

Mission Newsletter



FAITH MISSION

January - February 2009

Number 78

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH, is everlasting strength." (Isa. 26:3 - 4)

The words of these verses of Scripture were written to help and strengthen the faith and hope of God's people throughout the ages. They are just as applicable today as they were when they were first written. Every true child of God is safe and secure. His mind is quiet and serene in the assurance of God's favor if he will trust and believe the Lord.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace." What a gracious promise! The world cannot understand this promise because the world has never known the peace that God gives to His children. You see, God's gift is peace - inner peace, outward peace, a peace with God, a peace of conscience, and a peace at all times and in all things. Actually, it is a perfect peace for those whose minds are stayed on God, because they trust in Him.

Speaking of a true Christian, David said, *"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings"* (Psa. 112:7). A Christian's heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. He doesn't believe the doomsayers and the pessimists; he believes the Word of God.

We can find the peace that passes understanding by trusting in the Lord forever. In the Lord Jehovah - in Him who was and is and is to come - we find the Rock of Ages. God is a firm and sure foundation for our faith and hope to build upon. And if we build upon that Rock, our house will withstand all the storms of life. We can say with David, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower" (Psa 18:2).

" ... for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength. "

If you would like to hear a detailed report about the ongoing overseas work of Faith Mission, please contact us for An oral or visual slide presentation of our recent trip to Ukraine.

The War in Georgia And its Aftermath



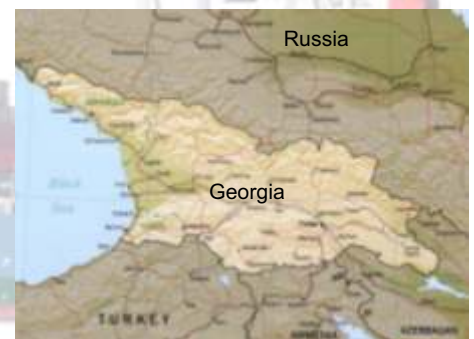
Lewan Achalmosulishwili is a doctor and missionary in the Republic of Georgia.

The following article is taken from a report he presented at the FriedensBote Mission Conference in Gummersbach, Germany on November 9th, 2008. It has been translated and used

A Yearning for Peace

Peace! No other word awakens so much yearning and longing among the people of my homeland. Certainly, the war was a tragedy in the most cruel sense of the word.

The aircraft bombs set off an unspeakable fire inferno. Several eye-witnesses told me of how the force of the bomb blasts had blown people and body parts out of the burning upper floors of high-rise buildings.



And there was nobody to put out the fires in the multi-storied buildings.

Many parents still wait in vain for their sons. For several days at a time during the fighting there were no times of cease-fire and therefore the people could not go out and claim the fallen or wounded. Many of the bodies were so



One of the worst bomb-damaged streets in the city of Gori

badly affected by the heat of the sun and from stray dogs, that they were unrecognizable.

DNA analysis is unavailable in Georgia and to keep disease from breaking out, the bodies were simply burned.



The small congregation in Kachreti (East Georgia) in the region of Gurdschani was able to take approximately 450 refugees under our care.

The parents of the fallen received coffins which were empty except for a little bit of ashes mixed with soil.

Almost a Half-million War Refugees

The other tragedy in Georgia is the plight of the war refugees. Because of the civil war in the 1990's, 300,000 refugees of Georgian and other ethnic descent fled from the Abkhazia to the Georgian heartland (Abkhazia, an autonomous Republic taken over by Georgia, had declared

its independence in 1993). A new wave of refugees out of South Ossetia and the surrounding buffer zone was estimated at 130,000 people.



Here in our region of East Georgia, refugees were being brought to all the villages and small towns. They were put up in private homes, school/kindergarten buildings and tents. Many people (also small children) simply sleep in their clothes on the floor.

Our Help

The extent of the change in the people's lives was unforeseen. In a very short time thousands of people were driven to extreme poverty.

During one trip to Tbilisi with 30 children's mattresses, some toothpaste and tooth brushes we were sent to a kindergarten building that housed 200 refugees. Ten people lived in each room and only half of them slept on mattresses. When they found out that we had brought relief supplies, they emptied our bus in a couple of minutes.

One young man asked if I would buy him a pair of slippers. When the bombing began, he had been working in his garden and had ran for cover in his bare feet. About 40 of the 200 people in this building were barefoot. Many women asked for articles of hygiene to keep clean. They had not been able to take money and necessary items with them.

We were informed that the government relief was not nearly enough to meet the needs of the people. Relief does come from other countries, but as a rule it is for basic necessities. The people are in need of the most basic necessities of life. We promised them that, if possible, we would come and visit them again soon.

Who Bears the Blame?

It used to be, that part of our mission work was like this: we would talk to the people about Jesus Christ, and the people would listen to us. Now our roles are reversed: where ever we go, the people speak to us. They cry, they talk, they lament and they plea. We can only listen, listen, and listen some more.

Many different kinds of people live in the Caucasus region. There are many mixed marriages. Because of the

war (and the after effects), many married couples of different nationalities hugged each other for the last time and separated, with no expectation or knowing if they would ever find each other again. Worst of all, is the terrible suffering experienced by the children.

Both Russian as well as Georgian experts are speculating over the possibility of a new war. Arms build-up at the border is increasing. Hatred between ethnic groups is deliberately being stirred and with that, each side blames the other. We, as Christians, are making an effort to bring awareness to the root cause of the happenings around us. It is not only Putin or Saakaschwili that are at fault, but the ungodly actions and unbelief of the people have contributed to this tragedy.

