

MBL MISSION NEWS

Highlighting events in Russia, Armenia, and Central America

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[www/gadisciples.org/organization/mbl](http://www.gadisciples.org/organization/mbl)
February-March 2006

Looking Forward Through 2006

2006 VBS Savannah to Russia

Tatiana Lyakhova's Faith Journey

Roll Call of Donors

Galina Obrovets to "MIX in '06"

Jim Caton Hosts MBL Dinner for Oklahoma Pastors

Editor's apology: I apologize that the transition to a different format for this newsletter was not accomplished this period. Hopefully it will be in APRIL-MAY.

"Opening the Bible"



The
Mission
for
Biblical
Literacy

"Opening The Bible"

**218 Dyches Dr.
Savannah GA 31406-5760**

LOOKING FORWARD THROUGH THE YEAR 2006

Last year, three goals were proposed that I had hoped to accomplish: 1. to raise adequate funding for our missionaries in Nicaragua, Russia, and Armenia; 2) to increase the Roger N. Carstensen fund and 3) to receive proper recognition or endorsement from the Region of Georgia and the office of the General Minister of the Disciples of Christ. So here is how it is going so far.

First of all, the frustrations caused by the natural disasters earthquakes, flooding and multiple hurricanes most likely contributed to our deficit of \$-8905.07. That is not so good for the end of the year.

Secondly, the Roger N. Carstensen fund at the time I reported last April was at an estimated \$80000 dollars. As of this date, the figure is now at \$89000. That is a better signal.

And today it seems that MBL has a wider recognition by our Georgia Region and by the office of the General Minister of the Disciples of Christ. George Bennett, our past Moderator gave me a few minutes to speak about MBL at the Regional Assembly. I also had the opportunity to speak a few minutes with Dr. Ray Miles and to meet our new General Minister, Dr. Sharon E. Watkins who graciously allowed me to take a picture with her and Dr. Rick Lowery (husband) who is on the faculty at Phillips Theological Seminary.

One will remember that the Mission for Biblical Literacy was once called the Institute for Biblical Literacy. It was started for the purpose of immersing church laity and clergy into the essentials of Bible Study in our country. In the last 13 years MBL came into existence because it answered a call to carry the message of the Bible *overseas*. Unfortunately, upon the death of our founder, Dr. Roger N. Carstensen two very important areas of MBL suffered: I refer to that block of Bible teaching that was called **the Feast of the Scriptures** and also to the teaching tours to the **Holy Land**.

It is not MBL's desire to duplicate the work that was started by our founder but rather recover and improve Bible Study opportunities that stimulate a desire in very Believer to make a visit not only to the Holy Land but to proceed to counties where Christian Mission is needed. **That day is coming back!**



Dr. Sharon Watkins, John N, Dr. Rick Lowry



John Novikoff (earlier display at Christ Church)

JIM CATON HOSTS DINNER FOR DISCIPLES

Dr Jim Caton, former acting President of MBL hosted a dinner for Oklahoma Disciple Ministers in Tulsa OK. Since John Novikoff and Thom Walker (Thom shown in pictures below) would be in the area, he invited them to present the mission work that is taking place in Russia, Armenia and Nicaragua.

Using digital projectors and lap top computers, the pair provided the ministers and wives with an up to date report of the work that is currently going on through MBL. Ministering to Children and providing biblical literacy is the present focus in each of the countries..

Since ministers and some wives were already in the Tulsa area to attend the Minister's Week at Phillips Theological Seminary, this turned out to be an excellent time to gather those who were interested and introduce them to the work that originally was started by the late Dr. Roger N. Carstensen. Carstensen was well known in the Oklahoma area until he left to take over the Presidency of the Christian College of Georgia in the early 1960s.

Attending: Reverend and Mrs. Kent Dorsey of Tulsa; Rev Harold Dowler of Oklahoma City; Rev and Mrs. Bill English of Stillwater; Ms. Rita Newton of Oklahoma City; Rev Dennis Clark of Guthrie; Chris Sharow of Edmond; Rev and Mrs. Chuck Sharow of Bartlesville; Rev Gene Spilman of Elk City; Rev Fred Ryder of Chandler; Rev Charles Ragland of Midwest City; Rev Richard Pitt of Thomas; and the Regional Minister, the Rev Dr. Tom Jewell of Oklahoma City.

