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Teaching and Training the next generation of pastor-teacher-evangelists
At the Eurasian Mission College - Kazan in Tatarstan, Russia.

Dear Christian friends and family,
News during the Year 2011-2012

October 2011

Since landing quite happily back in the UK following an excellent September trip to teach at the Kazan Mission College my feet haven't touched the ground! It was wonderful teaching the Gospels and Acts, getting the students started on what should be life time of deep and practical Bible study and encouraging the College in its Gospel task.



Now I have the task of communicating the opportunities and needs of the College to supporting churches and friends. The following 2 student testimonies will help.



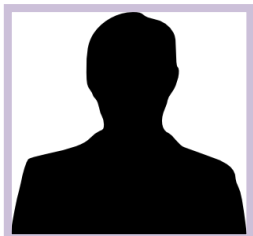
My name is P... I'm 23. I was born in a Moslem family in Tajikistan. I was baptized on November 16th in 1998. There are three children in my family - my sister, my brother and me.

As a child I admired and was very proud of my father. I was his favorite child. When he came back from work I always came out to meet him and hug him. What I didn't know was that my father abused my mother. I spent most of my time outside playing with other kids. When I found out about this I didn't know what to think because he had always been nice to me. But I felt very sad for my mum and our whole family because we didn't really have the father's love and support. We weren't emotionally close with him, only my mum and sister were really there for me. So in God I found a loving and accepting Father that I had always wanted to have.

My mother was the first to find out about my faith, then it was my sister, then my dad and brother. At first they were all against it but soon my mother was able to accept it, as well as my sister and even my brother. My father was enraged and tried to make me leave my faith threatening to harm me and my mum. The Lord was with us and protected us then. My father turned very cold towards me. He didn't allow me to go to church so I couldn't help in the church anymore. I had to come straight home after college and then after work.

The Lord is working in my life. It was a miracle they let me come to a Christian college, but many people were praying about this. It is a great opportunity for me to study the Word, grow in understanding and knowing the Lord and learn how to serve him better after I leave the College.

Please pray for the situation in my home. My father hit my mother again in a very bad way. My brother and his wife and child have left our family home. Please pray for them and for my father so that my whole family will accept the Lord Jesus.



My name is S ... I'm 20. I come from Uzbekistan but in 2010.09.16 I moved to Kazan. I first heard about God at the age of 10 from my mother but I kept living the same old life, smoking, swearing, condemning others, hurting people and lying. At the age of 16 I repented, understanding how serious the situation was. About that time I decided to dedicate my life to God. By then I had graduated from an arts school in piano, learned to play the guitar and started to praise God with music. Over time I was asked to lead worship. I taught two more people to play these instruments and they helped me in ministry. After a year I moved to Kazan and they continue their ministry at home.

But living in a new city wasn't easy. I didn't know anyone and couldn't choose a church and stopped going to church. After a while I met a wonderful Christian girl and got my life together. I'm established in the fact that God loves me and will never leave me. He knows my heart and knows how to help. My faith in him is strengthened. I want to marry that girl and we are praying about this (will you pray, too?)

I came to this college so that I could receive training and go back to Uzbekistan to serve there. I really want to be a missionary in Uzbekistan because I know the language and the culture already, and I love the people. They are very friendly and hard working and they need salvation, too. I would like to help those churches that are still very young and weak, preach the gospel in new areas, start new Bible study groups. It is not an easy situation in Uzbekistan. I've been arrested, the police broke in during our conferences, I've seen other things, but I've also seen God at work there, and the Great commission is being fulfilled. I want to be a part of it.



At the pre-term student camp held in the woods above the Volga River we thought about Guarding the Gospel, Living .. Preaching and Suffering for the Gospel. These are demanding Gospel imperatives. In the next long paragraph I have tried to explain just how difficult this is.

The religious map of Tatarstan can be stated as follows: 1.5 million people live in the capital Kazan; 3.5 million live in other regions of the country which are mainly rural but with some large towns. Of the total population, of 5 million, 50% is Muslim and 50% Russian Orthodox. In Kazan itself the majority of the population is nominally Orthodox and Russian and in the regions 90% Muslim and mainly Tatar. There are 1,800 mosques (the figure was 175 in 1992), 200 orthodox churches and 50 buildings used for Evangelical Church Fellowships. Orthodoxy is re-doubling its efforts to build more churches and gain a larger part of the national life and consciousness. There are perhaps 4,000 Evangelical Christian believers known as the 'Protestants' and grouped into three denominations - the Baptists, the Charismatics and those belonging to the Association of Evangelical Churches who number no more than 750. The Eurasian Mission College in Kazan is the training college of the Association. Gospel progress is difficult and slow. In 2011 thirty people have turned to faith in Christ across the 14 Associations churches. This is considered wonderful; each person a miracle of grace. A Tatar who becomes a Christian is thereafter known as a 'contaminated Tatar' and becomes at best an outsider and at worst a total reject from family and nation. If a person moves from Orthodoxy (in which all the adherents - active or nominal - consider themselves the true Christians) they are branded a heretic. While the national identity is found through race and religion many people at a personal level are as disenchanting with Islam and Orthodoxy as they were trapped and critical of communism. The modern Russian and Tatar thinks only of self advancement. It seems that most people are being driven by the desire to acquire money and appear wealthy. Few people have time or inclination to think about Christian matters.

So please pray: 1] For this year's students to become deep and practical students of the Bible
2] For the EMC staff to give themselves sacrificially to the task of teaching and training the next generation
3] For support to widen and deepen at a time of unprecedented opportunity for Gospel expansion
and 4] For the 26 church workers in Kazan studying the Moore Bible Course - made available for the first time in Russian this month
5] That income for my trips trickles in to allow me to continue to visit the Kazan Mission College to teach and help the progress of the Gospel in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Thank you for your concern, love, prayers and support ... Graham