

MISSION NEWS

Highlighting events in Russia, Armenia, and Central America

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www.gadisciples.org/organization/mb1

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“Opening the Bible”

MISSION FOR BIBLICAL LITERACY

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2006 VBS MISSION TO RUSSIA

Plans are now underway for the short term mission trip to Russia. Tentatively, the dates for travel will be July 9-24, 2006 and the target mission will be the Dimidovo Orphanage near Smolensk. This will be the third visit that we will make to that orphanage.

Last summer, Galina Obrovets, our Russian liaison in Moscow recruited eight Russian workers who teamed up with the Americans. Because we lost two of our American team members (1 withdrew and 1 had an accident) before arriving at the orphanage, we were short handed to work with 186 children. However, it proved to be a very uplifting and challenging experience for all of us. This year, we hope that we can recruit at least 14 of our own team and pray that Galina will provide at least 10 worker/translators to join us.

Air fare and visa cost for this trip is estimated to be around \$1550. Each team member must also agree to help raise funds that will be used to cover cost of the mission while we are in Russia. This will be discussed at our first organizational meeting that will be held on December 4th in Savannah at Christ Church or place to TBA immediately after the 10:30 AM worship service. For further information, contact John Novikoff at 912 927 3744 or use the email on the cover of this newsletter.

2006 VBS MISSION TO ARMENIA

Anna Nerkararyan of Moscow, Russia will lead another group to work in the orphanage located in Vanadzor, Armenia. Tentatively, she will be leaving for Armenia in the middle of August 2006. Vanadzor is city in the Caucasus Mountains that experienced a massive earthquake about twenty years ago and still shows substantial damage that has not yet been repaired.

Anna would like to have some of us join her when she begins her mission. If you had a chance to read the last MBL Mission Newsletter, Anna wrote about her spiritual journey at the orphanage. If room permits, I will place a few of the pictures that she had sent me under this article.



Figure 1 Anna's group awaits a Bible story Anna demonstrates the lesson of Jesus - foot washing Curriculum used by the Russian and Armenian group demonstrated Jesus' teachings of Christ-like service to others.

Dear Partner,

The rains are still with us here but the sun shines more now. We still lack about 2 or so months for the official rainy season to be over. It is extremely humid.

I just returned from a four-day trip into the mountains. I spent more than sixteen hours on a mule. The trip entailed crossing a lot of streams, going up steep mountains and then going down on the other side. The mud was sometimes almost up to the belly of the mules. I saw some really incredible country. On top of the mountains I could see for endless miles. The country was so green.

One of the mules on which I rode was so small that my feet almost touched the ground. That formed a problem fording many of the creeks because the water and mud was sometimes almost over my boots in the stirrups. Also when the animal is so small, when it is going down a steep incline it is almost perpendicular to the ground. That can make it very hard to stay in the saddle. But with the help of my two arms and the help of the Lord I stayed put.

We visited two comarcas (villages) named Diamante (over five hours by mule) and El Virgin (another eleven on a mule to get in and out). Most of the children and young people in the villages had never seen a gringo. We took in medicine and toothbrushes for the people. But more importantly we took the love of God and the Jesus Film with us. In addition to the mules we rode, we also had a pack mule to carry the equipment for the film. We have a small generator (there is of course no electricity), a projector, CD player, small amplifier, and a small speaker. We use a bed sheet or a light colored wall as a screen. One mule can carry all of the equipment.

We showed the Jesus Film three times. Each showing well over one hundred people came. Over 400 people saw it. The schools where we showed the film were "packed." I could hardly believe that many people could get into a building. Some of the people walked three hours from their homes to see it. That means that they walked three hours to the school where the film was shown, watched it for two hours, then walked another three hours home in the dark through some really hard terrain. Many lives were changed. Many people accepted the Lord as Savior while others sought a closer walk with Him. Very few dry eyes could be seen after the film.

It is such a pleasure to serve the Lord and to see hungry people fed and to see their thirst for more of God quenched. The people are precious. They share willingly what little they have. They are so appreciative of everything we do. One man walked about one and one half miles to give us a gift of a live chicken the morning we left Diamante.

I count it such a blessing to be serving where God has called me. Thank you so much for all you do for the ministry here on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. Your prayers and your monetary gifts are so appreciated. You are truly equal partners with us. Again

thank you. My prayer is that God will continue to bless you in everything you do. Please remember us in your prayers. Amazed by Him Thom



One of the many crossings we made to get to the little comarcas.



This is just a part of the group at the showing of the Jesus Film in El Virgin. Many accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

GREETINGS FROM THE MOSCOW CENTER OF THE MBL!

After two months of an unusually warm fall we finally got some snow and ice. The last weekend of October is sunny and beautiful. Our hearts are being filled with joy when we think about many blessings we have had recently in our publication ministry of the Christian women's magazine SESTRA and in teaching women how to minister to others.

We rejoice that the journal finds its ways to the hearts of the people who do not know about the Lord. After we published an inspirational interview with Miss Universe Oksana Fyodorova in the latest issue of Sestra, we received many good responses from unbelievers who read our magazine for the first time. They make comments that Sestra is not a magazine published for the narrow circle of believers but something they all might be interested in.

