

Mark Rose Update: April 11, 2006

Church Planting in Tajikistan

Today is the eighth day since we arrived here with hopes of teaching the Word of God to three converts won by our mission that started four years ago in January 2002. After learning a lot about the challenges of evangelizing Islamic people and considering how the world is being torn apart by war, we believe the time has come to thrust our faith upon the Islamic world with hopes that God might save some. Now is the time to push the Gospel forward; farther and faster than ever before in modern history. Are we ready? While many would agree, I doubt that most would be able to *count the cost* that the next great missionary will exact upon our lives or our nation. Still, I cannot keep silent any longer. I would rather face God now than live my life knowing what could have been, if we only would have been willing to believe God more and live our faith out the way Christ intended as He hung on the cross and modeled faith in a way that should have never been forgotten. My fear, as I write from this dark corner of oppression is that American Christians may never realized what *could have been until it is too late*. In this frame of mind I write the following report.

The world is watching Christianity and America through the eyes of Hollywood. In the most remote places of the world you will find satellite television. Over here, people think all Americans are rich, sex starved, and immoral drug addicts with a religion called Christianity that promotes such to the destruction of all non-Christian nations. It is naïve to think that any form of revolution will cause others to follow in our nation's footsteps. The harm done by four generations of *Information Age* is too great. It has not been difficult for *mom and pop* dictatorships to spin what comes over the satellite dish into useful propaganda that makes America look like the truly evil place on the planet. The world is watching America through the *eyes of Hollywood* with contempt. When I show up as a missionary, you can imagine all the negative hype and press that must be overcome before the Gospel is heard and our witness is seen.

When the Gospel is preached in Tajikistan, the Holy Spirit moves and the light of God shines bright. Even a tiny light gives great light where there is darkness. Last year I was able to preach in front of the school in Turba Kala. The impact the Holy Spirit made was visibly moving to all that stood and listened. The miracle of how God allowed us to witness to the people in that village and they way He opened the door for our team to share our faith went far to prove how the Lord uses the smallest amount of faith in the greatest ways when Christians put their trust in Christ. **In my mind is the knowledge that anywhere I preach that God will give salvation and victory; safety and direction-**our faith gives more faith to those who have not believed. **Yet getting to the place where we can teach or preach is a challenge. And that is why we need your help.**

It is not easy to ask you for money. My pride does not want to let go of the façade. **But inside me is fire that burns for the lost of this nation.** I know that a great awakening of true Christianity in this part of the world will end the wars that threaten the next generations of Americans. I know this in my heart. So when I try to raise money for projects to build things and help people, I know how God can use the things to open many *doors of utterance*. But getting to that point is hard because the survival factor is important. I don't want to die. I know I may be called to though. That is a disturbing thought for me. I don't want Valerie to grow up having lost a 2nd father. I want my sons, daughters, and grandchildren to always be able to find me when they need me. I want to be with them. I like the same things most of you like. Yet inside I know what God shows us in the New Testament. Everywhere Paul preached he divided groups of people. One side was converted while

the other side complained. Those that complained were not willing to lose what they had. Those that were converted gave everything to God.

The giving spirit was so great at Thessalonica that Paul had to turn down their offering many times. This was so they would not misunderstand his sacrifice. He did not want to be *chargeable to any*. He took offerings from those who had and gave it to those who lacked. He crossed all cultural and political boundaries to carry the offering of some to help the needs of others. And because he thought more of heaven than this life, Paul did not allow fear to control. I know he was afraid. It just never got a grip on him. Things have not changed.

Yesterday we climbed a mountain to see a village of about 400 people, 120 of them children. The kids go to school in one of three shifts due to the size of the school. Our witness in the valley of this mountain range began last year. We put the roof on the school in the village next door. We witnessed the Gospel in *Word* (teaching and preaching it) **and deed**. The people remembered our sacrifice of love and material, your sacrifice of prayers and money made it possible for us to be there. Now a great heavenly reward awaits many who will be converted as we continue our presence in this valley. But hear me now-***there are many adversaries***.

