



The Bridge Report

R.K.'s TRAVEL LOG PART 3: THE CELEBRATION



After the mountain retreat, everybody was transported back to Almaty where we entered into a three days magnificent celebration with a thousand plus believers.

It was conducted in the elegantly decorated Agape church hall beautified with flowers, white and blue balloons gathered in artistic clusters, the flag of each nation represented, and rich, blue fabric draping the front and back walls from ceiling to floor. A festive backdrop for the joy and enthusiasm bursting forth as the talents and gifts of the participants found their expressions in a variety of creative ways under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in thanksgiving and worship to the Lord!

The administrative team did an outstanding job — down to the minute details. The main speakers (see right) preached to the Kingdom of God, exhorting the people to continue to live by faith and reach out to the unsaved, the rejected, the wounded. For three days - a piece of heaven on earth!!



Yuri Shumayev



Nina Chin-Smirnova



Piet van Walsem



Ragnhild—RK Ulrich

CONT... R.K.'s TRAVEL LOG PART 3: THE CELEBRATION



Piet Nina Ragnhild Elena Baikal Elena Nikolai Irina Yuri



Pictures from top left: 1. Agape's founders and main apostolic leaders/sponsors, each honored by a crystal trophy. 2.-3.-4.: Worshipping Jesus by a burst of joyous creativity via instrumentals, songs, dance, drama, testimonies. 5. Kazakh leaders honoring Yuri with national costume. 6.-7. 30 inter-denominational Pastors praying for unity.



R.K.'S TRAVEL LOG PART 3: KAZAKH HOSPITALITY



The day we traveled from the mountain retreat center back to the city to participate in the Celebration, a group of us were invited for lunch at Nikolai's drug rehab center.

What a feast!! Everything on the table (except for the Coca Cola and Soda) was home grown and delicious: roasted duck, turkey, chicken, beef, rabbit, deviled eggs, cheese platter, mixed vegetables, cabbage salad with fresh vegetables, homemade bread — a large cooked sturgeon fished in the nearby river! The centerpiece: freshly picked roses from their garden!



A delicious, fully Kazakh ethnic meal was served in this Yurt, located on Agape's church property.



Two days after the celebration, the leadership of Agape gave their team, who had so diligently prepared and executed the event, a day off with a picnic. Forty adults plus children gathered at a picturesque riverbank where we grilled meat, drank tea from the samovar, played soccer and simply enjoyed relaxing together. Fun!



R.K.'S TRAVEL LOG PART 3: THE DRUG REHAB CENTER



Like the rose garden in front of the building, everything is blossoming at Agape Drug Rehabilitation Center, located in a village app. 30 min drive outside Almaty. The app. 15,000 sq. feet building used to be the village town hall. In the mid-nineties, a Canadian businessman bought it and donated it to Agape, to provide housing for the Bible Training School (presently Agape Bible College).

In 2001, the school moved back to the main Mission Center in Almaty. Yuri gave the building to Nikolai, a major drug dealer turned man of God, to be

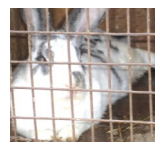


used for his newly opened Christian drug rehab center. Since then, several hundred men and women have been set free from the slavery of drugs and crime by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus, and are now model citizens, actively serving God in various capacities. A number of the alumni have gone on to Agape Bible College, then have been sent out as pioneer missionaries to establish new rehab centers in other parts of the country. There are now six of them, mainly financed by the main center

A few years ago, in assisting the rehab center toward financial self-sufficiency, The Bridge gave US\$3,000 toward the purchase of farm animals. This has been hugely successful, as their barn now has enough animals to daily supply adequate protein to the 40 full time residents plus the staff, in addition to 30 homeless taken in during the cold season. The overflow, plus the extra produce from their vegetable garden and 140 fruit trees are sold; the proceeds provide funds for purchase of other needed items.

Recently, the center opened two new successful enterprises: an auto shop for rebuilding and repairing cars, and a business producing hand-made iron rod gates.

Last year, a friend from Paris, France, donated through The Bridge US\$2,000 for laying a new roof on half of the building's leaking roof. Blessings upon blessings!



R.K.'S TRAVEL LOG PART 3: SARGON DANIALI

I spent two days with **Sargon Daniali** and had a meal with him, his wife and four children, and some of their friends and coworkers in his home (picture to the right). Sargon — an Assyrian Iranian national who has lived and served the Lord in Kazakhstan for fifteen years, is in the process of building a home in the outskirts of the city. It still needs to be completed.



Sargon is an evangelist /educator at heart. His vision is to equip Central Asian nationals to go out and conquer the Silk Road and Middle East with the Gospel. He invited me to teach in a **Korean mission school** which had fifteen students committed to missions!



A group of **American missionaries** are working toward establishing a **fully accredited Kazakh Theological Seminary in Almaty**. Sargon, who is on the Task



Force, invited me to have lunch with them and the leader of the Kazakh Evangelical Churches in the country, to participate in the discussion on how to proceed.

I had a genuine Japanese meal with a **lovely young couple from Japan** whose mission is to reach every community in Central Asia with correspondence Bible teaching courses. They are doing a great work!

Sargon then took me to the office of the **Jewish Agency for Israel** where we met with the **Director** who gave us insight into the history and culture of the Central Asia's Jews. There is a good relationship between Israel and Kazakhstan. I took a symbolic picture of the two men in front of the Israeli and Kazakh flags: **an Israeli and an Iranian standing side by side in peace and harmony — only by God's grace!**



FROM R.K.'S CORNER

This issue completes the report from my ministry trip in May/June to Kazakhstan and Russia. Steve and I are so very privileged to be participants over a period of two decades, and observe the transforming power of the Gospel taking root in individuals who have gone out and, by the Spirit of God within, have brought positive changes to their communities!

It is particularly meaningful, knowing that Kazakhstan is a Muslim, ex-communist country, where the government is endeavoring to establish a new law which, if ratified, will make the activities of the evangelical church illegal. I asked several of the believers, especially the field workers, what they would do if witnessing and conducting church would be against the law. In various ways, they shrugged their shoulders, smiled, and said they would continue to serve the Lord, whether above or underground, trusting He will guide and protect them.

Friends and sponsors — you sowed your prayers and finances into good soil! **THANK YOU!!**



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**LINKING GOD'S PEOPLE TO
REACH THE UNREACHED**

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RUSSIA REVISITED — SAINT PETERSBURG



On the plane overseas to Kazakhstan, I caught a virus which, as the days passed, progressed into a violent respiratory problem (a touch of the swine flu?). I refused to buckle and go to bed, so prayers and good care kept me on my feet. **Nina Chin-Smirnova**, one of my roommates, was the instrumental person in St. Petersburg, Russia under Piet's leadership who, right after communism fell, established The Bridge Church and



Bibleschool. She interprets for Piet when he travels in Russian-speaking countries. She is now married in Switzerland. Nina and I traveled back together on the plane and spent a couple of days in St. Pete. I visited **Most Church** (The Bridge Church), a warm, welcoming group of people who have a ministry toward abused, emotionally hurt people—of whom there are plenty in Russia! A brilliant pulmonary doctor and a very proficient masseuse at Most Church lovingly cared for me — I quickly got healed!

I then spent three lovely days with **Lena Shemka**, my friend and business woman who effectively shares the Lord among young entrepreneurs. I visited her church, also met her boss who just came to faith in Jesus.