



Australasian Leader's Mission to Russia 2005

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What one word can you use to describe Russia? Big! It is the world's largest country, spanning eleven time zones, sprawling from the Gulf of Finland on the Baltic and reaching eastward all the way to the nose of Alaska on the Pacific. It has the most extensive range of mineral and natural resources of any country on earth, including twenty-five per cent of the world's forests. Surely its topographical gem must be the stunningly beautiful but freezing Lake Baikal in Siberia, a mile deep canyon over 650 kilometers long and 80 wide, with 20% of the world's fresh water—all the waters of the five Great Lakes of North America could easily fit into Baikal.

But Winston Churchill described Russia this way:

"Russia is a puzzle, wrapped in a mystery, and stuffed in an enigma."

Part of this is because the vastness of Russia defies any clear and clever description; also because passion, extremism, and contradiction, seems to barely create a ripple in its body politic. Also because the "Russian way" is invariably not the "western way," which in some cases can be good, but in others, not.

The spectacular fall of communism and the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 gave Russia, as well as the other fourteen republics of the USSR, their independence. Russia's post-USSR ride has neither been a smashing success nor a colossal failure, and the despite the challenges of rampant corruption, mafia infiltration, crumbling communist infrastructure, lower birth rates and life-expectancy, Russia has made some great progress in many spheres—especially in the spiritual dimension.

While we often viewed Russia and the Soviet Union as interchangeable, the fact is that it was Russia under the leadership of former President Boris Yeltsin who led the charge out of communism and the Soviet orbit into parliamentary

democracy and a market economy. As a born leader, Russia's role in the spiritual will be all the more spectacular.

People have understandably associated atheism with Russia, since the former Soviet Union, of which it was the lead nation, was a superpower that espoused and exported atheism. What westerners don't readily understand is that atheism was only a parenthesis to an otherwise millennium reign of Christianity, albeit Russian Orthodox. Christianity came to Russia in A.D. 988 and has been there ever since. Russian identity has been largely intertwined with the Orthodox church, so it has been hard to separate one from the other (however, the communists did just that and the new democratic Russia, while respectful of the orthodox church, has demurred in making it the official church of Russia).

While unable to find any direct quotes or attributable sources, I have often heard the phrase "Mother Russia will save the world." This statement is, no doubt, due to the country's size, influence, and perceived spiritual destiny. And if this notion still persists, however quietly in the new Russia, I, for one, want to shout it from the housetops.

Vision for Russia



Looking at the map of Russia, take note of its massive size and its neighboring regions: the Far East, Central Asia, the Arab world, and Europe. Throughout history there has been much interaction between these areas and Russia. Spiritually speaking, there is the prospect for a whole lot more.

In order to understand the vision, we need to take a look at history:

Tsarism: Based in St. Petersburg since 1714, Tsarism and the Russian Empire expanded rapidly and vastly, unlike any other country in history. This expansion went down to the Black Sea, across Central Asia, touching the rim of Mongolia and China, and reaching the Pacific Ocean all the way to Alaska. In fact, Russia once owned Alaska but sold it to US Secretary of State Seward for a mere \$7.5 million dollars in 1867. Some Americans dubbed the purchase “Seward’s folly,” after US Secretary of State William Seward who made the transaction. Alaska has proven to be a mineral rich state and its largest single denomination is Russia Orthodoxy. Russia’s long reach was felt all the way in San Francisco, California, and even on the New South Wales coast in Australia the author found a nineteenth century cannon aimed at the sea, just in case “the Russians come.”

Marxism-Leninism: After the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917, a Provisional Government under Alexander Kerensky had taken over, only to be overthrown in October of that year. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924) came from exile in Switzerland to set up shop in Petrograd, the new name for St. Petersburg. Within a very short time—ten days—the whole world shook. Bolshevism came roaring from the west just as the Mongols did from the east centuries before. By using the same imperial infrastructure as the Tsar, their doctrine and deeds spread very rapidly throughout the whole of the Russian empire, thus creating the Soviet Union in 1922. Mongolia fell to communism in 1921 and even in 1920 the Bolsheviks were knocking of the doors of Warsaw to the West. Within a short time, China, Eastern Europe, parts of South East Asia, Cuba, and Africa, had fallen under the hammer and sickle.

The Spirit is Coming: Just as the Tsar and Lenin used an imperial superhighway to quickly spread their doctrine, so does the Spirit of God. He, too, will come from the west (though it is not clear whether it is from St. Petersburg, Karelia, Kaliningrad, or all three!), and forge His way to the East. After this, there will be the “spill over” effect into China, Mongolia, Central Asia, India, Iran, the Arab world, and post-modern, post-Christian Europe (see the prophecy of Hudson Taylor below). In other words, it will be the catalyst for global revival.