As a Disciples organization that is "faith based" funding is provided through individuals and churches that provide "over-and-above" contributions. The missions presentation was well received and it appears that MBL will receive invitations to go back to Oklahoma in the near future.

MBL is very appreciative of Dr. Jim Caton's time and energy to organize this event and to invite Thom Walker and me to share the MBL story. Kudos to you Jim. - John Novikoff



(L) Thom and his guide on their way into the mountains to treat children with parasites and to show the Jesus film

(R) villagers gather to see Thom off as he takes to the river to visit other villages.

TATIANA AND THE ARMY: “LOVE IS A WOMAN’S DESTINATION”

Article from the Sestra magazine # 4, 2005

A woman in the Army? This statement brings up the question whether this is the right place for her. After all God had destined for her to be the keeper of home. But in the military she will be facing deadly explosions while life and death cling close to each other.

As the mother of three children Tatiana understands very well the senseless violence of war. She has experienced first hand much horror and injustice and has felt the pain of others as if it were her own. Tatiana has served for thirty five years in the Army as a female soldier. She served her assignments in Afghanistan and twice in Chechnya.

To begin with her husband with whom she lived for 12 years died because of drugs. “For me it was hell on earth,” remembers Tatiana, “I could not divorce him because I thought it would be a betrayal to leave a man with his problems. I didn’t know what to do. I finally started moving towards God when I recognized I was helpless. Once in the winter I was out in the street and saw a car. There was a pastor of a local church in it, suddenly he said: “Tanya! Come to church!” These were the only words he said then he closed the door and left. It took me a long time to decide as I had too many doubts.”

“Almost all military units where I served were full of injustice,” tells Tatiana, “the personnel who served longer than others ‘ruled’ there and that was not the worst. The worst was that soldier’s started to mock at each other with cruelty. A lot of them died. I tried to make peace and tried to do anything about it but I did not succeed. I was desperate! But immediately after coming home I would begin praying behind the closed door to the Lord: ‘God tell me what to do! It’s not right to do that! It can’t last long!’

God answered my prayer unexpectedly. I was reading the Bible and found these words: “When a strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are in peace” (Luke 11:21). I continued praying and the Lord showed me more texts in the Scripture about military life. It described a soldier’s duty. It was the turning point for me and then I knew what to do. I continued to read the Scriptures about obeying the Lord, loving people, and serving to the soldiers of the motherland. That worked! Yes, God is faithful and when you ask about something He answers!”

Everything started to change; soldiers listened to every word Tatiana spoke. Change was not easy but day by day the Lord worked in their hearts. It seemed as if they were waiting for it very long time, they were ready to accept truth. “Suddenly I understood that the Lord gives us all the living: grass, trees, and flowers. He doesn’t give us anything dead. He is in us so that we can rejoice in Him even when we are too busy with our worldly worries. God is waiting for us to open our heart. If I hadn’t done it I would have been broken”.

Now in the military unit where Tatiana Shaitor serves the soldiers and their parents are glad that she is a Christian. “They often ask me” says Tatiana, “if I could start my life again what I’d have changed. And my answer is: ‘I would have come to the Lord so that I might not have done so many mistakes’”.

Many people are amazed that she has three children and has served for such a long time in the military. “I think it’s the will of God that His word is being proclaimed among soldiers” says Tatiana. She further says, “I travel a lot. I use every opportunity: I go to the train conductor and ask him whether I can broadcast for 20 minutes. Then I read my favorite poem “Mother’s prayer”, tell about the Lord, and bless conductors and machinists. Also I tell the give

the number of my seat so that people may come to me to talk about the Lord or copy the poem. I present them the Gospel and invite to church”.

Now Tatiana Shaitor is officially endorsed as a military minister (chaplain) Last year she went to South Korea where she witnessed the baptism of two thousand soldiers. She has also been invited to visit other military units in Ivanovo, Kursk and in the Moscow as well as in the Ukraine region and in Hungary. .

“I would wish for the readers of the magazine “Sister” as well as all the women of Russia to have more faith and a deeper spiritual life which the Lord gives us” Says Tatiana.”. “Furthermore she says, “Only God can give us this joy! He created woman for love and it doesn’t matter what position she occupies. He gave women the mission of carrying love. If o you open your heart to Him every minute here on Earth will be as in heaven, where you can serve the Lord and others all the time”.

