ASi-News from the Austrian missionfield

Tajikistan

By Klaus Reinprecht

ASI Austria has supported the central Asian mission in Tajikistan for the last 4 years. The work in unreached areas is as much a challenge as the recruiting and training of young mission pioneers. Many, especially young people, leave this poor country, looking for a better life mostly in Russia. This slows the growth of the SDA church.
Another difficulty is to reach Moslems who are naturally very skeptical towards any Christians. Nevertheless, there are some wonderful things happening in this country, thanks to God's plan for our time today – the use of medical missionary work.
As in all other areas of life the keys for success in missionary work are following God's counsels.
His invitation especially for the time of the end: "The Lord calls upon our young people to enter our schools, and quickly fit themselves for service. In various places, outside of cities, schools are to be established, where our youth can receive an education that will prepare them to go forth to do (a) evangelical work and (b) medical missionary work." {GCB, June 3, 1909 par. 13}

Young people had already been trained for service in Tajikistan, but the area of medical missionary work had never been considered before.

In a wonderful manner God established contact to Dr. Anna Slepenchuk, the leader of our institution in Novi Obihody/Ukraine. Novi combines a medical missionary school and a sanatorium on the same campus. Dr. Anna immediately supported the idea of starting a school in Tajikistan with two of her best teachers and graduates as well as with her experience.

The local church administration agreed and so we started in November 2004 with 39 students, six of them coming from Usbekistan. After four weeks of orientation the most promising students were chosen for more intense training, consisting of theoretical classes after morning worship, door to door work in the afternoon and evangelism and health programs at night. The goal, to equip the students with effective, practical tools for mission emphasis in a short time period, was achieved with God's help. These six months were very exciting for all people involved. Often it was necessary to improvise, for example, when there was no water for several days or heating in the winter. Unpleasant experiences such as murder threats, attacks, throwing of stones, imprisonment, the building being surrounded by the secret police etc. were compensated by extraordinary conversion stories.

Very often God had prepared Moslems through dreams for the meetings with our young missionaries. One woman for example, was told in her dream to get baptized. Another woman remembered having seen this room before – in a dream - as she walked into the church.

A very well-respected family, direct descend ents of Mohammed was so impressed by the health message, that they also showed interest in the Bible. After his baptism, the father of the family said: "It's nothing to be a descendant of Mohammed, compared to what we are now – children of God.

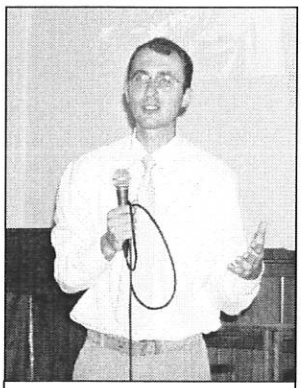
Just to give you a few insights into what happened the past six months.

Leader of the mission school arrested by the secret police

Dramatic scenes unfolded end of June, around the main church in Dushanbe. The secret police arrested four Adventists, among them two students and Leonid,

Students in action

the main teacher of the lay missionary school. The two students and the secretary of mission were released the next morning. Leonid was kept as he was being accused of terrorist activities. The presence of different nationalities in our school, financial support from other countries and intense outreach in the public seemed suspicious. The Moslems were probably not very happy about the public Christian meetings. The prayer chain (we told you about earlier) was informed and God intervened in a wonderful way. Hours before the evening meeting was supposed to start, Leonid – the main speaker – was suddenly released after several days of imprisonment. Emaciated after suffering from diarrhoea, but happy and courageous, he just had enough time to take a shower before the evangelistic meetings. Even though the secret police had surrounded the building and locked the doors before, a big amount of guests had kept coming for the following meetings. Leonid sent a message from prison to encourage the students not to be afraid during the evangelism. They will never forget his words: "After six months of study of the Book of Acts, we now have the opportunity to put theory into practice – God cares for us, just as he did back then for his disciples.



Leonid as evangelist

After graduating from the first training

Sixteen Students graduated June 23 from the first medical missionary school in Dushanbe. The seven months training, consisting of theoretical classes, practical missionary work and physical labor, were accompanied by seven major events like Health Expos, Stop-Smoking seminars, cooking classes and evangelistic meetings (see above).

All together 2335 people have visited our programs. 368 people are interested in further personal care. The students could give 2994 treatments in the *Health Room* next to the church.

What happens next with the graduates of this school? Some of them will support their local churches in their mission projects or keep up with the work in the Health Rooms. Others have been called to be mission Pioneers. The training equipped them with powerful tools which make it a lot easier to get into contact with Moslems. After a few months of practice, graduates, with the potential of leadership, get further training in the Ukraine. Through hands-on experience they get acquainted with how to run a medical missionary school as well as a sanitarium, with the goal to put it into practice in Tajikistan.

Member of the government wants Sanitarium in Tajikistan

A very high member of the government became aware of God's Health concept through a successfully conducted Health-Expo. He denied the invitation to participate in a Lifestyle program in Ukraine, indicating that he wanted to go through such a program in his own country - Tajikistan. Ever since that time, he has helped us to look for a property. It looks like the lot of 7 ha/17 acres in a nature reserve close to Dushanbe, worth 1, 6 Mio. US dollars, will be purchased for a fraction of this sum. Right now the papers being finalized. The plan is to start building a medical missionary school this year. Please think about the purchase of the property in your prayers.

Container with books arrived in Tajikistan on time

A container filled with evangelistic literature, financed through donations, arrived just on time – a few hours before the beginning of a big evangelistic campaign in Dushanbe/Tajikistan.
In order to reach the people living on the mountains and not speaking Russian the Conflict of Ages Series, education and health literature is now being translated into Tajik.
Thanks again to all the sponsors at the Austrian ASi-Meeting 2004 in Bogenhofen.

ASi Austria wants to encourage, educate and equip its members for the work in the mission field. It also encourages businessmen to run their companies as "kingdom companies", using their knowledge and infrastructure for God`s work.
By God`s grace we will start a Medical Missionary Training Center for Central Europe in Austria in autumn 2006 (Coming soon under www.asi-austria.at/tgm).
We thank OCI (www.outpostcenters.org) for the excellent team work in the projects.

Visitors enjoying the health lectures