



# CROSS CURRENTS INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

VOL. 34 NO. 10

October, 2004

Our dear Prayer Supporter,

Last month we shared ongoing extension of CCIM's "missionaries in paper covers" to Siberia. This month we will share how the Lord continues to develop these opportunities in the Tundra Region.

Several years ago we mentioned a walk that Dorothy and I took through a local park. Seeing a group of young mothers and their children we recognized that they spoke Russian. Soon we were chatting and discovered that many of them knew the Lord. Before leaving we prayed for their families. Twelve months later, we again heard Russian being spoken by painters outside our home. Upon bringing them coffee and cookies we found that they too were believers. We soon discovered these two encounters were truly providential!

**First:** One of the Russian mothers in the park, Tanyana (Tanya), was the wife of the man in charge of painting—Leonid (Leo) Litovchenko. **Second:** Upon giving Leo a copy of *Your Quest for God*, his face burst into a smile—"I have already seen this book in our church in Siberia!" **Third:** These providential meetings were followed by fellowship and home Bible studies.

As a young man of 21, Leo was called by the Lord to a pioneer ministry in Tobolsk. With a burden to reach people for Christ, he lived, prayed and ministered from a small unfurnished room that was made available rent-free. One night, as he cried before the Lord—being utterly broken before the great holiness of God—he testifies that this resulted in a new dependence upon, and living fellowship with, the Lord Jesus. Now, instead of Leo singing and speaking *for* the Lord, it was the Lord working *through* him. Fruit abounded through Leo's renewed ministry of grace and love.

From that humble beginning, the Holy Spirit brought forth the Independent Baptist Church in Tobolsk which today has a congregation of about 500 people. Let us share with you part of Leo's testimony as he ministered for seven years in Tobolsk and beyond.

## **Journey to Sumburg in the Tundra**

"One day I received a phone call from Victor inviting my music team to evangelize at the Olympic Games among the Nenets people. These games were to be in the small city of Sumburg. We agreed, so together with my two friends we travelled north by train for one and a half days to get to the big city of New-Urengoi. At the end of the train line nobody was there to meet us. Soon the train station became deserted so we spent the night on the station and prayed to God asking Him what to do next. Early in the morning we caught a big truck that took us to the ferry. Having just missed the ferry

we took a boat which transported workers to the other side of the river. During this crossing, we sang Gospel hymns and told the workers about Jesus. In turn, they told us how we could find Victor. Finding him, we had to wait two more days for transportation to get to Sumburg. At that time of the year, the only transportation was by helicopter. Again we prayed and made our way to the airport.



*Leo waving at the helicopter.*

Waiting for a helicopter we sang to people about Jesus. Eventually the airport loud speakers announced that a helicopter carrying government people to the Olympic Games would make a brief landing especially for us. We were amazed when these government people helped us to load our musical instruments and boxes of Bibles. After a two hour flight, we eventually arrived in Sumburg where we stayed in a small church house.

"Next day we went to the Olympic Games and we saw the Shaman [*medicine men who engage in a primitive form of spiritualism*] open the ceremony with a display of drums and fire. We went away and prayed that God would open peoples hearts and free them from demonic possession. We refused an invitation to sing in their main musical event but instead we invited all the people of the Olympic Games to our own meeting. About 100 people attended as we sang and talked about Jesus. Two days later, at the closing Olympic ceremony, we gave a Gideon Bible to each sport participant.

"God made a lot of miracles during this trip. One of these was when, after the Games, all the 'people of culture' gathered for a wild celebration. Before the concert their musical equipment broke down. Requesting our help we offered to pray and then we replaced some parts. It worked! Witnessing this the man exclaimed: 'God is! He is alive!' We then left their concert to practice our music.

"Next morning the same man came to our church house and told us that in the night of orgy all the musical equipment

[supplied by the government for the event] had been destroyed because people were drunk and without any control. 'We are not "people of culture."' he bewailed. 'we are pigs.' We then told him about the love of Jesus and he knelt and accepted Christ. At the same time, another woman who sang in the concert, was praying with Victor.

"During our stay in this city we met some people who claimed to be believers but they still had many idols in their homes [polytheism]. We talked about it and one woman said she would bring her idols for us to destroy. She went to her home but did not return so we decided to go to her house in spite of the fact that she told us her husband would be very angry. When this lady opened the door, we saw a very strange look on her face. 'I will keep my idols,' she said, 'and you can take your Bible!' We then asked her permission to read to her from her Bible. As we read, we observed her eyes became brighter and it appeared she came to her senses. Then to her surprise, the husband invited us into the one room where everybody lived and slept. There we talked with him and they both knelt and prayed to the Lord. We then destroyed their idols.