And there is a second benefit of the great Russia invasion. Southern Russia and Central Asia are predominantly Muslim, benign, moderate, and reachable. However, they are a target for Radical Islamism—the Saudis and Iranians in particular are keen to get them on-board. When the Spirit moves, there will be a containing of Radical Islamism.

Since the fall of demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, there has been marked increase in Christian churches across the spectrum, including Orthodox, Adventist, Baptist, Pentecostal, and even the cults.

For example, the Russian Church of Evangelical Christians (RCEC), formerly known as the Pentecostal Union of Russia, had a mere 100 churches in 1991. Their renaming was a victory, since until that time only the Orthodox Church was

recognized by the title “Russian,” hence breaking their millennium long monopoly of the name. Today, there are up to 1,750 RCEC congregations and growing. But with this kind of growth are a lot of teething programs.

That is why the leadership of the Russian church have asked for help in ministry from Christians in Australasia. This kind of big vision requires a global team effort.

After my first trip to Russia in 2003, I became a “true believer” in Russia mission. Though I have been privileged to travel to more than fifty nations, no nation excites me more than this one. And the opportunities to serve the Lord in this place are almost endless—you name it, you can do it! Evangelism, children’s work, youth work, leadership training, preaching, teaching, and church planting. The Russian church will happily fill your schedule for as long and as much as you can handle.

Unfortunately, it is not easy to sell Russia mission, particularly in Australia. Southeast Asia presents a wonderful, affordable, and worthwhile mission option. Russia is far-away, expensive to reach, and “other worldly.” Cold War notions die hard. A BA class in Melbourne in 2003, when asked about what were their ideas about Russia, replied, “communism, cold war, and KGB.” They were twelve years too late!

So the only way to persuade people to support Russia mission is to take them their themselves. Hence, the birth of the Australasian Leader’s Mission to Russia. It has a wonderfully simple template:

1. Arrival and briefing in Moscow.
2. Departure for the regions for about nine days of “hands on” ministry.
3. Return to Moscow for debriefing.
4. Participate in a church planting conference.

This model has worked very well and without exception, participants have become very keen about Russia mission.

2005 Australasian Leader’s Mission to Russia

Participants included:

Mission Leader: Dr. Kameel Majdali, Teach All Nations Inc.
Pastor Rocky Giovinazzo, Park Street Christian Church, Melbourne
Pastor Carey Crockford, Crossover Community Church, Cranbourne
Pastor Salvatore Quirino, Park Street Christian Church
Mrs. Carmel Quirino, Park Street Christian Church
Pastor Steven Teo, Re-Gen Ministries, Victoria
Mr. Anthony Lim, Acclaim Insurance, Singapore

Mr. Glenn Durkin, Faith! Christian Church, Melbourne

Phase One—Arrival in Moscow: Mission members arrived in Moscow on Friday 7 October at 3 p.m. after a 28 hour flight from Melbourne. They were taken to the head office of the RCEC to meet with Head Bishop Pavel Okara and his team, including Ivan Borishevsky, Missions Director & Evangelist; Andrei Blinkov, head of Project 42; and Nickolai Makoed, Director of the Moscow Theological Institute.



On Arrival 7 October 2005:
(from left to right)
Rocky Giovinazzo,
Steven Teo, Carey
Crockford, Pavel Okara,
Kameel Majdali, Glenn
Durkin, Nickolai
Makoed, Anthony Lim,
Ivan Borishevsky,
Andrei Blinkov. (Front)
Salvatore Quirino,
Carmel Quirino

Phase Two—Mission to the Regions 8-17 October 2005

Team One—Majdali/Durkin: Went to Petrozavodsk, Karelia, 1,000 kilometers northwest of Moscow, to be the guest of Bishop Fyodor Akimenko. This region is 300 kilometers east of Finland and resembles this nation in many ways, with forests, lakes, and blonde headed people. Ministered at the New Life Church, and also in the villages of Kutizhma and Esoila to the north. The Holy Spirit was poured out everywhere. Capacity only prayer meeting saw several people coming to Christ. Team One concluded their mission in St. Petersburg, preaching at three different churches including the new Russia's first messianic congregation.

Team Two—Crockford/Lim: This dynamic duo went far east to Tartarstan, about 1,500 away from Moscow. It is the most Muslim area of Russia. Their host bishop has a large church and dynamic testimony. The actually went to two regions and saw great deliverances everywhere they went.

Team Three—Quirinos: This couple minister to Bishop Gennadi in Kostroma, north of Moscow on the Volga River. They did much preaching and teaching during their stay, and won over the hearts of people by their love and compassion. A special service saw many people receive physical healings.

