



BIBLES FOR RUSSIA

October 2007

Partner,

The adventure in faith we began in 1988 continued on in September of 2007 by allowing Jean and me along with 6 others to return to the former Soviet Union. This mission, number 74, took us to Moscow, Uglich, Yaroslavl, Goritsiy, Kizhi Island, Svirstroy, St. Petersburg and back to Moscow.

My, what changes we have seen over the past 20 years. The most dramatic ones being the fall of the iron curtain, the move from socialism to controlled capitalism and change in every area of life toward a more western-style freedom. The most important change has been from a few hundred scattered, isolated, “underground” and persecuted protestant (evangelical) churches to approximately 15,000 in Russian alone. Praise God.

The ministry God gave to us has not changed. From the first until now, we have had the privilege of “speaking to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation” (*I Corinthians 14:3*) or “encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near,” (*Hebrews 10:25*) I encourage you to study all the passages on encouragement.

In Moscow, we learned of the ministries of Mikhail, Luba, Edward, Bill and Zhenya. Mikhail’s newest ministry outreach is to pastors who are experiencing “burnout.” We are trusting God to be vitally engaged with him in this very needful and important work. Lord willing, he will visit us this month. Zhenya has a growing and effective ministry to those who are HIV positive. Russia now has the fastest growing population of people infected with AIDS in the world.

In Uglich we encouraged and were encouraged by Pastor Andrei who has recently begun a new church. Because of some of our partners’ generosity, we were able to supply that new congregation with books, Bibles, New Testaments, tracts and much-needed funds. A visit by the team to a state-run orphanage was also an encouragement to each of us.

Yaroslavl was a special treat. Pastor Slava has recently left behind a large and successful church ministry, where he was senior pastor, to start a new work in an area of 200,000 souls that previously had no Bible-believing congregation. A brother we had not known before, another Pastor Andrei, introduced us to a 2,000-member congregation begun only 15 years back. To date they've sponsored 25 other new churches. He asked for 2,000 Bibles with which they hope to see, and are believing God for, 2,000 new converts.

St. Petersburg is where in 1991 we helped "plant" the first of 1,000 new churches; Christ Church of St. Petersburg. Pastor Sergei Timokin is still holding forth. Igor Bogomol continues to travel to the far north to work with Volodia Geraskin in a front line ministry to the "reindeer people." These brothers encourage us as much or more than we are able to encourage them. We are part of a team effort of which you also play a most important role.

Then Marina, Luci, Gary and Pam demonstrated for us what the Lord has done in the lives of orphans and others who have left their orphanage totally unprepared to live and survive in the harsh "real world" outside of institutional life. Their "transition homes" prepare orphan boys and girls to live as salt and light in a corrupt and dark world. May their tribe increase! We helped Marina start that ministry in the nineties. St Petersburg has 127 orphanages.

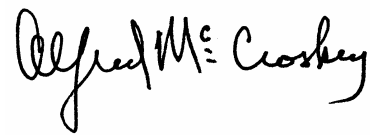
"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord . . . the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (*I Corinthians 12:4-7*) "You are the body of Christ . . ." (*I Corinthians 12:27*)

Our team also visited a children's hospital for orphans in St. Petersburg. We took them gifts and shared God's love. There were small babies, some only a month old, whose mothers didn't want them, dropped them off at the hospital and never returned. It broke our hearts to see such babies there. Some teenagers have lived most of their lives at the hospital.

In those 4 cities as well as the other 3 we visited, we spoke with many Russians from professional musicians to poor, peasant grandmothers and chambermaids, distributing goodwill, friendly smiles, gospel tracts, Christian booklets and New Testaments. At various places, because partners had blessed us with monetary gifts, we were able to bless others with the same and hopefully with more than a little encouragement.

And yes, there were times of entertainment, good food, excellent concerts and sightseeing. Also, a great deal of supplication and intercession with thanksgiving was sent to the throne of grace on behalf of friends, family and all the churches and believers in Russia. It is such a needy place. Pray with us for God's mercy on their behalf.

Thanks be to God for His divine enablement and the part played by partners, team members, hosts and each one to whom we ministered. We are grateful and greatly encouraged in this service with the King and for the further advancement of His kingdom,



Alfred McCroskey

P.S. Each of the 8 team members were especially encouraged by our survival through a long night of horrific storm as we traveled by boat across Lake Lagoda. Thank you for your prayers. And remember that everything is from, goes through and returns to our Lord Jesus Christ. To Him be glory forever. Amen (*Romans 11:3*)

P.P.S. A mission to central Russia is planned for November 26 through December 10. Care to join us? Please write or call as soon as possible.



Our team with Pastor Mikhail Kindruk and his family.

(back row, left to right):

Helga Hayes, Roberta Morrow, Alfred & Jean McCroskey, Joyce & Karl Henn, Megan West, Mary Yost and Luba Kindruk

(front row, left to right):

Edward Kindruk, Genna Kindruk, Maria Kindruk and Pastor Mikhail