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

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FROM R.K.'S CORNER

The phone rang, "Hi, this is Steve. We have been given a car to use, so we will come to see you for a few days"... direct, simple and practical... the hallmark of Stephen (Steven) and Sophia Schmalz' approach to life! My Steve and I were delighted - finally, we would finally meet this precious Dutch/American couple with whom we have partnered for nearly 12 years in serving indigenous pastors in the Republic of Georgia. We knew them by voice and written communication, but we had never met in person! Every four years, Steve and Sophia return to the States and Holland from Tbilisi, Georgia's main capital, for a few months of sabbatical to visit family and friends and get some R/R. This was good timing!

We offered them the usual vacation pleasures for weary missionaries — what about a couple of days on the beach... or a trip to one of Orlando's many theme parks... perhaps some money to spend at the large discount mall up the road? They declined. "We have all the clothes we need — stopped by a few thrift stores on the way down", said Sophia (she is well dressed, by the way).

What would they like to do? "Just spend time with you — we like to do practical things for people we visit — is there anything I can do for you?" Steve asked, turning to my husband. So, while trimming trees and fixing odds and ends in our home, the short Steve took the tall Steve on a journey into the hearts of the Georgian people, sharing stories of faith and courage, and testimonies of God's miraculous intervention of love and care toward them and the believers there. Sophia and I did what women do... we shared our hearts with one another! We all talked a lot, laughed lot, ate a lot... and prayed! They transmitted to us a fresh love for the Georgia people!

On the last day of their visit, Steve said, "Now, we've got to go to the Mall!" I was thrilled — finally something for them! Both Steve and Sophia put on T-shirts with the letters JESUS printed in large letters across the front. They then walked the hallways of the Mall, sharing the Gospel with anyone they met... and they were many! They returned empty-handed with things, but hearts full of joy and concern for the people they had met. **Steve and Sophia came to us as partners and missionaries — but we left one another as friends!**

The reason I detail this visit a bit, is that their stay showed who they really are — immediate, warm, servant-hearted, serious in their relationship with the Lord while exuding the radiance of God's presence, always ready to share their faith and resources with others with unwavering integrity while identifying with the people they serve — **two ordinary people called together by God to do extraordinary things!**

In prior issues of The Bridge, I have featured the Schmalz' life and ministry, as well as the Georgian Pastors we help support. This time, I wanted you to hear from them in their own words, so Steve has written this update. **Please pray for them as they return back to their home in Georgia's capital, Tbilisi.** Mark donations to them: 8337 Georgian Workers. Blessings, R.K.

Vol. 27, Issue 8

August 2010



LINKING GOD'S PEOPLE TO REACH THE UNREACHED

The Bridge Report

THE SCHMALZ — THE REP. OF GEORGIA

"The Word of God shall go forth as the waters cover the sea".

Hello, my name is Stephen. My wife, Sophia, and I, moved to the Republic of Georgia nearly 16 years ago. This verse



Steve with Stephen and Sophie on our front porch in South Florida. Sophia is dressed in a Georgian national costume.

from the Word of God is both our desire and our goal wherever we are and wherever we go. This is how it has been for us since the beginning.

About us. Sophia is from a small country, The Netherlands, located on the west coast of Europe. She grew up in a village where she could look out of the back window of her house and see 13 windmills happily spinning, carried along by the breeze. She was a physical therapist by profession. I came along from across the ocean, from a small town called Peekskill, NY, located along the rolling mountains on the banks of the Hudson River. I worked in the quality control field at a company called I.B.M.

While driving to work one night in the early 1980ties, the Lord spoke to me saying: "consider Israel". As I result I found myself during the next 14 years or so, reaching out to the Jewish people, both in America and Israel. While in Jerusalem, I picked up a tulip, Sophia. Every year with her in the Lord, gets better and better. Our love runs deep!

UPDATE ON STEVE AND SOPHIA SCHMALZ IN THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

WHY THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA?

The value of a drop of water is higher and much more needed in the desert than in the ocean. Spiritually, the Republic of Georgia is a dry and desolate land. This is why we chose to spend the rest of our lives there.

In the early 1990s, Sophia and I participated in numerous outreach trips into the former Soviet Union. A love from the Lord Jesus filled us to the point where we decided - let's just leave our jobs, go overseas and live there for good! It has been for more good than we ever imagined! In comparison, our lives in the west was like a drop of water in the ocean. Jesus is not only Lord, but He is the Lord of putting a hunger within us to want to go into a dry and weary land, that we may share the riches that He has placed within us!

FROM PAST TO PRESENT

Sophia and I are only two people. 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 in any way possible to see the life, glory and



We make the 3rd floor of our home available for a Kurdish Sunday School & an Armenian Bible school.

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 want to 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 been possible. Steve and RK, we love you and all your partners out there. We join our praise and thanks for you with many others!

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Some time ago, we received a phone call from a fellow Russian believer, Andre. He told us that he saw Bibles at the nearby toilet-paper factory being used to make toilet paper. We went with him to confirm his story. It was true.

After discussing this situation with the manager, we were told we would be able to have about 17 pallets of New Testaments in the Russian language released to us,

if we would collect an equal amount of scrap paper for their replacement. We did so, and received the Bibles. These New Testaments were transported from the West into Georgia in 1995 and were sitting dormant in a custom's department for about 14 years. Jesus had His eyes on these Bibles all these years!

In various places where we live, Jesus has directed us to distribute this accurate presentation of Himself to village people who say they follow Muhammed. Many of them understand the

Russian language, and in some cases have prayed to receive the gift of Salvation. We appreciate your prayers!

Thousands and thousands of these NT's have been distributed to a people who have not had an accurate presentation of Jesus.

Now they do. The Scriptures say that the Lord will pour out His Spirit on all flesh. It is happening! And with that, the Word of God is going forth as the waters cover the sea!



Distributing physical & spiritual food, bringing home delicious Georgian bread!

Steve Schmalz

