

MBL MISSION NEWS

Reporting events taking place in Russia, Armenia, Nicaragua, Haiti and at home

RECALL

While visiting at the home of Mr. Heyward Gignilliat one evening, I was shown some interesting furniture that I had never seen before: some chairs and a small. Table. There may have been several pieces that I missed but as Heyward told the story about how this came about, I was too involved to see beyond the few in front of me.

The chairs and table were actually carved and chiseled from enormous logs of teak. These were hand crafted by civilian prisoners of Viet Nam who were serving their time. The crafting of the furniture was by chisel. Every form was chiseled out by hand and without any assistance from power tools. The furniture was also finished in one piece. It was nothing like you would see in a furniture store. This work was art but served to pass each day of a dreary prison sentence.

That story also reminded me of another group of prisoners who were imprisoned in China by communist leaders some years ago. These prisoners were in prison because of their Christian beliefs and their work as Christian missionaries.

Years later, I met one of them at a Sunday school convention that was held in Castro Valley, CA. I don't remember the name of the woman I spoke with who was in prison years earlier. But what I do remember is this: the prisoners were not permitted to keep their Bibles nor any other literature to read so that they could get spiritual nurture and spiritual direction for their hopeless condition. So, the brethren all agreed to write down all that they could recall from the Bible and in make a "short" version of the Bible they once knew!

I remember that dear sister missionary producing a number of hand written pages that represented the book of Psalms, and many other pages of the books of he Bible, though incomplete but nevertheless the "guts" of the Bible that they had come to know. That was all that these believers had; but that was all they needed to have the leading of God's spirit in their lives.

This suggests to me that not only do we need to read and study our Bible, but find that the discipline of memorizing as much of it as we can is essential to our Christian walk. JMN

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Galina & Lawrence prepare to drive her car to the Jacksonville docks

Please cut along this line>.....<

Dear Pastor John.

I want to support the work of the Mission for biblical Literacy in Russian, Armenia, Nicaragua and Haiti. Therefore I want to pledge the following contribution to do my part

I am pleased to provide _____\$35_____ \$50_____ \$100._____ \$250_____ other_____ to support of the following mission

Programs (Please check one of the following) Russia__Armenia__Nicaragua__Haiti_____. All contributions are tax deductible

Name_____ Address_____ City_____ State_____

Please send your gift to: The Mission for Biblical Literacy
1580 Peachtree St. Atlanta GA 30309-2435

Test your Bible skills with BVC**

PROVERBS NIV CHAPTER 11:1-15

(Complete each verse)



1. The Lord abhors dishonest scales but.....his delights.
2. When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but.....comes wisdom.
3. The integrity of the upright guides them, but.....their duplicity.
4. Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but.....from death.
5. The righteousness of the blameless make a straight way for them, but.....wickedness.
6. The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but..... evil desires.
7. When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes: all he.....nothing.
8. The righteous man is rescued from trouble, andinstead.
9. With his mouth the godless destroys his neighbor, butescape.
10. When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices; when.....joy.
11. Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but.....destroyed.
12. A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor, but.....his tongue.
13. A gossip betrays a confidence, butsecret.
14. For lack of guidance a nation falls, but.....victory sure.
15. He who puts up security for another will surely suffer, but.....is safe.

ABOUT OUR EPIPHANY WISH LIST!

Galina needed a car and Thom was looking for a truck for his ministry in Nicaragua. Here is the story!

Unfortunately for Galina and her husband Vladimir, the vehicle they have used for ministry in Moscow (an Audi) happens to be a vehicle that was brought into Russia illegally. In Russia and especially in Moscow, motorists are pulled over at random and asked for documents of ownership. As a result, Galina is given a citation and she has to pay a fine. Meanwhile, she cannot legally register the car.

In desperation Galina borrowed money from friends while several supporters provided funds to purchase a used 2002 Honda CR-V with low mileage. After searching the internet while still in Moscow, Galina found what she thought she wanted in Savannah. The vehicle had to be a 4 wheel drive car to access the difficult roads outside of the Moscow area. The vehicle will be used to transport workshop material and the Christian publication "CECTRA" (Sister) to the many churches where workshops are held.

