



# The Bridge Report



**PREFACE BY R.K.:** In the Sep. 2010 issue of The Bridge Report we presented to our newer readers Stephen and Sophia Schmalz and their outreach to the Georgian people. (<http://www.bridgeinternational.org/articles/georgia.html>).

There are many facets to the Schmalz' ministry; one being their annual distribution of food staples, clothing and various basic supplies to pastor families of smaller churches located in the poorer areas of the country where the needs are greatest. **For a number of years, our Bridge partners have helped fund this project. We just received a report from Stephen and Sophia on their most recent distribution which took place last December and January.**

To give you a glimpse of their vision and heart of love for the people they serve in Georgia, I quote an excerpt from Stephen's writing in the issue mentioned above:

*"What can two people do in a country of about 5 million? Very much, is the answer. Without the Body of Christ, we're nothing but two people. With the Body of Christ, we have been able to move mountains in people's lives! Thanks to the Body, we have been able to go to orphanages for the past 16 years and reach out to thousands of children. Thanks to the Body, we have been able to go to villages throughout the country with village pastors and give presentations of the Gospel of Luke right in the middle of the streets. The Body of Christ is directed by Jesus, Himself, and we have relied on Him year after year. There are faithful people who are looking to assist us in any way possible to see the life, glory and the Word of God spread to every hungry person on the planet! This is the calling and the function of the Body of Christ.*

*We honor Steve and RK for the faithfulness, dedication and assistance they have displayed to many of us at the other end. Their labor in the background — with your help — has equipped, not only us, but many others, to do what would not have not been possible".*

This year the Western region was the biggest challenge. The snow came early (November 4) so the Georgians were not prepared. Wood and food were not yet in place. We were able to visit eight pastors with relief in spite of twomajor snow falls.

### CENTRAL GEORGIA



**M** is 46 and a full time minister and main pastor of the church he planted. It attracts mainly poor people due to the personal care and distribution of food and other basic staples they receive. **M** is a real Georgian in looks and lifestyle. His car, partially donated, works well. He depends on it, as the increasing congenital paralysis of his feet he told us about last year, has now reached both hands and feet. **M's** wife, busy with five children at home, is in charge of preparation of lessons for the Sunday school classes which are attended by children equally from unbelieving and believing families. She is a great encourager and expressed she would like to start various handicrafts among the children, i.e. clay crafting for boys. We keep this in mind for the next visit.

**R** works with **M** with four other deacons. They minister in four locations among 110 adults and 75 Sunday school children. **R** has two children in school and two older girls who are worship leaders in the church. They seem a happy family in spite of **R's** lack of work as an electrician. He lives in the city during the week and comes home on week-

ends. He supplements his income by driving a small, older church van to pick up members from around town. Though old, it seemed 200% better than the one he drove last year!

In spite of lack of heating in the church gathering hall that consists of bare cement block walls, the atmosphere was warm, open and inviting. His, and his assistant pastor **R's**, teenage children do a great job in leading in-depth contemporary style worship, with pauses for the congregation to express their love for the Lord in between songs.

This time we were not in a hurry, so **M** took time to show us how to eat *Khinkali* (meat dumplings). We had forgotten about this dish after having missed out on this Georgia's delicacy for some eight years.

### EAST GEORGIA

We left at 6 am to reach the eastern region of Georgia. The city we visited is memorable to us, as we were kicked out by the authorities several years ago for publically showing the Jesus film and doing an outreach to orphans. Recently, we returned to the city to help **D**, a precious pastor whom we have known for many years. With a wife and two small boys, he is struggling financially; he lives in a small adjacent room to the church sanctuary and



survives on bare necessities. In November, we brought him and his congregation 250 heads of cabbage — they greatly appreciated it! On the last day of the year, with the funds from The Bridge, we supplied them with much needed, mainly food items, clothes, and a variety of outreach materials — the family could hardly believe their eyes! **D** is one of the few pastors who highly encourages Sunday school for the children, so we also brought a blackboard, crayons and whatever else we had available for teaching of children.