"Next day we went to another house and met a woman who could not walk very well. When she was young she devoted herself to shaman and had a lot of idols. [Shamanism is 'a religion of certain people of N.E. Asia, based on the doctrine that the workings of good and evil spirits can be influenced by shamas.'] We prayed with her and she gave us all her idols which we took outside and burned.

"That evening all the government people wanted to meet with us. We were very glad to have this opportunity to tell them about Jesus as we talked and sang for an hour. Then, one of the bosses stood up, took money out of his pocket and gave it to this small church. Some people cried! [Today, Dorothy and I are told that there is a church of 100 people in this city. Praise God!]

"The snow and bad weather was a problem for us to return home so we got down on our knees and asked God to help us. At that very moment the door opened and a man ran into the room to tell us that the helicopter was waiting for us. It was a miracle! Once again we flew with the government people. Because of the heavy snow, the helicopter set us down in a big empty field but God had His own plan. Within a few minutes we stopped a car and the driver gave us a lift. During our drive, we told him about Jesus and testified about what He had done in Sumburg. He was very interested and drove us out of his way to the train station refusing to take any money. This was God's provision and we praised Him for all that He had done on our long train journey home."

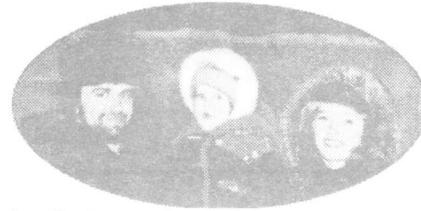
"Why did you leave Russia?" Leo and Tanya are sometimes asked. Well, could our meeting Tanya in the park and later, Leo as he painted the home, be one of the reasons? Certainly, in our Lord's mystical mosaic of Divine blessings, through them, the Lord has graciously extended the outreach of CCIM to the Tundra!

FACT: Leo is in constant contact with Pastor Timothy Oleinik, the church in Tobolsk and other spiritual leaders. Via Leo's computer—for \$15 a month—they receive unlimited verbal encouragement.

FACT: Vital truth concerning the work of the Holy Spirit that we shared with local Russians at Bible studies, in turn,

were relayed to Pastor Timothy. We are told that at least one of these spiritual kernels has become a by-word of blessing among Russian Christians.

FACT: **Pastor Taras Tkachenko**—an original member of Leo's team—is now evangelizing and church planting from New-Urengoi. With his wife, Alena, they requested *Your Quest for God* to undergird their strategic ministry.



FACT: **New-Urengoi** is a "closed city." This means that no foreigners are permitted there without security clearance. It has a population of 100,000 with an average age of 25-35. Taras writes: "The main ministry is to tell people about Jesus. We visit schools, colleges and medical buildings and give away Bibles in small villages and far-away regions. Now we have new small churches in such cities as **Sumburg**, Tazavshi, Gas-Sale. These are difficult to reach in summer because there are no roads. The only way is boat and helicopter.

FACT: Through the mediation of Pastor Hugh Walker—who has again returned to teach students at the Western Siberia Bible College in Omsk—10,000 copies of CCIM's *Your Quest for God* will be shipped to Taras and Alena as they minister as far north as the Kara Sea.

FACT: **Praise the Lord! CCIM has been able to encourage this strategic ministry to reach 10,000 people in the Tundra. Through these stalwart missionaries we are giving *Your Quest for God* to spiritually misguided people in the far north of Siberia.**



**Northern Tundra: Total family living accommodation.**

A recent request from Siberia has also been received for further copies of *Food for Faith* to support the discipleship ministries of these small and growing churches. Also, for a further printing of *Your Quest for God*.

However, our ability to meet these wonderful opportunities depends upon the continued open door to transmit money for printing in Russia; and by the Lord *increasing* our giving constituency or *leading* our existing prayer partners to give additional support to meet these ever-expanding support ministry requests. Please pray about this.

This month, at last, Dorothy and I are sending you a complimentary copy of the **updated** "Quest" and "Food." As you read them please remember the precious nationals who, through your help, are receiving these books in 56 languages.

Together in His Name,

*Richard + Dorothy Bennett.*