Many thanks to all of you who had a part in helping her to make the purchase. Also, thanks to Lawrence Lehr who at the last minute was called upon to help us transport the vehicle to the docks in Jacksonville, FL. The vehicle will be shipped to Helsinki, Finland where Galina and her husband Vladimir will pick it up after arrival and drive it across the border into Russia. Does this sound like its worth all the trouble? According to Galina, this very vehicle will cost several thousand dollars more to purchase in Moscow.

And now for Thom Walker! Thom has returned to the USA last week because of emergency surgery that his wife Polly had to undergo. Polly is making a normal recovery and Thom is expecting to rejoin his daughter Lorena in Nicaragua in a few weeks. However, shortly after he came home, he made contact with an acquaintance and much to his surprise, his friend has underwritten the cost of the truck that he needs for ministry.

Dear Partners,

It is the beginning of the dry season here on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua and it is hot.

My oldest daughter, Lorena, is with me and working side by side with me. We have been working with our team directly on the coast in Pearl Lagoon in a comarca named Kakabilla. It is a Miskito Indian comarca and the language is Miskito and English. The population is near 700. There are so many needs. It is a hard place to work because of the living conditions there. But as hard as it is for us to work there, it is harder for the people who have to live there. There are a great deal of material needs such as clothing, schools supplies, church supplies, and food. But the most pressing need is for spiritual help. Kakabilla is the center for witchcraft for the area. The pastors with which we work need spiritual encouragement and prayer.

We had a great time with a children's crusade. More than 100 children were in attendance. We had puppets, clowns, games, songs, and a Bible Story. Many lives were touched. Afterwards, we showed the Jesus Film. Approximately 200 people view the movie and many made decisions to follow our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The people are so hungry for the word of the Lord. We also take Bibles with us as we travel into the bush. The Bibles that were delivered this trip to Kakabilla were the English Bibles that John Novikoff brought with him on his trip here late last year. We are planning another trip to Kakabilla in three weeks to take in Medicine. Lorena and I leave tomorrow morning for Honduras to buy medicine. Pray for the Lord to help us cross the border back into Nicaragua with the medicine. It is needed so badly here.

Thank you for your faithfulness in your prayers and your giving. The kingdom of God is advancing here on the Atlantic coast as we all are faithful to the call of our Savior Jesus Christ. As always I am:

Amazed by Him, Thom

March 2007



Lorena interacting with children of Kakabilla



Typical sight on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua

AN UPDATE ON THE ROGER N. CARSTENSEN FUND

Many will remember that shortly after Dr. Carstensen's death on February 22, 1996, the Board of the Mission for Biblical Literacy voted to begin an endowment fund in order to continue the work of the mission that had been started.

While many friends and faithful patrons of the Mission provided generously, the fund did not begin as a large fund not to mention that there was a period when giving slowed down to a "trickle".

I now want to report that the funds invested through the Christian Church Foundation show a balance on December 31, 2006 of **\$102,626.03**. Looking back to a report on May 2005, MBL News reported that the endowment had **\$85,494.16**.

It is still my hope that before my term as President of MBL expires, that the Carstensen Endowment reach **\$1,000,000.00 ! It can be done you know!**

GUEST CORNER Welcome to Rev Gary Andrews, Sr. Pastor of the First Christian Church of Sandersville, Georgia who contributed the following article to the MBL Mission News.

NOTE: Though Gary Andrews and I attended the Regional Assembly of Christian Churches in Georgia last November, we were like two ships passing each other during a fog. I did not then nor until now meet Brother Gary. Much of our conversation has been by phone or e-mail. When I finally made contact with him so that Galina and I could visit the church in Sandersville, he wrote back and mentioned that the best day for a visit would be Ash Wednesday in the evening and that the youth would be in charge of the service. He also informed me that he was scheduled for an examination that morning that might end up surgically. The surgery took place and he is still recovering but improving from surgery to his heart.