We are happy to have a new member of the editorial board - Dina Lyahova, a Christian journalist. Dina has been our author for a number of years, she is working on her doctorate thesis and she is especially interested to make Sestra better understood by **unbelievers**. The other Dina shared with us a story that happened some time ago. She gave a copy of Sestra to a young man Sergei. After he read it and discussed it with her he said he was interested to go to church. Soon he came to know Christ as his Savior.

This year we celebrated the fifth anniversary of Sestra. Lyubov Perevoznikova, one of our guests at the celebration, told us a few stories about her friends in Chita (Siberia), to whom she gave Sestra to read. Soon they also were converted. It is a joy to hear such stories

Here is a passage from a letter of Maria Ivanova, our reader from the town of Gubkin, Belgorod. She writes, "Thank you for the wonderful magazine. All my friends and relatives who share the reading of Sestra thank you for the interesting articles. I believe that the Lord will touch many hearts with the help of Sestra". Another reader, Nelia, from the village of Nizhneye Ozernoye, the Altay Region, writes that she was encouraged by a publication in Sestra to start a puppet show ministry to children. She writes, "Peace to you. Thank you for the magazine. - It teaches and, explains a lot. I especially liked an article about Alla Marchenko who makes puppets. In our village there are no Christian resources at all. I need books and curriculums". We have sent Nelia the necessary books and contacts so that she would be able to start this ministry. This summer and fall we have planned and organized a series of one day workshops for women to encourage them in ministry and present the magazine Sestra. One took place in July in Voronezh (16-hour trip to the South of Moscow) where we had sixty women from various evangelical churches, another took place in October in one of Moscow's seminaries. On October 31 we are invited to Krasnoarmeisk, Moscow Region; on November 10-13 - to Volok and Balakovo, and in November - to Volgograd on the Volga River. Please pray the Lord blesses the women to be encouraged to powerfully proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers that are many in Russia. We thank you for making possible these events. **Galina**



Figure 2 Commandant Kim Kvaz Kuk (L) of the Korean Women's Army visits with Galina at her office. Kim represents a Christian military organization. R. Olga hands out the journal Sestra at the Voronezh conference that was attended by many Christian organizations in Russia.

The Mission for Biblical Literacy would like to honor all of our friends who provided gifts of support during 2004. They are listed as follows:

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This weekend, I will join in with the brethren who will attend the Regional Assembly of Christian Churches in Georgia. We will officially install our new Regional Minister Dr. Ray Miles and pray that God will provide him with the strength of leadership required for his office. With his blessings, we will continue our work as the church of Jesus Christ and deal with issues that are pressing in this region and around the world. Yours truly will be on hand to also place on display, the work of the Mission for Biblical Literacy.

I cannot help but reflect on what Margot and I witnessed the other day. Three children, infants at that, were presented by their parents for baptism. This was not an adult baptism but the ritual of baptism as provided by the Episcopal Church.

While we as Disciples vary in our view of the ritual of Baptism, one has to be impressed by the thought that while an infant is marked with water, the sign of the cross and the chrism, the infant is going to need all the help it can get as it grows up in this world. For that reason, the liturgy also is addressed to the parents, the god-parents, and the entire congregation witnessing this solemn act. In fact, there is that moment when we who are witnesses to this event, take the further step of reciting our baptismal vows so that we can be in tune to the commitment we made to Jesus Christ when we also were baptized.

We now approach the season of Advent which begins at about the time you receive this newsletter. We are called upon as Believers to be in an expectant posture as we look forward to the celebration of Christ's birth. In this season we are reminded that Christ was promised to the world, to be the light of the world, the hope of the world, and the Savior of the world. And the awesome fact of all of this is that God made his promise to us personally

Therefore, as we approach a season where we are called to be grateful for the gifts of life that we have received, and for the bounty that we have received from the earth, the sea and the labors of many, may we also prepare our hearts to receive the greatest gift that was ever offered to mankind – the salvation of God through Jesus Christ His Son. Praise be to Thee O Lord! John Novikoff

The Mission for Biblical Literacy continues to do nothing more than to get that message out to those people who at present are without hope.

Yes we could place a lot of socks and shoes on the dirty and calloused feet of those kids that we visit in Russia and in Armenia; we can give them one to two weeks of our vacation or leisure time to provide companionship; we can teach them Bible and help them to establish a worship life in a unfriendly environment that they live in, and in those areas where it is needed, good sanitation and hygiene can be taught so that intestinal parasites do not have to make a home in the belly of young boys and girls;

BUT

After we have visited and left them, it takes a company of believers to continue praying and supporting and giving encouragement so that the efforts of those who have answered the call will not be wasted.

Dear people, many of you have offered your supporting love and gifts for a long time. You have really given until it was painful. You have stuck with MBL as we had to struggle to maintain this mission with integrity and dignity.

I cannot thank you, the backbone of MBL, enough for the continuous prayers, funds, support and encouragement that you all have provided for the past 14 years. Because you are that cloud of witnesses described in the Epistle to the Hebrews, I will continue to provide ministry and the Blessed Hope to many who need it.