Many congregations are fasting and praying that God might bring a quick end to this ongoing horror. Please, do pray for this too; not only for this, but for us also.

Lewan Achalmosulishwili is the contact person for FriedensBote in Georgia. As a Christian, he is not bound by any ethnic group. He is a Georgian and his wife, Natasha is Russian. In the congregation that he looks after, there are several nationalities represented: Georgian, Ossetian Russian, and others who freely get along because Jesus Christ is for them the highest authority.

Ukraine Struggles to Prosper

Reprinted with permission - from Jan.15, 2009 issue of The Western Producer (By Karen Briere - Regina bureau)

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SUMY, Ukraine- Chickens scatter as the car comes around a curve and through a small Ukrainian village.

Ducks, geese and turkeys also head for safer ground, while goats and cows, tethered at the roadside, raise their heads and continue chewing.

Some villagers sit on benches outside their fenced yards, tending their animals or passing the time. Many offer for sale vegetables from their small backyard plots, or fish they have caught.

In nearby fields, small cattle herds graze under the watchful eye of their owners. There are no fences, and keeping tabs on the animals is a full-time job even in the misty, chilly days of late October.

Huge livestock barns, abandoned after collective farms were dismantled, sit crumbling.

There are hundreds of small communities like this where Ukrainians live a rural lifestyle that most Canadian farmers left behind decades ago.

Many see their opportunities in the cities, not here. "Compared to Soviet times the rural area got much poorer:" said Anatoliy Shevchenko, a livestock specialist working at the Sumy agricultural extension service.

He and other extension workers see the changes taking place as the country moves from centrally planned production to a market economy.

Livestock production was hit particularly hard. Ukraine's cattle herd dropped from a high of 26.7 million

head in 1986 to 7.7 million in 2003, according to the United States Department of Agriculture's foreign agricultural service.

Sheep and goats went from 9.4 million to 1.9 million and pig numbers dropped from 20 million in 1989 to 7.3 million.

Grain production was also affected, dropping as much as 50 percent in the first years of reform.

Just three years ago, in Sumy oblast located in the country's northeast, roughly 40 percent of the agricultural land wasn't farmed.

"Before, most people in rural areas were employed by agriculture," said Mykhailo Martynenko, the director and crop specialist in Sumy. "Now, because of these changes, many rural people are out of jobs."

About a third of Ukraine's 46 million people live in rural areas, and about half of them are of working age, said Roman Schmidt, a deputy minister of agrarian policy.

Today, large farm enterprises employ about 800,000 of those workers; he said, leaving millions of people to survive on subsistence agriculture.

Many lease their small landholdings to larger farmers and companies, but often they are paid in grain or flour, not cash.

The United Nations Development Program earlier this year said 28 percent of Ukrainians live below the poverty line of 430 hryvnia per month, or about \$60 Cdn. The same report estimated that nearly 40 percent of rural residents are poor.

Schmidt agreed there are few rural job opportunities and the hope really lies in the land.

"We try to support them, to diversify;" he said of the small landholders.

"It's not profitable for such a small enterprise to produce grain or sugar, but vegetables, raspberries, black currants, strawberries because they are labour intensive (could support some farmers)."

Schmidt is a strong proponent of agricultural extension and Canada's role in helping Ukraine develop such a service.

The goal is to help rural people diversify, establish co-operatives and credit unions, and attend seminars to learn about various farming methods, such as organic or no-till farming. *(Editor's Note: Thanks to The Western producer, this article answers many questions that have been asked when we report for Faith Mission. - JME)*



*Ternopol Ukraine region (oblast) agriculture:
A load of sugar beets.*



Praise the Lord! The new washer and dryer are finally in place. This is not a matching set. S a w a t z k y ' s Appliances Ltd. gave us a good deal on this Super Sized Top Load Maytag

Washer and a large capacity Maytag Dryer. We chose the top load because of the larger capacity; there is no front load washer as big as this one. Like a front load, this one also uses less water, soap and energy. Thank you to everyone who made this purchase possible.

A special "Thank you" goes out to all those people who responded to our request regarding blankets in the previous newsletter. PTL! We received a number of calls from people who are willing to help and some supplies have already been picked up to be made into blankets.



"Faith Mission" blankets at the Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation Center near Kharkiv Ukraine. Nov.2008

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- Please change my address as indicated below.

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Office Hours



Tuesday 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Clothing sorting & baling:

Thursday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. & 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Clothing may also be dropped off in the small white trailer at the south end of the warehouse building. This trailer is open 24 hours a day, emptied on a regular basis, however, if you have more than a few bags or boxes, please call ahead to arrange delivery.

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE CLOTHING DONATIONS OUTSIDE!

Volunteers Welcome!

If your Youth Group, Bible Study group, or Ladies' Sewing Circle would like to volunteer for an afternoon or evening (Monday-Saturday), please contact the office to make arrangements.

Faith Mission (FriedensBote) Inc. solicits your gifts for the purpose identified in this appeal. However, if the project for which the gifts are received has been fully funded or cannot be completed for reasons beyond the control of the charity, the board reserves the right to use such funds for other similar projects.

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Faith Mission (FriedensBote) Inc. is a nonprofit, registered charitable organization based in Winkler, Manitoba. Faith Mission was incorporated on May the 16th, 1994 in the Province of Manitoba

Purpose of Faith Mission

- to provide humanitarian and spiritual aid to the people of former Communist communities of the world.
- to call others to pray for the suffering people in the world.
- to provide information about the people of the former Communist communities to fellow Christians in North America.

The **Faith Mission Newsletter** is printed bimonthly and mailed at no cost to those people who have supported us in the past or to those who request information about Faith Mission.

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