



MBL MISSION NEWS

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

The Mission for Biblical Literacy

November/December 2006

Volume 1 issue 2

UP THE CREEK IN NICARAGUA– THE MAHAGONY CREEK THAT IS!

DAY ONE I usually use the Savannah airport to depart to other cities but this time, I had to leave from Jacksonville, FL's airport – 143 miles south of Savannah. So, to make the 0745 AM flight I had to leave my home at 0400 IS to satisfy the airport security requirements. But this lonely time of the early morning gave me an opportunity to reflect on the work that is presently going on in the Mission for Biblical Literacy in Russia, Armenia, Haiti and Nicaragua. This was also a good time to practice out loud, what few Spanish words I had learned from my next door neighbor, Lucy who is from Panama.

The plane ride from Jacksonville to Atlanta seemed a bit long for the 42 minutes that is normal for such a flight. In fact, the plane was late and my biggest fear was that my baggage of Bibles and other supplies for Thom Walker would not arrive in time to be transferred to the flight to Managua. But my fears were relieved after arriving at the customs section of the Managua airport to see both bags on the carousel.

I was met by Missionary Thom Walker who walked us to a waiting cab.. Thom was well acquainted with the cab driver named Mark Anthony. Mark spoke English that he had picked up earlier in primary and secondary school. As we journeyed the five hour trip to the city of El Rama, I also found Mark to be a very knowledgeable person. The trip was almost without mishaps until a young boy ran across the highway oblivious to oncoming vehicles. But Mark's superior driving skills avoided what could have been a potential catastrophe.

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For Believers, it is a very special time of the year.

Margot and I drove through New Orleans, Slidel, and the Gulfport areas. As much as we kept our ears and eyes on the news of Hurricane Katrina this year, and as saturated as we became with the videos and pictures of the destruction of those areas, we found ourselves gasping as we viewed miles and miles of ruination. There is no way in my best imagination could I ever fathom what this deadly storm did to those who experienced it.

But I also heard the concern of many men; pastors and layman alike who also weathered that storm, thanking each other for generous the help that they had given and received from each other. Now they continued to encourage each other to continue helping where they were needed. This took place at a Christian Men's luncheon.

As we approach this season of Thanksgiving and shortly afterwards, Advent. I want to encourage each of our readers and supporters to keep our Gulf region brethren in prayer and in your loving kindness.

Yes, we are thankful for our security, our country, and those blessings that are poured out on us by our Savior. But those are also blessings that need to be shared with those who are in need. Russia, Armenia, Haiti, and Nicaragua are on our hearts because God has called us there. But He also reminds us to not forsake our nearby brethren.

May you each have a Happy Thanksgiving and a Blessed Advent Season. John N.;

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Special points of interest:

- Coming soon! Dr. Robert Harris of the Christian College of Georgia reports that our new website is close to completion. For those of you who have internet access, this will be a splendid way to receive the newsletter and other important bits of information regarding MBL. Meanwhile, we can be found on www.gadisciples.org/ministries/MBL

Test your Bible skills with BVC**

PROVERBS NIV CHAPTER 10:1-16

(Complete each verse)



1. A wise son brings joy to his father, butmother.
2. Ill gotten treasures are of no value, but.....death.
3. The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but,.....wicked.
4. Lazy hands make a man poor, but.....wealth.
5. He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but.....son.
6. Blessings crown the head of the righteous butwicked.
7. The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but.....rot.
8. The wise in heart accept commands , butruin.
9. The man of integrity walks securely, butfound out.
10. He who winks maliciously causes grief, and.....ruin.
11. The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but.....wicked.
12. Hatred stirs up dissension, but.....wrongs.
13. Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning, but.....judgment.
14. Wise men store up knowledge, but.....ruin.
15. The wealth of the rick is their fortified city, but.....poor.
16. The wages of the righteous bring them life, but.....punishment.

**BVC = Bible Verse Completion

OUR CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

Galina Obroverts has been using her personal vehicle to provide the necessary services that are vital to MBL. She no longer can use her vehicle to perform duties for our center that is located in Moscow, Russia. Galina and her husband have saved \$6000 and need a \$6000 match to purchase a late model certified used vehicle in the USA and import it to Russia. The vehicle will be used to service the many churches that she and Olga work with throughout Western Russia. This is a NEED indeed!