The regional governor and I climbed the mountain to the village that needs a new school. On our way down, I asked him if there was any negative impact from our work in Pishanbe last year. He turned and told me how the KGB followed us everywhere we went. He knew about our witnessing and sharing our faith because I witnessed to him the same as I did everyone else. But because we did so much in the way of good works that the people accepted our witness gladly with open hearts. He told me that! Tears formed in my eyes again as I saw how God had worked through last years team. But let's not forget that we are always watched and followed by evil men who would do us much harm if we do not remain diligent and fervent in prayer. **This is fertile ground for the seed of truth to be planted. But it will cost us something. It will cost us a lot. For me the cost is my life. For you, the cost will be great also. Together, we can reach these people. Together we can make the only difference that counts.**

The world is falling apart again. Just like in centuries past, Christianity can heal the broken hearts and bind up the wounds that greed and evil have caused. ***But where are the Thessalonians?***

The other day I walked and talked with one of the leading scholars of Tajikistan. I asked him what he thought about America, the war against terrorism, and the world situation today. He told me that to him it seems that what began as a just war to stop tyranny and Al Qaeda is fast becoming a different struggle all together. He told me how the struggle we face as a nation is fast becoming a world war between Muslims and Christians. We know he is right and the last days are here. The battle of Armageddon is being set in array. Here at the end, we want to be among those who can see realistically what is happening. When the Lord returns, I want Him to find me fighting for what He says is the most important thing: The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The needs here are great and we are in great demand everywhere because of America and what we represent. I am sure that if you and I can raise money for some of these projects that we will be able to be vicious soldiers of faith; able to fight to the end for the souls of man. But we will need to raise a lot of money quickly to do it. **We pray that God will help some of you make the decision to arm us financially.** We know how to fight. But we need your help. Will you help us deliver the Gospel as we meet the needs of the people here? **Let me just share with you some of what I have been presented with as needs:**

1. **A great need exists for small schools to be built** everywhere. Most schools in rural areas are falling apart due to the fact that they were built with mud and clay. Tajikistan experiences constant earthquakes and tremors happen almost every month. The mud and clay walls crack and the children are at great risk. International Aid organizations are well funded but they do not have the people who are willing to travel and live in these remote places where millions live. You can't just throw money at the needs; you have to go there and live there and manage the project. **Along the way, the door is opened to plant the Gospel.** We are willing to do this. But we need the money to build the schools. **I was presented yesterday with the need for \$30,000 to build a school.** What registered in my mind was that if we can raise \$30,000 we can plant a Church. **We need to start in two weeks in order to finish by September** when school starts. **First, we need \$1,000 to improve the road that winds up the mountain.** The project will call for about 40 truck loads of block, cement, rebar, lumber, and other materials to be driven miles up and around the mountain. We are praying first for someone to give the \$1,000 needed to improve the road; then for someone to give the \$30,000 pledge to build the school so the people in the village can start tearing down the old school and building the new one. We have national missionaries who are willing to work with me to build the school while evangelizing the people. There are men in American that I have worked with before who will also come and help get the school built by fall.
2. **We were detained and held by the Tajik border guards when we arrived last week.** We witnessed our faith to our guards and the Lord has opened another door of opportunity for us to evangelize through this experience. **We found out that the soldiers didn't have an exercise room.** They didn't even have a soccer ball, volleyball, or basketball to play with. The first thing Jeff and I did when we were released was to buy them some balls for exercise and to play with. They loved what we did and we have made great friends with the soldiers and officers of this elite unit. The Tajik border guards are subordinate only to the President of the Country. Last week when nobody came to even speak on our behalf (there are scores of Christians organizations here and all refused out of fear to help us-nobody wanted to stick their neck out) they became curious. The Lord blessed Jeff and I with *an excellent spirit* that they noticed. We witnessed to them and they were attracted to the light. Finally, the commander decided that he would take responsibility for us and he let us go. The US Embassy never even sent a representative to see that we were OK. We refused to pay a bribe and that got us more respect than we ever imagined. Two days ago Pastors Sergei and Valera arrived to join Jeff and me. They flew in from Moscow. When we went to the airport to pick them up, the border guard Commander invited me in to his office for tea. We sat and laughed while Sergei and Valera went through customs. The commander asked for their names and sent his officers to escort them through like VIP's. He is the most powerful man at the airport over every other person that works there. His authority is like Felix or the *Proconsul* on Paphos from Acts 13. **While we sat and talked, he asked if I could build them a workout room. As I thought on this later I began to see many ways that God could use this charity in the future.** If we build this, we will win many of these guards to Christ-just like the *Philippians jailer of Acts 16*. **The cost of this project will also be \$30,000;** and another Church will be planted next to the Dushanbe international airport. **The future for our missionaries will be secured by this kindness** and the border guard unit will escort our servant missionaries across their border with open arms. Now that would be a strategic strike.