Speaking of "heart", here is where he is when it comes to the issue of short term missions as he wrote the following:

Here is what we can do in the long run:

1. Send or e-mail me reports and pictures of her work so that I can keep it before the people here.
2. Send other mission emphasis opportunities and reports for me to promote.

I have found that the most effective thing to do is to send some of our members to her work for a few days each year (which we did when I lived in Lubbock with our man in Brazil). A few excited members works ten thousand times more than a missionary report. You would be surprised at the people here who might make that trip (we have lots of teachers and people who have the time and money for the trip).

This sort of thing is what I had planned when I came here. Let people spend their vacation dollars learning our missionaries and getting their hearts closer to the work, while being culturally enriched.

The last week of May, my wife (Chaplain Galasso) and I will be working the Katrina counseling post set up by the Disciples in Gulfport, MS. I am hoping to take a few people with me on the trip (one week long) that can do other chores down there.

Thanks, Gary



Gary Andrews

THE BUNDT CAKE

I don't know who invented the cake pan that you turn upside down after you cook with it, but they invented a bit of magic. That ugly old pan in the oven produces a neat looking mountain-shaped cake. Something about flipping that dude upside down brings a smile to my face - neat little ridges (on my face and the cake).

In theology, it is called the great reversal: someday everything gets flipped upside down. On the final day, all who rejected Jesus have to bow their knees to him and confess that he is who he said he was. The first become last and the last become first. The powerful become powerless and the most religiously despised sit on thrones (a day the modern media finally sees the real story). The godly ridiculed become those to whom others bow. The arrogant are humbled and the humble are exalted. The most prized possessions become junk and the smallest sacrifices done for others become grand mansions. Degrees and certificates on the wall as power levers, become paper to line the birdcage and a child's scribbling becomes the Mona Lisa. *Cont p 6*

Postage rates are going up!
If you noticed at all, postage for each newsletter costs \$.39, the first class rate. In May an additional .02 cent increase will be effective.
Why don't we mail at bulk rate prices? Simply, there are not enough folks to justify the licensing costs. For now, the first class rate is best for MBL.

Also, you may download the MBL Mission News if you go to:
www.gadisciples.org/ministries/MBL

БОЛШОЙ СПАСИБО!
(Thank you very much!)

Dear friends of the Mission,

One of the biggest challenges and vital tasks for Christians in Russia today is to learn how to minister to people outside of church doors. For decades in the communist time Church in Russia was deprived the right to show mercy to the needy as everyone was almost totally dependant on the State help. And so were Christians.

Now we live in different circumstances. In this time of changes the majority of plants are closed, people can hardly find a job, thousands of homeless adults and children are flooding the streets of big cities. Despair and hopelessness lead to drinking and using drugs. Hatred and nationalism are growing fast. Hundreds of shelters and orphanages are being opened for children abandoned by their living parents. Family unions are being destroyed rapidly.

Most of the church leaders in Russia do not use the potential of believers for outreach through social work and social activity to change the situation in the society for the better. Just because they have never been taught to do so. But God is there to change the thinking of the entire nation. Churches and individuals have to change their mentality and become open for the challenges. Recently my own mentality was dramatically changed as I learned from a woman what it means to be homeless and what she really felt.

Recently I have been reading a book written by Lylia Shevchenko, a famous music producer from Belarus. Her life story had a great impact on my life. After she had lost an enormous amount of money she became a homeless drinker and was treated in the society likewise. She told stories of nice looking people who let their dogs bite her and showed hatred towards her. Her life changed after she received Christ. Now she is sober and has organized a rehab center for drug addicts and alcoholics.