Thom Walker is also looking for a vehicle to use in Nicaragua. It will be a used truck that will be outfitted to be utilized as a panel truck. When Thom goes into villages, Managua and other cities in Nicaragua, he will keep a supply of Bibles, literature, and medications that he can dispense from the panel truck. This will also be a used truck purchased in Managua, Nicaragua and built up to Thom's specifications. Cost is estimated at \$15000.dollars. Can you help with this project?

Please remember Galina and Thom in your prayers.

If the Lord lays it on your heart to help Galina or Thom, I know you will be richly blessed for doing so.

-cont UP A CREEK

The hotel is just a very small hotel situated on the banks of the Rio Escondido. I am not sure about how many rooms there are as expansion is currently taking place. But I can mention that my room was exactly 8'x8' with a 10' ceiling. An electric fan helped one stay cool at night and a mosquito net that I slept under kept the flying critters away. I must mention that there were power outages every day that would last throughout the afternoon. So much for the fan!



Mark, Anthony John & Donna Coco



Thom gives a Bible to a Nicaraguan man



John & Thom prepare to go up Mahogany Creek

DAY TWO - By now, I had a pair of shiny rubber boots that I purchased upon arrival. That is a must since during this rainy season the ground is saturated with rainwater and that the water table is very close to the surface. It was on this morning that I met Thom's assistant, a Nicaraguan named Brother Henry. Henry, a very tall and lanky man who is a Believer and who attends the Seventh Day Adventist Church in El Rama has been Thom's primary guide. Brother Henry usually prepares the "ponga" (river boat) that Thom will take speedily take us up the Rio Escondido to the locations where Thom provides



Thom prepares to dose children



Brother Henry with family



Thom and John rest at Mr. Whitmore' house

medical assistance to children.

Our first stop was at a location called Misquita. Since this was a national holiday, the school was closed except for the pre-schoolers. There, I saw Thom go to work as he ministered his program of de-worming the kids of intestinal parasites. The eradication drug is administered by mouth. Thom fills a syringe and squirts it into each child's mouth.

Afterwards, we continued up the river to visit Brother Henry's brother that we call Mr. Whitmore. Upon our arrival, he was milking one of two cows and at the same time preventing one of the calves nearby from reaching the cow's udder until he finished his milking work.

After our greeting and introduction, he led us to a patch where there were coconut trees. Using a long pole with a hook on it, he brought down some coconuts. With his machete, he cleaned off the husk and cut off an end so that we could enjoy the milk of the nut. A real delight in that hot weather.

We all had a short rest and then went on to another school called Magnolia but upon finding it was closed, we returned to El Rama and prepared for the next day's journey

-Cont on page 5

Galina Obrovets poses with the Doug & Cathy Wirt, Regional Ministers at the Regional Assembly of Christian Church In Oregon. April 2006 Pendleton, OR

Dear Saints,



We received "Sestra" from print on October 12th and sent it to our subscribers and individuals, our partners in ministry who distribute the magazine and use it for evangelism. Then, on October 16 there was held a conference in Moscow for two hundred widows from Moscow and from a number of Russian cities. I was invited to speak and present "Sestra" to the women. In the word of greeting I said: "I am not a widow. Only a woman who lost her husband may truly understand you and your heart. When our staff learned of your meeting, the Lord touched our hearts and we thought of an appropriate issue that would meet your need.

In one of our issues we have an article "The True Widow Trusts the Lord" about Anna Nesyn from Belarus, who lost her husband when she was young and had four daughters. Instead of concentrating on her grief, she started a blessed ministry for widows like her. More than that in this issue there is an article "Is Loneliness - Blessing or Burden?" Written by a lonely man who chose to serve the Lord alone. We give each of you a gift of this issue and hope it will be a blessing to you". We had just enough copies to give to all who were present.

A week later, on October 22, Irina Potapova, one of the women who were present at the meeting, came to our office with interesting comments on her first time reading Sestra. She said, she was so influenced by the materials in Sestra which encouraged her to spend a lot of time searching, reading and studying the Bible characters and their life that she'd never thought of.

