

Decmeber 2nd-9th, 2009

ROSTOV

Report of trip Rostov, Russia during their South Russia Conference

Participants: Derik & Leigh Anne Vett, Church Leaders from St. Petersburg Family.

Churches: Krasnodar, Volgograd, Kislovodsk, Rostov, & Dontetsk (Ukraine).

WEEK IN ROSTOV-ON-DON

The South Russia Conference was a great success, the first time they have ever had visitors from the USA.

We arrived on Thursday, Decmeber 3rd and were greeted warmly by Vadim and Ira Gonyaev, the leaders of the Rostov Church. They generously gave up their room for us to stay in. It was great being able to stay with them and their family. The first night we caught up with them and went over the schedule for the rest of our time, as well as discuss what needs we could meet the most.



Vadim & Derik

Had many meals together in the Gonyaevs home. The Russians are great examples of hospitality.

FRIDAY 12/4: We met Alecksei & Ira Donskoy at the train station and then together with the Gonyaevs we took a tour of the city. It brought back more memories of the former Soviet Union days; not yet completely changed by commercialism like Moscow & St. Petersburg. It was a long walk as there is no metro in Rostov.

In the evening we met with all the leadership and house church leaders of the Rostov church. I shared a lesson on "High Expectations" with many of the points coming from a book entitled "Do Hard Things." We then had a great time of open discussion. Most of the questions dealt with usual ministry issues: growth of the church, strengthening the marriages, helping with the raising of children, converting their teens, and having a vibrant campus ministry.

SATURDAY 12/5: At 11am was the beginning of the South Russia Conference. The theme of the conference was "Добрая Весть" which means "Good News." Throughout the day the leaders from each church was able to share good news of what God is doing in their cities. They also had great worship and performances throughout the conference as well. Very talented disciples in Eurasia. We had a break for lunch. We used all the breaks to get with the different leaders of the church.

At 4pm we came back and Leigh Anne & I shared our testimonies (many of these disciples didn't really know us personally) and I led the communion. Afterwards was a mini concert. We then had a dinner break.

In the evening we had two classes: one for marrieds and one for all others. Samonins, from St. Petersburg, led the marrieds group. They did a great job and have been visiting the churches to lead the Dynamic Marriages, now translated in Russian. It is having a great impact.



South Russia Conference

"Good News" was the theme of the conference, and we heard good news from all the visiting churches.

SUNDAY 12/6: We spent time with the Donskoys and Gonyaevs in the morning. We discussed the training of the Gonyaevs by having them move to St. Petersburg for 6 months starting in January 2010. They have been in Rostov for 12 years. The top two couples will work as a team to lead the church in their absence.

That afternoon was their 12th Anniversary service. It was a very encouraging time to have all the disciples from South Russia together as well as the many visitors who came to the service. Alecksei Donskoy led the sermon and did a great job; he has continued to grow.

Later that evening we had a great meal together and just great fellowship with all the leaders. It is great to see them all together. We

need to make sure we can facilitate more opportunities for them to meet together throughout the year.



Russian Barbecue Feast

Great time with the church leaders, even had some Russian karaoke.

MONDAY 12/7: The conference ended on Sunday afternoon, but the leaders all stayed two extra days to build unity and discuss the direction of the churches.



Church Leaders Meeting

We had a great time of prayer, worship, getting in the word, confession, discussion, and fellowship during the week.

I did a lesson on the Spirit and Elisha which focused on how to be truly productive. Great discussion afterwards. It was clear that most of the churches have slowed down in growth, and the greatest needs are trying to get vibrant campus ministries again, and converting their teens (many of them are not interested in becoming disciples as the pull of the world is hav-

ing a strong influence). We then had a lunch break.

Later in the afternoon we had men and women separate time for prayer, confession, and time to share personal needs. There was definitely some tension concerning budgets and trying to meet the needs of the churches in the Caucasus. It was good to be there and get a clearer picture as well as explain to them more clearly how Eurasian Missions needs to work with them. It is a work in progress.

After a dinner break, Alecksei closed out the evening with another lesson. Very productive day.

TUESDAY 12/8: We met in the morning for a great time of singing and prayer together.

There is a great spirit among the leaders and they see their need for each other. They would continue to meet the rest of the day to get on top of the calendars and other conferences, as well as practicals in budgeting, and discipling.

We left that afternoon, the Gonyaevs and Donskoys took us to the airport. We had a night layover in Frankfurt, and then came back to Dallas.

Summary: Overall it was great to visit churches that had not been visited by Americans before. It would have been harder to have impact without the ability to speak Russian. There are less translators in these smaller churches. The greatest needs are helping them with parenting; and we are in the process of getting "Growing Kids God's Way" translated into Russian. We are hoping it will have the same impact that Dynamic Marriages has had recently. The big concern for the future of the church is converting the next generation and having a powerful Youth Ministry. We need to get some of our best Youth Ministry leaders over there to help facilitate, and possibly some kind of Youth Mission Team from the U.S. to go and inspire their peers in Russia.

There is also a need for some kind of emergency fund or benevolence account to meet needs that are outside the support of Eurasian Missions. Two big needs came up during the conference and after.

The first one, is the church in Khaki, Azerbaijan meets outside (even in the winter) because they have no place to meet. The brother who leads the church has been trying to build a

house with a large room for the church to meet in when they come together. Only last year were they able to get a roof thanks to a donation from disciples in the Ukraine. To get the place suitable for meeting would only take about \$3,000 dollars.



Right after the conference, Ivan and Sveta (Alecksei Donskoy's sister), were driving back to Volgograd, and their car lost control off a bridge. The car was totaled, and they were both hospitalized. God spared their lives, and their children which fortunately had left earlier with other disciples. The problem is that they have no insurance, it is way too expensive. They have a great need for a car to meet the needs in the church.



We presented these two needs to the church in Dallas and they were quick to respond by giving almost \$6000 in one love offering. I believe this shows the investment each church can achieve in their relationship with the churches they support. We are grateful for Eurasian Missions and all the the US disciples who contribute to the needs.