Team Four—Teo: The region was Pskov, near the Estonian border (and a twelve hour train journey from Moscow), as guest of Bishop Nikolai. Taught in the training school as well as preached in churches in the power of the Spirit, and also did street evangelism. Pastor Teo returned to Moscow to preach at the Revival Church. He also did consultancies with pastors.

Team Five—Giovinazzo: Kaluga is only 190 kilometers south of Moscow, and this is where the fifth team went. Teaching and preaching were part of the ministry; plus offering strength and encouragement to the bishop and pastors who labor under difficult conditions.

Phase Three—Moscow De-Brief and Missions Conference 17-19 October

The five teams returned to de-brief the Head Bishop and his team in Moscow. Everyone returned with great enthusiasm for the work, but also daunted by the size of the task.



Australasian Leader's Mission to Russia 2005:
Red Square, Moscow, with Lenin's Tomb middle left-hand side.

The next day commenced the Church Planting Conference, sponsored partially by the Mission. Over forty church planters came together, in many cases for the first time, to be taught and encouraged in their holy mission. They came from far and wide: Arkangel in the north in the Arctic, the sub-tropical Black Sea region in the south, the northern Ural Region 2,500 east of Moscow, and even one man came from Irkutsk near Lake Baikal, 5,000 kilometers away. Profiles include:

- Pastor Sasha from Rostov-on-Don, age 28, a dynamic guitar player and church planter for one year, with 50 people in the church. A young lady named Anya, 21, came to the church and got saved, and married Sasha the week before the conference.
- Nadezhda, a single woman urban woman, is trying to plant a church in a rural area and faces strong opposition from the Russian Orthodox Church. The priest made it clear that she was not welcome in the village. She asked for prayer to take a different approach.

- Pastor Rustaslav, age 31, planted a church in the northern Ural region of Sverdlovsk, 2,500 kilometers from Moscow. His town is 3,000 and church currently stands at 20. During his recent evangelistic campaign in the small villages he was able to baptize four people into the faith.



Church Planting Champions

From left to right, Nadezhda, newly-weds Sasha and Anya, Rustaslav, and Valentina.

Kameel Majdali, Steven Teo, Rocky Giovinazzo, and Carey Crockford all spoke to the church planters on various practical/spiritual topics. On the first night, every church planter received prayer, anointing oil, and prophecy. Delegates consistently commented on their appreciation of the ministry of the Australasian team.

Russia's Essential Needs

1. **Teaching:** Pastors and pew all need to be trained in the basic Christian doctrine and practice, as well as advanced teaching for many.
2. **Church planting:** Project 42 aims to plant RCEC churches in 42 cities of 150,000 people or more who do not have a Pentecostal/Evangelical church. This is "cutting edge," adventurous church planting, including the dangerous Caucasus mountain region, the snow-carpeted tundra of Siberia, and the Russian Far East with its large Korean and Chinese population (not all of them legal).

Some find money to find and support a church planter for two years, but this approach does not always work. More success has been experienced

by finding someone in the region who is **already** working for the Lord and support them. Examples include:

- a) **Armenia**: A pastor is trying to reach Kurdish churches in the mountains, but they are covered in snow nine months out of the year and are difficult to access. Solution: missionaries bought him a snow-mobile so he could visit the mountain churches.
- b) **Caucasus**: A man has been going around the Muslim areas showing “The Passion of the Christ.” Money has been supplied for a proper DVD player, a screen, and a tent which becomes a makeshift theatre. There have been astounding responses from the Muslim viewers, with much crying and tears. Some have even said, “We’ll get them, Jesus, for hurting you!”
- c) **Far East**: A Singaporean pastor commented how he wants to plant churches in China, but this is very difficult. My response: no problem, plant the Chinese churches ... in Russia! There are large enclaves of Chinese, some of them who simply walk across the border to have access to more land or to escape from China’s “One-Child Policy.” These people are relatively easy to reach. After being integrated into the church, some of them will be deployed back into China to spread the fire of the Holy Spirit.

New Identity for the New Russia

The advent of “the New Russia” necessitates a new identity. This is many ways is both a quintessential postmodern search, but it is also a very practical one. What place does the New Russia have in today’s crisis-riddled, changed filled world? How does its history and heritage help position it for the future?

Due to its long and painful history, there is a strong thread of nihilism in Russia today. One of joke’s regarding Russia’s notoriously extreme weather could apply to many other aspects of life. Summer in Russia is defined as “*nine months of expectation followed by three months of disappointment.*” The dawn of the new Russia after the long winter of oppressive communist rule,¹ came with many promises but also much disappointment, particularly with the western world, whose promised support of the new market economy was not fully forthcoming. Disappointment has a nasty habit of turning into despair, if nursed for too long. That is why the alcohol and tobacco consumption is very high, and the life-expectancy of Russian men has actually decreased to 58 years.