On October 23 we had a guest at our office, a missionary. His name is Eldar Salikhov, from the town of Pushkin, the Moscow Region. The purpose for his visit was to purchase forty copies of Sestra. When we asked him about how he used them he said he's been using them for almost a year for evangelistic outreach. "Sestra", he said helps him to get acquainted with people to share the Gospel with them. "I have never seen a better Christian magazine that would be such a great help in evangelism. You have chosen the best form to witness about the Lord".

On October 23 in the evening we had the first meeting of our interdenominational women's club where we discussed a topic "Influence of Other People on Our Choice of the Way of Life" where we shared stories on how the Lord sends special people to our lives that help us come to know God. One of our guests, Victoria Belova, an actress and singer shared her story of meeting a Holly Wood vocal teacher and encouraged him in his faith. We are going to write these stories for women in one of the issues of "Sestra".

On October 25 I received a phone call from a woman who subscribed to "Sestra" and refused to receive any more copies when she found out "it was not a Russian Orthodox Church publication". Thirty minutes later I received a phone call from Olga Butskaya, from the Russian Orthodox Church Publishing House with invitation to me to speak and present "Sestra" next week at their annual Book Fair in the International Exhibition Hall in the Moscow down - town. She said, "Magazine "Sestra" is absolutely wonderful".

On October 25 we got an e-mail from Tatyana Cherkasova from Ekaterinburg, she is organizing a conference for 60-70 women of the Ural Region and would like to organize a subscription campaign for "Sestra". Praise the Lord! Olga has received a few invitations from Moscow Baptist Churches to come and tell about "Sestra" while before they had been much closed. Mikhail Chekalin, chairman of the Unity council of Moscow Baptist churches is interested to invite us to his church and organize a workshop for women.

In November we will continue workshops for women "Over a Cup of Tea With the "Sister". Please, pray the Lord continues to use us for his Glory and spreading the Gospel. And thank you, MBL, that all this is possible because you and others care. - Galina Obrovets, Moscow office

Up a creek cont

DAY THREE - Now, instead of the large boat (ponga) we now were preparing to travel in a dory. This is a vessel that is about 12 feet long. It resembles the longer dory's that are used to ferry passengers up and down the rivers and creeks in Nicaragua. Because of their slender shape and built very heavy, the dory withstands high winds. Nevertheless, it has to be delicately balanced.

We traveled east on the Rio Escondido until we reached what is called the Mahogany Creek. The journey in the ponga would have taken about 30-40 minutes but now, with a 5 hp mercury engine, this journey would take 2 1/2 hours to reach the mouth of the creek. From that point we st we had at least 6 hours up a winding creek filled with fallen trees and submerged debris. I must add that traveling up the creek through the rain forest was a very beautiful sight for all of us to behold. But one of the painful parts of this trip was that we had no comfortable seats to sit on – just a plain board that stretched the breadth of the dory.

Near the end of the day we had not reached our destination so we came upon two young men overlooking the creek. We asked how far we had to go. Upon learning that we were not too close, Brother Henry asked if we could stay that night at their house. The house consists of one large room and another small building nearby that is the kitchen. The young men introduced Henry to their father, Mr.

Martinez who invited us to stay overnight in their home.

All of our equipment and supplies that were in the dory had to be brought up the steep but muddy embankment. The young men and Brother Henry graciously volunteered to remove everything that was in the dory and brought up to the house. We were invited to a supper of beans, rice, and coffee. In return, Thom asked if we could show them the "Jesus" video that he had brought. Since there is no electricity to run the projector, we had brought a generator along. Soon, we had the whole family sitting in the large room viewing the "Jesus" film that was in the Spanish language.



A view of the Martinez farm



Mr. & Mrs. Martinez & daughter



Brother Henry loads the dory

DAY 5 – This morning, we were invited for breakfast of rice, beans, coffee and cheese by the Martinez family. Their sons and Brother Henry loaded our dory and soon, we were on our way to a school house about two hours up the creek. The creek now was getting narrower and shallower so again, it was a slow cruise of about 3-4 miles an hour. Then, we came on the schoolhouse where Thom once more would meet with the teacher and begin treating the children with medicine. All this took place in the one room school house. As it often happens, after taking a few pictures of the children while they were on their recess on the school grounds, a number of them gathered around me and Thom while we took digital snapshots. Of course, we let them see their images that were on the camera screen. As usual, the kids were very excited.



