



Thousands Reached with the Gospel in 14 Simultaneous Mega-City Campaigns in Russia

Missions in the City of the Cossacks

As mentioned we have conducted 14 city mega-city campaigns, some of which are still under way, in mega cities like Rostov-on-Don, with a population of over 2 million people. Rostov-on-Don River is a major city in southern Russia and is known for the famous, fearless, often brutal Russian Cossacks. The Cossacks were horsemen, comparable to the American cowboy.

The supervising pastor at the call center reported that an average of 3 people accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior on the phone lines alone every day! We are not specifically asking people to make a decision over the phone to accept Jesus. Because of the amount of calls we can only offer them a book and encourage them to meet our counselors. Similar praise reports are coming in from the other cities. The spiritual hunger in Russia is great.

I was thrilled to find out that church leaders from twelve satellite cities surrounding Rostov-on-Don had requested similar campaigns because of the reports they had heard and what they had seen taking place in Rostov-on-Don. Talk about multiplication! One basket makes twelve in the hands of the Lord! Do you remember Jesus and the little boy and his lunch?

We have already printed extra copies of the campaign book, containing dynamic life-changing stories as well as other literature, and delivered them to the churches in these 12 cities; equipping them to conduct their own mini-campaigns.

One pastor told of a teenage boy who called, requesting a copy of the campaign book. While reading the book, he became a believer in Christ and immediately began attending one of the campaign churches.

His mother became concerned believing her son had signed up at a dangerous sect. She called the campaign office saying, "I want to know what you have done to my son!" She asked for her own copy of the book to see what her son had gotten involved in. She read it and subsequently gave her life to Jesus as well. Now both she and her son attend the church and are growing in their faith, reports the pastor.

The 30-day campaigns are just the tip of the iceberg—once the Christ centered messages in the ads and the television and radio programs disappear, the churches have an enormous task to meet all those who responded.

City of the Last Russian Czar

Another campaign city is Yekaterinburg, with a population of 2 million located just east of the Ural Mountains on the western edge of Siberia. Yekaterinburg is sadly known as the place where the Communist Bolsheviks executed Czar Nikolai II and his family in 1918, following the Russian revolution.

I visited the sight some days ago. Today on a high hill overlooking the city a statue stands on the site where the royal family was executed. As I stood looking at the anxiety, and deep worry in the facial expressions of the emperor, his wife and children a chill ran through my soul.

To this day the blood of royal family cries out for revenge on their savage executioners.

We were now in the city proclaiming the blood of Jesus that speaks forgiveness peace, and reconciliation to all who will receive it.

The place had extra meaning for me as

one of my aunts, aunt Maija is the offspring of the adjutant to Czar Nikolai II. He was executed with the Czar's family. When the Winter Palace in St.Petersburg was stormed in 1917 (the start of the Russian revolution) the adjutant sent his family into hiding across the border to Finland. He faithfully remained at the side of his emperor to the bitter end.

The churches in the city are seeing a clear move of God as the campaigns extend through the end of June. We will keep you informed. Please keep Yekaterinburg in your prayers.

All in all, in May, we received almost 20,000 thousand telephone calls, text messages and other contacts from as many families in these 13 Russian cities. For most of them, this media evangelism campaign will have been the first time they have heard that God is more than an incomprehensible mystery, an icon clouded in incense, covered in gold, but HE is a living God who wants to be Lord of their lives; a God who can not only save them, but change them for the better in this life as well.

Opposition

We have experienced great resistance in several cities. For example in Volzhsky, where a very successful evangelism campaign is currently underway, a city official demanded that the churches cease all outreach or face imminent arrest. Our team refused to stop, so an arrest was ordered.

Fortunately the campaign leader knew the city mayor personally and called him on his cell phone (at 8.00 p.m. on a Saturday night) to explain the situation. The mayor asked Sergei, our campaign leader to pass the phone to the hostile city official. Her face

The churches in the city are seeing a clear move of God as the campaigns extend through the end of June. Members, often young people are out, eagerly, to take the Gospel to the people in the streets in a personal way. Once the Christ centered messages in the ads and the television and radio programs disappear, the churches have an enormous task to meet all those who responded.



went ashen. He rebuked her directly ordering her to stop the resistance immediately.

The mayor told Sergei: "You will not see a repeat of such interference again! Continue as if nothing has happened!" The mayor told Sergei: "What you do is the only power that can straighten out the minds and lives of the people of our city." In neighboring Volgograd the Mayor asked popular FM radio stations to strongly promote the campaign.

Another example of God's blessings in the face of adversity was evident on the morning of April 24, when we were informed that a truck loaded with 24,000 campaign books had been seized by the authorities at a highway checkpoint outside Orenburg, near the border of Kazakhstan.

When our campaign leadership team arrived on the scene, they were immediately, "unofficially" detained and questioned for 8 hours by the FSB (formerly KGB). The truck carrying the evangelistic campaign books and the team members were later released.

Even in the face of arrest, there was an opportunity to share Christ with the police and FSB officers, reminiscent of Paul and Silas in Acts 16.

Attacks by the Media

Several days earlier, two major TV channels had launched vitriolic propaganda attacks against the city evangelism



campaigns in a manner reminiscent of the Soviet era. All churches were targeted in the slanderous newscasts, with the exception of the Russian Orthodox Church. Statements by evangelical pastors were edited totally out of context in an effort to erode their integrity.

During this time, a 300-member congregation in Orenburg lost their rental agreement on a movie theater they used for worship services. An unnamed official threatened the owner with "unfortunate circumstances", if he did not tear up the church's lease. This contravenes the laws and constitution of Russia, but the rule of

law does not exist in that country.

We are seeing the political situation, which affects religion in Russia, changing for the worse at an alarming rate. The non-Russian Orthodox churches in Russia are losing their freedom to worship and influence society.

We challenge our prayer partners to continue to pray for these effective city evangelism campaigns in Russia and Israel. All things are possible for those that believe. Thank you for praying for our teams and standing with us financially at a strategically important time like this.

Hannu Haukka