¹ **Note:** while many Russians liked the predictability of the Soviet system, with guaranteed housing, employment, education, and health care, the era was both an opportunity and nightmare for Christian believers, as well as Soviet Jews. As Robert Kiyosaki, best-selling author of *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, says that “security” and “freedom” are mutually exclusive.

While the pundits speculate on the “identity” of the New Russia: capitalist, democratic, quasi-autocratic, there is no doubt what God wants—a Holy Spirit led Russia. The template of the New Russian is being fashioned on the anvil of the emerging church. You will find them to be intelligent, dedicated, progressive, hard-working, enthusiastic, Spirit-filled, and, as a bonus, they actually smile! In short, it is the place where the Bear meets the Dove.

Russia’s painful and traumatic history was due to many forces, but if we are to believe the prophecies of future glory, then it is not surprising that a land with such an awesome destiny would be afflicted in the manner it has. The “New Russian,” will also understand the dynamic of what the Scriptures describe as the power of overcoming. Christ says in Revelation 21:7 “*He who overcomes shall inherit all things...*”. You cannot overcome, however, unless you have something to overcome. The New Russian will face the anguished past and problematic present and through faith and the Spirit will come forth stronger than ever.

Welcome to the New Russia!



Face of the New Russia: Pastor “Misha” from Moscow



Face of the New Russia II: Aelita and Sergei, Moscow

For further information about Russia or future Australasian Leader's Missions to Russia (next one is scheduled for April/May 2007, please contact:

Teach All Nations Inc. www.tan.org.au

Prophecies about the Great Revival in Russia

Hudson Taylor, famous British missionary to China and founder of the China Inland Mission, had an amazing vision in 1889 of a great national spiritual awakening in Russia that will touch Europe before Christ's return. These are his words:

*"I saw in this vision a great war that encompasses the world. I saw this war recess and then start again, actually being two wars [WWI & WWII]. After this I saw much unrest and revolts that will affect many nations. I saw in some places spiritual awakenings. **In Russia I saw there will come a general all-encompassing, national spiritual awakening, so great that there could never be another like it. From Russia, I saw the awakening spread to many European countries.** Then I saw an all-out awakening, followed by the second*

coming of Christ."

In the turbulent years preceding the 1917 revolution in Russia, when Europe was to pour out the abomination of communism on the land, a young aristocratic woman (later to become Mother Barbara, Abbess

of the Russian Church of St Mary Magdalen on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, used to visit a "staretz " (holy man) in the Kremlin, Bishop Aristocoli . He prophesied many things about the End Times in Europe , England and in Russia . The Bishop foretold that Europe would be laid waste and Germany divided in two, that England would lose her Empire and colonies, and be on the verge of collapse, but be saved in the last hours through praying women.

About Russia , Bishop Aristocoli said, "An evil will shortly take Russia [*the 1917 Communist Revolution*] and wherever this evil comes rivers of blood will flow. It is not of the Russian soul, but an imposition on the Russian soul [*from - and financed by the West*]. It is a spirit from hell. But finally Russia will be free and from out of Russia believers will go forth and turn many nations to God." The bishop said, "From the very earliest centuries we have had prophecies that rays of Gospel light will come from the East... The light over the whole world will be from Russia who suffered more than anybody...Russia will be completely reborn!"

Recent prophecy of Rick Joyner is another confirmation of many other prophetic words about the destiny of Russia in the great final Revival.

Word for Russia

Rick Joyner, 10/21/2002

Russia will be the host of the greatest revival that the world has yet seen.

Because of it, the soul of the nation will be transcendent, overcoming many of the great problems of the times and helping many other nations to do the same.

Preceding this, Russia has a very difficult road ahead, with some tragic events looming . Eventually the road will become smoother. God's grace is extended toward Russia, and He is the One who put in Putin. She has at times tottered on the brink of anarchy, but she will grow in stability and wisdom and be a great leader of nations until the end. The Lord has prepared great leaders for Russia in government, business, and the church. These will all be statesmen in their fields, developing a sound and wise interchange with counterparts in other

nations to their mutual benefit. Such interchange is essential for the prosperity of Russia, and she must learn to resist the forces of isolation and shortsightedness . Germany, Poland, and Russia will grow in friendship to their mutual benefit and strengthening. It is the destiny of Russia to precede the world in dealing with some of the problems that the whole world will face. Pray for wisdom from above to show them the way to build upon a foundation that can stand against the pressures to come. When Russia is standing on solid ground, the world will be safer, and she will be able to help pull many other nations out of the quicksand. The potential of the Russian soul is a great treasure. The greatest threat to Russia is not the resurrection of Communism, but the emergence of Fascism.