What would have happened to Lylia if nobody ever told her of Christ and His message of salvation and offered her a hand of help? Now, when I see beggars and the homeless I think of Lilia's story. *She has promised to tell her life story to readers of the Christian women's magazine "Sestra" ("Sister").*

In order to help churches and Christian groups change their thinking and to start social programs, we have developed a one-day project at the MBL Center in Moscow. It is called "Over a Cup of Tea With the Sister". We teach women from various parts of Russia to use their spiritual gifts in ministry and encourage them to see the needs of people outside of church.

Another goal is to introduce the journal "Sestra" and encourage women to read it. There, they find answers to their life questions in it. Finally we encourage women to minister to others.

Here are some of the responses reported in our workshops that Irina Kabanova conducted in other regions of Russia:

"I was impressed to hear about the social work by the church and by Christians in the community so that people and local authorities may hear the Good News", one person wrote in her comments of our workshop
-Irina from the town of Alexandrov, Vladimir Region.

"I learned at the workshop that I do not love my family enough and I know that from now on the Lord will begin to change me", wrote Olga after a workshop on how to grow in Christian faith and trust God as one faces spiritual and moral problems in their families and while upbringing children.

"May God bless you and give you strength in this ministry. You must know that it is not in vain in the eyes of the Lord", writes Elena in her comments.

I want to tell all our friends and supporters that all your help is not in vein. All these important projects on printing "Sestra", teaching women at conferences and workshops, teaching the Bible at VBS at orphanages would not be accomplished without your generous support and open hearts for outreach.

May the Lord continue to bless you all richly.

Galina Obrovets
Director of the Center for Biblical Literacy
Moscow, Russia

The Bible study manual "People, Passages and Places" is still available and may be purchased for \$8.50 each plus shipping.

This is the same manual that is also used in Russia, Armenia, and Nicaragua in the native language of that country.

To order, call me at 404 806 1485 or 912 308 8277

cont from page 3 *The Bundt Cake*

We are in the bundt pan of physical life and someday God will flip it over - with some real surprising results. It has been said by scholars of old that Jesus came to tell us what it will be like when the great reversal happens. His teachings and practices had to do with how to "get to the bottom of the pan" now to be at the top later. To completely make his point, he allowed himself to be executed as a criminal - the lowest thing on this earth that can happen to a person - especially if that person is innocent.

So, as I drift around in my "profession" today, I wonder what all of this is going to look like upside down. Either one by one as we pass individually or on the last great day itself, God takes his greatest creation out of the oven of life and "poof" we get to see what it was all about from a heavenly perspective. In the mean time, I think I will take the words and actions of Jesus with some seriousness. I think he saw the whole plan before he got down here and came to give us some life-chef advice. Dale Andrews

Pictures from our visits to Sandersville and Glennville, GA



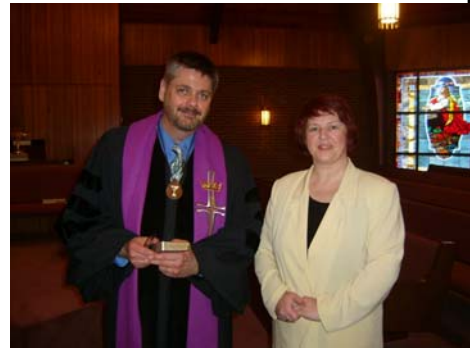
L Galina visits with Jean Cummings of the FCC in Sandersville GA



R Ray and Gloria Dotson with Galina Obrovets & John Novikoff



L Youth at Sandersville impose ashes and serve communion at Ash Wednesday Service



R Galina with Rev Jim Crockett, Pastor of FCC Glennville



L Galina speaks to a SS class at FCC Glennville



R Galina with Pat Brannen, FCC Glennville, GA

SALLY HAAS ON THE WAY TO HAITI IN MAY

Sally Haas, Coordinator for the nutrition program for children and expectant mothers in Haiti, departs for Haiti in May. Accompanying her will be Rev Jim Bell, music director of the Peachtree Christian Church and a physician (unnamed) from the Peachtree Christian Church.

Sally has been hard at work on writing a set of two booklets called **HAITI—SAVE A STARFISH MINISTRY!** The booklets are written with both adults and children in mind.