Thom treats children in classroom



School house



Children watch as we go up the creek

After leaving school house, we took along five of the children in the dory and dropped them off at their homes that were located further up the creek. Traveling for another half hour, we finally arrived at our destination. Because it was still early in the day, we had the opportunity to unpack the dory and also located our quarters in one of the abandoned houses. Here we strung up our hammocks and rested awhile. *Cont on page 6*

Shortly after, we made our way across a muddy pasture to the house for our meeting. Word of Thom's arrival went out to neighboring families in that village and soon, we saw many people gathering at this house. As evening fell and it became dark, Thom treated few children for parasites. He also dispensed analgesics to a few of the people. Surprisingly to me, things like aspirin or ibuprofen are very expensive in Nicaragua so Thom keeps a large supply with him. That evening as we had done the night before, Thom showed a movie; this one on family violence. A well done movie was produced in Mexico by Armageddon studios with a Christian message. When the movie was over, Thom offered Spanish Bibles to those who were present and also offered prayer for the group. That night a heavy rain began and kept us in the house for another hour. Finally, in light rain we made our way across the muddy pasture back to the abandoned shack where we had hung our hammocks. From thereon, it was a restful sleep.

DAY 6 - We awakened in the morning to notice light fog. We also noticed that the heavy rain through the night had swollen the creek. The rain filled the dory with lot of water but Brother Henry bailed out the water and dried the bottom before he reloaded the dory. It was not too long before we were packed and started back to El Rama. This time, we knew we would have a swifter cruise since we were going downstream and also the risk of colliding with tree stumps or submerged debris did not seem to be the problem. But there was one time when we had to go under a fallen branch with only inches to spare. The same incident turned our dory sideways but Brother Henry was able to straighten it out preventing us from capsizing. We finally entered into the Rio Escondido and continued on to El Rama. That evening, Brother Henry put away all equipment and secured the dory.



Our quarters



Mahogany Creek



Brother Henry carrying a trunk

I failed to mention that earlier in the week, Thom had introduced me to three young ladies who had volunteered to provide children's ministry while he is back in the USA. One of them, Julia, is designated to be a coordinator.



Thom with Julia



Thom with the Puppet team



John with the Puppet team

Thom has also been looking ahead to the future and hopes to start a puppet show to be aired on TV. Although most of the Nicaraguans do not have electricity, the advent of solar panels is providing the opportunity to have low voltage electricity and also the opportunity to own and operate a TV set. This looks like an excellent opportunity to get into TV programming. Thom is presently working with studio personnel to develop his program. Julia and some other women have helped him. His puppet show will be called "Gringo Bob"

DAY 6-7 Thom showed one more video at the Assembly of God Church in El Rama. This one dealt with the issue of abortion and seemed to be well received. Thom was invited to preach at this church on the following Sunday. We returned to our hotel where we packed our personal items. That night or should I say at 3:00 AM we both boarded a bus to take us to Managua. The trip is five hours long. Arriving in Managua, we made our way to a motel that was across the highway from the Managua Airport terminal. That day, we will visit the Bible Society of Managua and also call on friends who have helped Thom in the past.

Day -8 had been on a previous short term trip with Thom a few years back. Then, he was headquartered in Masaya. It was shortly after an earthquake had struck and it also was a few years after the Sandinista-Contra war. I was impressed with the degree of mission ministry that Thom was bringing to that area in the name of Christ through the Mission for Biblical Literacy. But today, I see the work headquartered in El Rama as a significant ministry that all of us need to be in prayer about as Thom and his team of young women minister to children and their parents. Through the avenue of lay medicine, he is touching many lives and there is no doubt that the name of Jesus is spread throughout the remote areas of Nicaragua. However, the election of November 5th could potentially be a blockage to any Christian ministry in Nicaragua. There are four parties that are vying for political leadership and the party that presently is in the lead according to polls is the party that Daniel Ortega once commanded. Please pray for Nicaragua! John Novikoff

WELCOME TO HAITI

by **Sally Haas,**

Director, Haiti Nutrition Program

MBL has expanded our ministry into six remote villages in Haiti, the poorest county in the Western Hemisphere yet only two hours from Miami. Eighty percent of the population lives below the poverty level. Fifty percent of the children are malnourished and sadly more than half the deaths of Haitian children are caused by malnutrition. Other effects of malnutrition include birth defects; blindness, permanently impaired mental development, liver disease, stunted growth, pneumonia, and diarrhea.

