

Sept. 8th 2008 Trip to Russia

We arrived in Moscow accompanied by my daughter Amy, her husband Wes, and their two children Ryan and Kayley. Our stay in Russia was for a month. We were met in Moscow by Yuri and Kostya. I spoke with Kostya about the church in Moscow and his work there. He said, "I have new leads and they look very promising. A number of folks have agreed to start Bible study with me." There are 10 to 12 meetings and sometimes more as they get visitors from time to time. Kostya also said, "his son is beginning to give lessons which would free him up to go to Tambov from time to time."

After two days in Moscow we caught the train for Tambov. Upon our arrival we were met by a number of the church members that came out to greet us and help us with our luggage to the building. We started services Sunday then services every Monday, Wednesday, Friday. The other days were used for personal visits in the homes.

A mother and daughter started coming on our spring trip and have returned. They demonstrate a good deal of interest and the possibility is good they will be added to the church. Wes talked to Vladimir's daughter Sveta, who is 13, and she is ready to be baptized but her dad wants her to wait till she is 14.

I spoke with some of the women in the church and they said, "the church is at peace." From all I can tell that is the case and I realize the church can start growing with a climate of peace.

Wes, Amy and the kids were a real asset to the work and the Russians enjoyed them very much. Materialism is having a major impact on the Bible's success. People are giving much of their attention to working, making money and buying things. Vladimir said, "all churches are concerned about the drop-off in church attendance but this may just be a trend that will pass after a few years." We continually encourage Christians both home and abroad that Christ must be your number one priority!

Teresa, Alex (the man I baptized in the spring) and I were invited to Penza (7 hour bus ride from Tambov, three hours by car) to visit. It has been 9 years since we were last there. Jerry Cutter is the primary worker in Penza and there is a nice congregation of about 25 meetings there. I gave two talks while there and enjoyed being with those brethren. I am presently working with Vitali (the preacher in Penza) to have a joint meeting with the Russian churches. In the spring we would like to invite members from Moscow, Tula, Tambov and Michurinsk to go to Penza for a weekend meeting. Tambov hosted the last meeting and it has been quite a while since the last such meeting.

Alex (the new member at Tambov) is studying the Bible every day and I'm hoping he'll develop into a good teacher in the church there and be a help to Alosha. He taught in the university before going into business for himself. On Monday before leaving Tambov I was given the opportunity to do something I had never done before. Alex and Victoria decided to be married and wanted me to conduct the ceremony in the church building. I was honored to perform the ceremony and join them as husband and wife in God's sight.

It was a very productive trip with much good being accomplished.