Each booklet has been provided to the members of the Peachtree Christian Church to use as devotional material during the period of Lent to emphasize the life, longings and hardships of the Haitian people. At the end of each daily reading there is a space in the booklet to pledge a love gift to the Haitian ministry that Sally conducts.

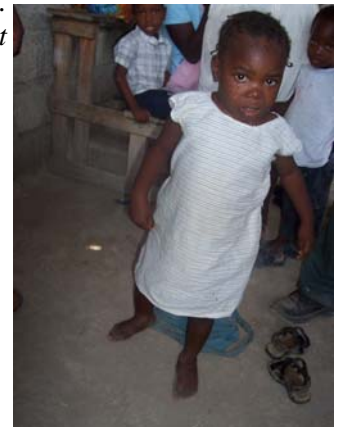
The offerings are brought to the worship service on Easter Sunday morning and dedicated to the Haitian ministry that Sally conducts.

While this announcement to MBL readers is late into the Lenten Service, one may care to inquire further about this astounding ministry that Sally has worked for many years.

Pictured below are pictures of a malnourished child named Gertha Prince, Gertha was treated with the proper nutrition formula and provided with loving care. The pictures illustrate her physical condition before treatment and after treatment.



L Gertha Prince before she received nutrition treatment



R. Gertha Prince after treatment

Lower R Gertha Prince with her mother



MISSION TRIP TO GRAFSKAYA RUSSIA CHANGED TO NEW LOCATION

The dates of June 18-July 01, 2007 are firm but the location has been changed. Galina Obrovets has called me to mention that the small church in Grafskaya did not think that they could accommodate our team.

As we have experienced in the past when some of the changes would come at the very moment that we are on the way to our destination, it turns out that our team will be invited to the city of Tambov, a large city south of Moscow.

At the moment, I am waiting for a report from Galina who is in Tambov at the time of this writing and possibly the information will arrive in time to include it into this newsletter.

Those persons who are interested in going on this mission, please contact me at 912 308 8277 for updated information. The cost of the trip still remains at \$2400 and each person must have a current passport with at least six months remaining after the time of departure. Also, a visa from the Russian Consulate will be the traveler's responsibility. John Novikoff

The Mission for Biblical Literacy
1580 Peachtree St. NE
Atlanta GA 30309-2435

“Opening the Bible in other lands”



The
Mission
for
Biblical
Literacy

“Opening The Bible”

Important notice!

This announcement appeared in the previous issue of the MBL Mission News but needs to be run once more. During 2006, an attempt was made to move the office of MBL to Savannah GA. Unfortunately, the new location did not work out and consequently, it was decided to retain the office in Atlanta at the Peachtree Christian Church. The Board of MBL is grateful to Peachtree CCD for this privilege. Hence, all correspondence and gifts will need to be sent to MBL at the Peachtree Christian Church address. If you have any business reply envelopes addressed to Savannah, please discontinue the use of such. Meanwhile, the phone numbers listed on this newsletter will put you in touch with me personally. Thank you. John Novikoff

Announcements and itineraries

February 16-18th	Faith at Work Conference St Simon's Island GA
February 18th	arrival of Galina Obrovets from Moscow
February 20th	Galina and John attend Shrove Tuesday meal at Christ Church Savannah
February 21st	Galina and John to FCC at Sandersville for Ash Wednesday Service
February 25th	Galina and John to FCC at Glennville for CMF Breakfast, Worship Service
February 28th	Galina returns to Moscow
March 27th	John Novikoff to meet with Dr. Jim Collins and Dr. Bob Harris, Atlanta
April 11th	John Novikoff to speak at Jolly Hearts luncheon of FCC Savannah
May	Sally Haas to Haiti
June 4-6	Annual Meeting of the Mission for Biblical Literacy, Atlanta GA
June 18-Jul 01	Russia Mission '07 Voronezh Russia
July 18-25	General Assembly at Ft. Worth TX
October TBA	Visit to Kansas and Mississippi Churches