3. There is a great need for teachers of mathematics, English, physics, and Russian. Also needed are coaches and trainers. Everywhere there are needs for people who would invest their lives through their talents to plant the Gospel in Central Asia.
4. **We need a house that we can make a home.** It is very expensive to rent places to stay, eat in cafés, or stay in hotels. This is bad exposure as it makes us look like something we are not: Rich. We cannot afford to travel back and forth as each trip costs nearly \$3000 for each person. **What we need to do now is to make a big investment here and buy a Mission house so teams will have a safe and healthy place to stay.** Many I have brought have gotten very ill from the water and food. There is a lot of typhoid, TB, and parasitical illnesses that we can catch. Having a place to call our home will make it possible to house a small medical staff, prepare our own food, and store our equipment. I want to buy a house that needs repairs so we can build it the way we need it. We want to buy this house outside the city so the cost will be cheaper and the taxes lower. **To do this we need to raise \$40,000.**
5. **We need \$17,000 to purchase both a car** (so we don't have to pay for drivers and taxis) **and a 4 wheel drive van** (so we can move our work teams around the country). The cost for a new *Niva* (Russian jeep that can ford rivers and climb mountains) is \$12,000. Chevrolet has a joint venture with the Russian car manufacturer *Niva*. A Russian four wheel drive van in good condition is \$5000 used. Earthquakes, floods, war, and disease I will happen every year. We need to be able to respond with material and spiritual help.

Those are a few of the needs that God is showing us. **Robyn and I believe that money should be raised to meet these needs thereby giving us a reason to be here and allowing us a door of utterance for the Gospel.** When I return from this trip, this will be our priority in the states. **We are praying that some of you will help us raise this money.**

Another option is to go underground and live here illegally until the Lord calls us home. We are willing to do this also. The thing that keeps us from doing this is the knowledge that **if American Christians would all give just a little, it would take about 2 days to raise the money we need.**

The world is coming apart and America is dying from its wealth. We are living on the *resurrection side* of the Gospel and our children are not learning what it means to *die to self*. What we need today are some Christians who are ready to make the *financial sacrifice* necessary to push the Gospel into the *Moslem world*. Remember that it was the same in many ways for the Apostle Paul. He went to places where it was dangerous and faced angry mobs who wanted to kill him. God spared his life and the world received the Gospel. America needs to see some servants of God sacrifice and die to themselves so that the glory of God through Jesus' blood can be resurrected through their *dying*. Now is the time when *Christians must go to war for the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. The US Government will never win *this war!* This is a war that we must fight on the mission fields of the world.

Today I go to give the doctrines to our converts in Turba. Please pray for them, and for the needs we have listed above. **For about \$150,000** (the cost of a modest home in the US), **we can plant the Gospel well into Central Asia.** But will we find a *Thessalonian* to give the gift that is needed?

In Christ,

Bro. Mark