**Pastor R** is well known to The Bridge for a number of years. He lives not far from Chechnya, is now 47 with four children, one of whom has begun working. His congregation of 80 plus 30 Sunday school children keep him busy. With four helpers they visit five villages; in each some 10 believers. His oldest



daughter is assisting him in his ministry. **R** borrowed a brother's car to pick us up and brought us to his home for food and fellowship. We thank God that he found work as a community electrician with a government company.

Three distributions were scheduled in **Pastor P's** district under his oversight. In his early fifties, **P** is well known to The Bridge. He is the senior pastor with a real shepherd's heart, is wise and considerate and knows the sheep well. With four children still living at home, the family is closely knit and works well together in home and church. **P's wife N**, a good organizer, is in charge of the Sunday school and evangelistic outreaches while discipling young believers. Their fourth daughter is



responsible for thirteen youth! She shows insight and has musical talents and will help out this summer in a VBS 2012 in the city of **G**. Teenage kids are so energetic and need direction! **P** did not receive the Bridge food parcel this year. He has received funds (not via us) for buying their first plot of land to build a teaching center near the Russian/Azerbaijan borders. Plans are to start building soon. **P** is considering selling his Belarus tractor and Volga car to buy a van to pick up his family and church members for gatherings.

**P** supervises his assistants **V** and **A** who received Bridge food parcels. After visiting those two brothers, we reached **P's** house again. For the second time at mealtime, there was no meat on the table, but we did not miss it. We love their *Khadzjapuri* (cheese bread) even better! It is written: better a simple meal with joy than a meal with meat and envy. Sure enough — these love meals were a feast!

**Pastor A** is still not married. His 86 year old mother lives and cares for him. She stated she is going to become at least 100 years old - her Mom became 108! . She still has a great sense of humor and is a good missionary in the city. **A** is a teacher and caregiver, a pastor after **P's** own heart. He has one cow and a handful of chickens and had a good bean and honey harvest last year. He sold all the honey. He did not touch the chicken which his mom had prepared, but served it to us while he ate white bread and drank peach juice.



at the impact, but later passed away due to other reasons. His parents consider him innocent. However, the police and the courts both fined him 17,000 L (app. US\$10,000) or face seven years imprisonment. This was so sad to hear and was disastrous for a brother in the Lord with two children to raise. Now he is doing better. Gela's teenage girls we did not see, they are attending school in the village.

After the visit to the city's orphanage, we drove back home with joy and thanksgiving of having accomplished our service to the faithful husbandmen of God's vineyard in Georgia!

## WEST GEORGIA

After four hours of driving from Tbilisi, we reached the city of **K**. It was a stunningly beautiful ride across the snow-covered Caucasus mountains (see photo). Pastor **G** and his wife happily greeted us. Their prayer house had again improved. The roof and all the walls & windows on the third floor were finished and nicely done. Lack of funds has prevented them from finishing the inside / balcony / banisters. They have a total of 24 sheep; the females give birth to app.14 lambs which provide the family with food for the year. He also raises chickens and peacocks. They received a Bridge parcel.

Their son, **M** has gone through a very tough time. He has financial debts due to a traffic accident which caused the death of a 72 year old driver who had broken an arm and a leg

## FROM R.K.'S CORNER

At this time, I am asking for prayer on behalf of our family. My husband, Steve has just been diagnosed with aggressive prostate cancer, needing immediate surgery. He is asking that your prayers be directed towards his hearing, trusting, obeying, and waiting on God. Steve has experienced physical healing many times in the past by different means – by supernatural miracles, doctors and medicine, vigorous physical exercise with heavy weight lifting, and change of diet - God works His will in all of the above — He is the ultimate healer! Steve is not upset, bitter, angry, sad, worried, aggravated, or fearful - he is enveloped in the peace of God, waiting on Him!

The Christian believers who live in the poorer regions in the Rep of Georgia do not have our privilege of good medical care; they are solely dependent on God's supernatural intervention to meet their spiritual and physical needs! Through the Schmalz's fish-and-loaves ministry, we are blessed to be part of serving with The Bridge in helping support pastors and believers in the country of Georgia! Please mark your gifts: **8337 GEORGIA WORKERS.**

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