



BIBLES FOR RUSSIA

May 2013

Dear Partner,

We have recently returned from Russia where we experienced another successful mission. Thank you to all who gave to send us and prayed for us while we were away.

Mark and I arrived in Chita, Russia then traveled by car 5 hours south to Borzya where we were met by Sasha and Lena whom I've known since 1993. Sasha started a church in that region in 2000 and they now have 120 members. We shared at the church service and had a good time of fellowship. As our translator read my testimony, tears ran down her face. At each church I shared about how faithful God had been for 26 years. Many people said it encouraged them and helped them resolve to be faithful.

We next traveled to Zabaikalsk and visited our long-time friends Andrey (who had ministered to the believers in Mongolia) and his wife Galena. It was wonderful to spend time with them again and to be given the privilege of speaking in their church.

On our return trip to Chita, we stopped at a church we had helped start in Mogota. To my surprise friends from other villages came to see us there. I shared my testimony with the congregation. Then we left and continued our journey on to Chita. That Sunday morning Mark and I both shared in the church service in Chita.

We visited two rehab centers: one for alcohol and drug addicts and the other for released prisoners as they prepare to go back to normal life—both sponsored by the church with which we worked. The men who live there have Bible studies, praise and worship time and chores such as feeding the farm animals (pigs, cows, horses and chickens), milking the cows, chopping wood, working in the large vegetable garden and cooking in the kitchen. They come there voluntarily and can leave when they want. Many of them come from the city so this is a much different lifestyle for them. The prison rehab building is old and very small. They have begun a new building but have limited funds. Would you please pray about giving to help build the new rehab?

The men shared their testimonies of where they had been in their lives and what they had done. One man was in prison for 23 years. After coming to the rehab center, he decided to leave. He walked 60 miles to town, decided he had made the wrong decision and walked back to rehab. Sergei, another of the men, got saved. The 2 drivers who took

us to the rehab center were former addicts themselves and had previously lived at the rehab center. We prayed for all of the men and promised to continue praying for them.

Government officials wouldn't allow us to go to the prisons but we met 2 Christian brothers and a pastor (Constantine), all former prisoners, who go to the prison each Wednesday to share the gospel with the inmates. In the last 2 months, 9 men have come to know the Lord. Zhenia, another brother who is also a former prisoner but now a Christian, goes each Wednesday to minister the gospel in a Chita prison.

We went to a school for 500 deaf children where we had the opportunity to visit with some of them. Some of the children can hear a little but others are totally deaf. We took gifts for the children. Along with Lena and her husband, Sasha, we ministered to poor children and their families by taking gifts for the children and groceries for each family. We also shared God's love with them. Lena and Sasha minister to these families every month, giving groceries, clothing and fire wood.

We visited with Lucy, a long-time friend who is in charge of a home for teens from the streets or whose parents are drug or alcohol addicts. We had a good time of fellowship and enjoyed the delicious meal they had prepared for us.

Katya, another long-time friend, works with the Jews, sharing the gospel and giving them clothes and food. Katya invited us to go with her to the synagogue. A newspaper reporter was there to interview Mark and me. He wanted to know why we came to Russia. We later took part in communion and a meal there at the synagogue.

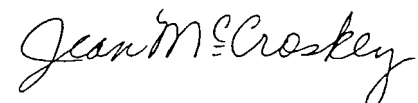
As we traveled by night train to Irkutsk, we distributed gospel tracts to our fellow passengers. We arrived on Saturday night and visited with Nickoli and Galina whom we have known for many years. We attended the largest Baptist church (300 members) with them Sunday morning where Nickoli is the choir director.

We also met with the man who takes Bibles into China and Mark gave money with which to purchase 3,000 Chinese Bibles. Pray for those who will receive those Bibles.

Everywhere we went they invited us to return. I met 3 pastors at the church in Chita who asked me to share in their churches on my next visit. Mark was invited to return and help with 3 different children's camps next summer. We are praying about going back next July. Will you pray about going with us?

Thank you for your prayers and for your support. Lives were changed, people encouraged and we came home rejoicing in the Lord.

In Christ,



Jean McCroskey