While listening to such life stories of people it is hard not to be amazed about how great our Lord is! It seems that you can do nothing about the rules which are established. If your heart is open to the Lord, even if you’re alone, your life can change a lot! One warrior is enough if the Lord is with him!

Dina Lyakhova

GALINA OBROVETS TO ATTEND “MIX IN ‘06”

With the thought that the Disciples women (CWF) will meet with UCC women in Indianapolis, it seemed too good an opportunity not to have Galina attend and represent MBL. A display booth has been rented and it will be set up to reflect all of the good work that is taking place in Russia and Armenia. Galina will also show a cd about the work she is involved in with Russian women in churches, government, prisons, hospitals and other areas across all of Russia. The dates of the event will be July 27-30, 2006 and will be held in Indianapolis. The timing for Galina is just right as she will come to the USA to report to the MBL Annual meeting that convenes just days before the Indianapolis event.



GATHERING OF WOMEN IN VORONEG, RUSSIA

2006 Mission Team to Dimidova July 09-23, 2006

Plans are now underway for MBL's third visit to the orphanage in the village of Dimidova. The campus houses 180 children ages 5-18. It is one of the largest of 34 orphanages in the Smolensk region. Dimidova is approximately 90 kilometers north of Smolensk. The team this year is comprised of Methodist, Episcopal, Disciple and Presbyterian youth and adults. Each person will pay for the airfare tickets and visa documents. This cost is approximately \$1450. Another \$771 will need to be raised per person to offset costs of hotel, food, train, coach travel, excursion in St Petersburg and orphanage curriculum and sports equipment. A fund raiser of selling smoked Boston butts and other items will take place in March. Sponsorship will also be sought. Those who do not participate in the fund raiser will pay the full amount of \$2256.60.

A number of the team are getting to be veterans in short term missions: among them are Heyward Gignilliat (4x) Aiken Reeves (2x) Carol Kuhn (1x) Carolyn Kuhn (1x) Lawrence Lehr (1x) Laura Lawton (1x) and Emily Aimonis (1x). First timers are Grace Ragan, Stege Wheeler, Mary Sprague, Kara Stanley, Faith Kuhn, Carver Blanchard and Sharon Kay Banks. For those who are interested in this mission tour, please call John Novikoff at 404 8061485.

The itinerary:

Jul 09 Depart Savannah on Delta Flt 782
09 Depart Atlanta on Delta Flt 46
10 Arrival in Moscow next day at 10:
10 1630 St Petersburg by train, arr 2230.
11-14 excursions
15 Depart for Dimidova , arr evening
16 Worship Service, set up vbs
17-21 Ministries to children
21 Depart to Moscow , arr evening
22 Free days in Moscow
23 Depart Russia on Delta Flt 47

The Mission for Biblical Literacy would like to honor all of our friends who provided gifts of support during 2005. They are listed as follows:

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FROM ATHENS TO WINDER TO ATLANTA TO SAVANNAH, GA?

You will note that lately, envelopes for contributions have been sent to the Savannah office instead of Atlanta. This is due to facilitating a smoother administrative transition since MBL's President lives and works primarily out of the Savannah area. Although donations are sent to Savannah, the acknowledgment still comes from the Peachtree Christian Church's secretary Jan Blakeslee after the funds are posted. Once the transition is fully made, Savannah will be the site of our MBL office. Thanks for your patience.

LAST YEAR'S MISSION TRIP TO DIMIDOVA, RUSSIA



12 year old boys



Our combined Russian American team



Pavel Solomine sings and plays Christian rock songs



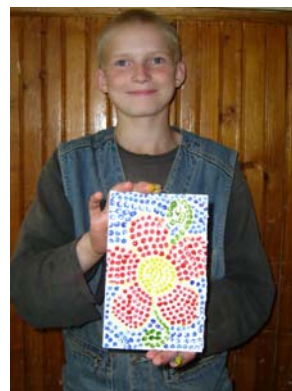
Orphan folk ensemble



Girl recites poetry



Proud of his treasure box



A mosaic artist