oldest of five children, and lived most of his childhood in or around the New York City area. Ken's parents and his three brothers now live in Texas, where his father retired from a management position with J.C. Penney. His sister lives in NJ with her family.

At the time of this writing (June 2000) Ken reflects on how quickly the five years have gone since first arriving in Ukraine. In Ken became a Christian at the age of 19. He became involved with the E.C. church through meeting the late Rev. Alan Hipkiss, who mentored Ken and told him he should consider going into ministry. Ken attended Evangelical School of Theology from 1987-1990. After graduation, he served as assistant pastor at Mohn's Hill E.C. Church. He felt called to mission work early in his Christian life after the interest was "sparked" by talking with a missionary from France. He attended a summer mission project in Ireland in 1989, after which the certainty grew that he was to serve in Europe. After much prayer and consultation with the mission director, Ken was finally led to serve in the Ukraine. After cultural and language training, Ken left for Zaporozhye in 1995 to serve with European Christian Mission.

Ken teaches at Zaporozhye Bible College, which was founded by missionaries from Greater Europe Mission. He teaches theological courses and English, as well as overseeing the practical service requirements of the students. He also participates in summer camp and the church planting ministry. During that time he's been able to both lead and assist in many forms of ministry, including evangelism, children's camps, preaching and singing, hospital ministry, along with his regular teaching at the Bible college. For two of his years in Ukraine he shared an apartment with a Ukrainian friend, Vova, who became a very valuable coworker in this ministry, interpreting, preaching, helping Ken to get around in a foreign culture and also being Ken's driver! In January of 1999, Vova left his interpreter position at Zaporozhye Bible College to enter seminary in Amsterdam; after seminary Vova will return to Zaporozhye to join the college's teaching staff, as well as get married to one of ZBC's graduates. Ken considers it one of the greatest blessings of his ministry in Ukraine to have been a support and encouragement to a younger brother in Christ with much potential for fruitful ministry in future years.

During the school year, Ken's day normally begins around 6 a.m. By 8 a.m. he is at the college, where the day begins with prayer groups for all staff and students. If

he's teaching a course, which are taught in two-week modules then he lectures for five hours a day, plus English which is taught three times a week. In September 2000 Ken will have a new challenge in the area of English as he'll be teaching the next-to-highest level, having only taught the top level or the bottom level before. Besides the regular courses and English, Ken leads one chapel service a week; that's the "Christian Service Chapel" at which the students give reports on their ministries or different ministry-related issues are discussed. The school day ends at 4:45 at which time Ken usually goes home, except for one day a week when he and a small circle of students gather to study New Testament Greek.

In fall 1999 Ken set a record at the Bible college by teaching full-time the whole semester-except for two weeks when he was on the road in college-related business. Theoretically, the permanent missionaries on staff only "fill in" when there aren't enough guest teachers. There was a famine of guests that fall!

At home, the evening flies by, always too quickly! There's supper to prepare and then wash up, and then e-mail, lesson preparation or grading, study for future course, personal reading, etc. Ten o'clock always sneaks up unexpectedly.

On Sundays, Ken is generally in different churches throughout the Zaporozhye region, preaching and singing. He now feels secure enough in Russia to preach without an interpreter. He's even managed to preach a couple of times in Ukrainian, which is quickly overtaking Russian as the national language.

As for the future, Ken and the other missionaries in Zaporozhye definitely see their task as that of working themselves out of a job. They project the Bible college will have a Ukrainian administration and faculty within the next five years, at which point Americans will be needed only in an advisory capacity.

Ken hasn't forgotten about his earlier desire to serve in Ireland....But no matter where the Lord may lead him in future years, Ken says that the people and language of Ukraine have become a part of him and he'll always be ready to come and help, as the Lord gives the opportunity.