Haitian women give birth to as many as six to ten children and average life expectancy is 47 years. Infant and maternal mortality rates are extremely high due to inadequate prenatal and postnatal care, unattended births and widespread malnutrition. A mother's milk is the main source of nutrition with most children being breast fed to the age of five. Unfortunately, the majority of mothers are malnourished so their milk provides minimal benefits to their child.

A Nutrition Program has been started in Haiti that provides monthly nutritionally enhanced meals and vitamins for the children for the first five years of their lives and important healthcare information for their parents.

Respected Haitian religious leaders like our friend Father Fritz Valdema, nurses like his wife Carmel, and local health workers conduct monthly clinics in each of their assigned villages.

If malnutrition is diagnosed, a child is enrolled in one of both steps of the Nutrition Program. When a child has developed a swollen belly indicating a lack of both protein and calories, both steps are needed. There is excess water in the stomach that must be eliminated before the child can eat regular food.

STEP 1 of the program provides an enriched milk formula made by combining powdered milk, sugar, oil and water. This daily treatment may be needed for several months to eliminate the excess water in a child's swollen belly. Successful treatment allows this child to proceed to STEP 2. If malnutrition is recognized early enough, STEP 1 can be avoided.

STEP 2 provides Alkamil, a protein enriched powder which is added to rice, the mainstay of the Haitian diet. It supplies all the necessary components of a complete protein which is critical in the development of a child.

Records are kept for all children participating in the program and their progress is monitored to ensure success.

Please help MBL address Haiti's overwhelming malnutrition problem. Please contribute \$.41 a day or \$150 a year to sponsor a child in the Nutrition Program and save that child's life.

The people of Haiti may not have clean water, electricity,

sewer systems, or paved roads, but most of them have their faith in Jesus Christ. God uses all gifts for big purposes. It's remarkable what your gift can do. Here are just a few children we have been blessed to help



Ricardo before treatment



Ricardo after treatment



Sally Haas discusses mission strategy with Thom Walker (upper) and briefs the MBL Board (lower)



The Mission for Biblical Literacy
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“Opening the Bible in other lands”

President's itinerary	November 1	-	Conference with Dr. Jim Collins, Peachtree Christian Church Atlanta GA
	November 3-5		Provided display at Great River Assembly of Christian Churches at Shreveport LA.
	November 13	-	World Missions Committee meeting, Christ Church Savannah GA
	November 17-19	-	GA Regional Assembly of Christian Churches St. Simons, GA
	December 6-11		Planning meeting for Russia Mission '07 Voronezh Russia
	July 21-25, '07		General Assembly at Fort Worth, TX

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The mission trip to Russia is tentatively scheduled for June 19-July 03, 2007. The orphanage that we will serve has not yet been identified but it appears at this time that the team will be invited to the region of Voronezh, south of Moscow.

The Golden Ring Cities around Moscow are planned for the excursion. The cities of Yaroslav and Rostov are being considered at this time. The cost for this trip is estimated to be at \$2600 dollars. This will include the airfare to and from Moscow, ground transportation to the orphanage, VBS supplies and excursion costs. The trip will originate in Savannah GA.

Please cut along this line.....X.....

Dear Pastor John,

I would like to provide \$_____ to support the Mission for Biblical Literacy in (please check one of the following) _____Russia_____Armenia_____Nicaragua_____Haiti.

(All contributions are tax deductible)

I would also like to know how I can help with a gift to the Mission for Biblical Literacy through my will.

Please send your gift to

Mission for Biblical Literacy

218 Dyches Drive

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