

Front Line Ministries

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FLM

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SERVING THOSE ON THE FRONT LINES OF MINISTRY

From Bill

During February 2003, Keith Boyer and Doug & Suzanne White traveled to Kaluga, Russia, to minister to pastors and lay ministers. Combined, these three taught for almost 40 hours during one week!

Keith addressed Biblical lay counseling skills to better prepare crisis counselor workers to minister to the needs of the Russian people as well as to provide opportunities for Russians to receive Christ as their personal Savior. Doug & Suzanne educated several churches on how to start addictions recovery programs. This is a tremendous need in Russia given the high rate of alcoholism and drug abuse.

Since this was their first trip overseas with FLM, be encouraged as you read about God's ministry through them in Russia. Thank you for partnering with FLM to minister to the Russian people.

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Bill Wakefield

The Heart of the Matter by Keith Boyer

As a result of the trip to Russia, I have never been more certain of the similarity that exists between people around the world. In Kaluga, Russia, the food is different; the culture is different; certainly the language is different. Even the alphabet is strange to a Westerner. However, these differences are only at the very surface of a person's life. At the core, the heart of every human being is the same. It is this similarity that makes the truths of God's Word transcultural.

I have never been more certain of the foundational struggles within the life of every human being: to find ways to deal with the emptiness resulting from man's separation from God. The outward expression may change from culture to culture, but the internal dynamics are the same. I have never been more certain of the one hope that exists within the despair of this fallen world: that emptiness can only be filled through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

God's Word was the foundation of the 20 hours of lectures and discussion which comprised my portion of our week-long seminar in Kaluga. The participants were Christian leaders involved in church-sponsored counseling ministries throughout Russia. Some traveled over 12 hours in order to attend; two men came from Siberia! All who attended were seeking information to

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From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:16

Celebrate Recovery by Doug and Suzanne White

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."

--Proverbs 19:21

Kaluga is an ancient city, established around 1371, and has a population of 350,000. Like Baton Rouge, a river runs through it, and the petroleum industry is a major factor in the economy. But unlike Baton Rouge in winter, a blanket of thick snow envel-

oped the city, and absolutely NOTHING could have prepared us for the brutally cold weather we would endure during our stay. Sadly, the spiritual climate in Kaluga is as

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frosty as the weather. The Russian Orthodox Church continues to have a political and cultural stronghold on the country, making evangelism and outreach difficult, if not at times, impossible for the local church.

One can't help but notice the alcohol, cigarette, and pornography kiosks on every street corner with no lack of business at any of them. The locals scurry about with long, lonely expressions that seem to be crying out, "Is there any hope for me?" Here and there, an elderly woman can be seen begging for a few rubles, and teenagers share a bottle of booze in the cover of a storefront. While the grocery store may have a total of three brands of cereal, four aisles are devoted to alcohol products alone.

Despite the darkened spiritual climate, the Christians in Kaluga, although few in number, persevere in their faith with all the voracity of the early believers in the book of Acts.

The Christian recovery seminar was attended by 25 ministry leaders, some having traveled from as far away as Kiev and Siberia (625 miles)! The hearts of these people were incredible. Many of these the Lord had healed from drug addiction, alcoholism, and codependency, and now they were giving back to others with similar struggles through work in churches, rehab centers, prisons, and hospitals. They expressed how eager they were for information on addictions and Christ-centered treatments to be more effective in their ministries.

As Doug spoke on the Celebrate Recovery model, several atten-

dees expressed their eagerness to adapt such a format to their own programs. Doug shared how the Eight Recovery Principles and corresponding Beatitudes from Jesus' sermon on the mount applies to the lives of those of us in recovery. He taught on small-group dynamics, issues of leadership, responding to suicidal participants, and the power of grace in dealing with difficult people. The women, with few resources, had many questions for Suzanne about their relationships with addicted men and children. She ministered to them as a group and individually.

Despite our differences in language and culture, the body of Christ shares many of the same struggles, the same hopes, the same victories and defeats. As we bid our sad farewells at the conclusion of the seminar, many of the participants shared with us how this meaningful event had changed their lives, confirmed their callings to recovery ministry, and had empowered them to lead more effectively for the Kingdom. For this, we give God the glory.

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Doug and Suzanne White

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assist them in impacting the lives of people through the application of God's Word in Biblical counseling.

The need for trained Biblical Counselors is great in this troubled nation. Russia is a culture scarred by years spent under the domination of the atheistic philosophy of its' former communist government. Organized crime and corruption are rampant. The grayness and monotony of daily life leads to alcohol and drug

abuse. The financial hardship of daily existence contributes to the breakdown of the family and the lack of a Judeo-Christian foundation leads to accepted immorality and unlawful marriages.

Within the darkness a light is shining. Throughout the country there are churches seeking to make a significant difference. Churches are establishing and supporting drug and alcohol recovery centers, providing Christian counseling and telephone help lines and seeking ways to change peoples lives. The enthusiasm is palpable. Many within the church are willing to make great sacrifices to impact the lives of others.

But though the desire is great, the lack of training is a tremendous obstacle. Through your gifts and prayer support for the work of FLM, those on the frontlines of ministry were provided with the tools and training needed to fulfill their God given mission. Providing the basics of Biblical counseling theory and practice brought a great excitement for the growing potential for impact in people's lives. During small group discussions, real-life problems were addressed. Some who had been discouraged with the burden of their work were encouraged. New strategies and methods of addressing needs were discussed.

The training also brought about a request to come back in order to provide further training. With your continued support the work of Front Line Ministries will expand, possibly leading to further training and support for these who are making an impact across the nation of Russia.

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Keith Boyer