

BLOODSHED IN KYRGYZSTAN!

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LINKING GOD'S PEOPLE TO REACH THE UNREACHED

The Bridge Report



On April 7, violence erupted in several cities of **Kyrgyzstan** as thousands of angry citizens rallied to protest the government's recent decision to sharply raise the utility prices. The crowds also expressed frustration over **President Kurmanbek Bakiyev** and his regime's corruption, nepotism, brutality, and imprisonment of opposition party leaders. The hope for positive change, which the 2005 so-called Tulip Revolution had evoked in the people through the election of Bakiyev, had died.

When the protesters gathered around the Presidential palace in the capital city of **Bishkek**, riot police officers opened fire into the crowd, killing 88 and injuring nearly 1,000. The crowd responded by vandalizing the streets and looting the palace and other surrounding buildings. Concerned that anarchy would erupt, an interim government was quickly formed under the leadership of **Roza Otunbayeva**, a former foreign minister and ambassador to the United States. She officially dismissed the President and his cabinet and has restored law and order. The President, who during the riots fled on his plane to his home district in the South, refuses to resign, while trying to rally support to do a comeback. Otunbayeva is promising to move Kyrgyzstan from oligarchy into a democracy with free elections to be held in six months. The peace is tenuous, but increasing, as foreign powers are backing the interim government.

This little Muslim-dominated nation with a population of 5.3 million people, is of geo-political significance in the balance between the superpowers. The **United States** has an air-force base there, through which troops and supplies are flown from the States into **Afghanistan**. **Russia** also has an air-force base in the country. Nearby **China** has economic interests in the oil and mineral-rich **Central Asian** region; thus, all three superpowers are motivated to see stability maintained in Kyrgyzstan.

Please pray for the nation and people of Kyrgyzstan!

MEETING THE YOUNG GENERATION!



The recent events in Kyrgyzstan mirror the events that took place in the country in February 2005, when the then President Akayev was also ousted by the people, due to nepotism and corruption, except — this time, there was blood in the streets! The Kyrgyz people are again longing for new government leaders who will rule with integrity and justice, and care for the welfare of the people and communities entrusted into their hands.

The issues in the country are not primarily geo-political or socio-economic, they are fundamentally moral — arising from the issues of the heart. Psalm 144:5b states, **"Happy are the people whose God is the Lord!"** Those who are committed to living out the Judeo-Christian faith as expressed in the Word of God — the Bible — find peace and righteousness in their personal lives, in their families, their communities, and their nation! The banner (see above) carried by one of the young men at the Bishkek conference, summarizes that truth!

Above all the wonderful things our ministry team experienced during our 2005 visit to Kyrgyzstan — encountering the young generation of believers in Jesus, impressed me the most! I had an opportunity to meet with 25-30 beautiful, young professional adults engaged in academia, business, and politics (see picture on page 3). When I began speaking about the importance of each of them embracing their destiny and identity in Christ through their own language and culture, as God has laid down a unique aspect of His nature into each ethnic group, there was an eruption of excitement, and everyone began to openly share their thoughts and ideas. They had a lot of questions. I explained, *"God has buried a pearl deep into the Kyrgyz heart, and you are the ones to dig to find it and share it with your people. You are the generation whom God has called to redeem your culture for God's Kingdom"*. We had a fruitful, articulate dialogue on integrity,



Translation of Banner above: *Jesus is King over All Nations*

MEETING THE YOUNG GENERATION!



which is extremely relevant in this emerging country where corruption is knee-deep from the President down the line to the grassroots of the people. It was obvious that I touched the anointing of the Holy Spirit in their hearts! Their enthusiasm was contagious as they began describing various practical ways in which they could serve the Lord among their people!

These young adults are now five years older and more mature, but the pressure against the Kyrgyz believers has been intensifying, so there are many obstacles that are testing their faith:

- Economic instability as the global recession has deepened the poverty among the general population, while unduly enriching the ruling class by means of nepotism and corruption.
- Political instability with an ousted President endeavoring to hold on to power, while the interim government is trying to steer the country toward more freedom and democratic rule.
- A sharp increase in limitations on fundamental freedom and other human rights – in both law and practice. In 2009, a harsh new Religion Law was adopted despite international protests, and a similarly severe new Law on Religious Education and Educational Institutions is being drafted. There are also plans for a new Law on Traditional Religions. State actions, including banning unregistered religious activities (fellowships under 200 adult members are disallowed to meet) and raids on worship meetings. Evangelizing (“proselytizing”) a Kyrgyz is a crime. Satan is specifically targeting church leaders on a personal level in order to scatter the flocks. The leaders need increasing discernment, wisdom and strength to ward off his attacks.

Please pray for the nation of Kyrgyzstan and the church there — that the believers continue to be children of God without fault, shining as lights in the world, according to Phil 2:14-15.



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FROM R.K.'S CORNER

When I heard the news about the riots and change of government in Bishkek, my thoughts went back to August 2005, when I brought a ministry team to Almaty, Kazakhstan and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (the trip was featured in the October 2005 Bridge Report now placed on our website's Archive.) John and Beverley Sheasby taught and ministered on the Grace of God in two three-day conferences, where close to one 1,000 believers gathered in each city. In Bishkek, the conference was specifically organized for Kyrgyz believers from a Muslim background.

I was impressed by the maturity of faith and commitment to the Lord among the believers. I was also humbled and deeply grateful that The Bridge had been an instrument in God's hands in laying a foundation for Biblical leadership training in Kyrgyzstan via seminars organized by Piet van Walsem (1991-95) and the Bible school in Bishkek (1994-95). We helped plant; others watered. God gave the growth!!

I hope you enjoy the pictures I took in 2005. Please pray that the Lord will continue to use the Kyrgyz believers as light and salt for Him!

Every man knew his place in Kurmanbek Bakiyev's Bishkek. The street sweeper never looked into the eyes of the businessman with a gold watch. If you drove a clapped-out Soviet car, you always let those in shiny SUVs overtake you. The shopkeepers turned their noses up at farmers hawking what they can and everybody pulled back when the Bakiyev clan grabbed what it wanted. Ordinary Kyrgyz were reserved and powerless, not knowing their own strength. This was Bishkek early on Wednesday morning. As people worked and crisscrossed though quiet leafy avenues, nobody knew that Bakiyev's rule might be in its final hours. Nobody would have believed that, for two blood-soaked days and two nights alive with gunfire, they would see society itself eclipsed in the darkness of revolutionary anarchy.

A roar of banging metal, screams and shouting is approaching. Passersby stop in their tracks. People had heard rumors of riots in the provinces but their eyes swell with shock as they see what is marching forwards. Hundreds of men are on the move. Their eyes have turned to glares. Men enter this mob as shopkeepers, drivers or factory workers -- only to lose themselves in the surge. They are moving as one body, copying each other as they pick up the rhythmic chants and grab rocks to hurl at police. A man in a gas mask is waving an AK-47. All work has stopped. Shop fronts are being boarded up. Society is dissolving. The grief of a people who have seen their quality of life slide continuously since the fall of the Soviet Union is turning into frenzy born of despair....

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To read the entire article and more on the situation in Kyrgyzstan, please go onto the Internet, copy each link below and paste them individually in the address-box.

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/04/09/blood_in_the_streets_of_bishkek

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/04/09/how_not_to_run_an_empire



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