

BARNAUL NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS

January 2008



IN BARNAUL

We have arrived at the time of year which Russians dread most. Temperatures are the lowest in January. We have a thermometer that gives the outside temperature and the lowest so far is minus 27°F. In one 12-hour period the temperature went from plus 12°F to minus 23°F. The temperature started to drop one day about noon and kept dropping until midnight. It stayed that way for a couple of days and then warmed up to minus 7°F. It is quite tolerable until the temperature drops below minus 30°F. Between minus 30°F and minus 40°F your skin needs to be protected as it can freeze rapidly, especially if the wind is blowing. At minus 40°F they shut down the elevators in older buildings as the tinsel strength of the cable is greatly diminished. There are signs on all elevators even under normal conditions that say “enter at the risk of your life.” But life goes on and unless you want to climb 9 stories you soon understand that all is part of the culture.

Photo of Barnaul holiday:



BBI
We began a new quarter January 8th. Students always enjoy time off and seem to spend a lot of time sleeping. We had a party on the last day of finals, December 27th. Each teacher and family brought a dish and we had a potluck. Several dishes had fish as it is a favorite of most Russians. Pam made some peanut brittle as we managed to bring some Karo Syrup with us from the States. Russians like it, but do not have Karo Syrup. Raw peanuts are available everywhere so Pam makes it whenever possible.

This quarter our students are studying Minor Prophets, Jeremiah, Biblical Interpretation, Speaking for the Master, Psalms, The Holy Spirit, Ezekiel, Greek, and Sign Language. I am not teaching this quarter but working on administrative things such as a unification and clarification of the faculty's syllabi, creating a student handbook, clarifying some legal "stuff" and other things that have been on hold for some time.

OSTROVSKOGOVO CONGREGATION

Our students continue to benefit from our sister congregation across town. We want our students to have as much experience as possible so some participate in its worship and growth. They will face many challenges when they graduate and get in the field. Our central thrust is evangelism. We use every opportunity that is available or that we can create to remind us of why we are left here on earth. This congregation gives our students a chance for some practical experience in church growth and a process of maturing.

DEAF EVANGELISTIC THRUST

We have begun making plans for an evangelistic campaign around the first of April. We are excited about making a special push to reach the deaf for the Lord here in Barnaul. We're examining the various locations and possibilities, and taking an inventory of our large print Bibles Russian to be used in this effort. More on this later....

SIBERIAN RETREAT

Some time near the end of March or first of April the church in Barnaul will have its annual retreat, and the local brothers are busy planning. Russians will come from all over Russia for this event. For new Christians attending for the first time it will be a first for them to be together with Christians from the European side of Russia as well as from the Far East. I always enjoy this time as graduates return to Barnaul and we get to catch up on what God is doing through them.

FROM OUR STUDENTS:

I have had requests to hear from our students and I asked them to write a short autobiography. Below is information from Krill Tilindis, a second year student.

My name is Krill (Cyril) Sergeevich Tilindis. I was born on the 16th of April, 1987 in Magadan. Then our family moved to the coastal city Vladivostok, because my father was a sailor. When I was 4 my parents divorced and I lived in a family without a father. It was hard and even difficult but perhaps it helped cause my interest in God.

In 1993 I was given a book about Jesus for children. I liked the book very much. In 1995 my Mom and I moved to the Urals to the city of Miass (not far from Chelyabinsk). Since that time we started searching for God very actively. We attended various denominations. Finally we ended up with the Baptists. I attended children classes there and read everything I could get my hands on.



My Mom got sick with cancer in 1997. She had a surgery in Chelyabinsk where she met Christians from the church of Christ. Owen Albright came with several missionaries in 1998. He gave several lectures based on the Bible in our town. My Mom and I attended those lectures and after one of them my Mom became part of the Lord's body. After that we kept contact with the church of Christ in Chelyabinsk. A short time later I became a member also. Several brothers from Chelyabinsk came to Miass on Sundays. This is how the church of Christ started there. I became a Christian on the 14th of March, 1999. Since there were no other men in the congregation I had to carry out the ministry in the church. The Lord worked with me and helped me and began to mature me.

In 2000 the Lord blessed me with a trip to the Ukraine, where I learned from the local brothers the basics of ministry in the church, leading and glorifying God. In addition I participated in the establishment of a new congregation in a remote region of Kiev. At that time I realized that my calling in life is to be a minister and a preacher in Christ's Church.

When I came back from Kiev to Miass two other guys of my age became members of the church and the three of us tried to serve in the church: organized the Lord's Supper, prayers and classes for youth. In 2001 brothers from Chelyabinsk stopped coming to us and the three of us assumed the responsibilities for service in the church such as organization of worship services on Sundays, evangelization, and youth classes. My Mom was dealing with women classes and organizational questions (lease of rooms, finances, etc.).

Eighteen months later those two guys left the church and I had to conduct Sunday worship services by myself. That was from 2002 to 2006. Of course God did not abandon me; He instilled in me the love to serving and preaching. I went to study to Chelyabinsk in 2002. I studied Monday through Saturday. Saturday night I would come home, conduct the worship service Sunday and go back to Chelyabinsk. The Lord always gave me strength and inspired me to serve.

I didn't have any financial support in Miass but I realized that the congregation had to be taught. Jesus was my support and everything to me. I used to think and still do that serving in the church whether as a preacher or as a shepherd is not a job in the strict sense of the word. It's rather a calling that on the part of the minister, which demands more responsibility and work than at a regular job of the same enterprise. And if you get financial support it's not a salary, but rather a blessing from the Lord.

I graduated from college and entered Barnaul School of Preaching in 2006. I got married in February of 2007 and everything in my life changed. There is a great responsibility for the family, for the future baby who will be born in March of next year (if God allows and we are still alive). I don't know what the future holds for me and my family, but I totally rely on God. Serving God in the word and teaching people is my life and my calling and I believe that God will take care of everything and His plans will be realized through me.

Krill Tilindis

Pam, Samantha and I pray God's richest blessings on you as you have started a new year. May you complete all the things that are important to God and the building up of his Kingdom on earth!

With Lots of Love,

Jerry, Pam and Samantha