

Front Line Ministries

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FLM

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From Bill

SERVING THOSE ON THE FRONT LINES OF MINISTRY

Front Line Ministries was invited to Moscow, Russia, to work with the missionary teachers and missionary students at Hinkson Christian Academy. I must admit that as I boarded the 8 ½ hour flight from NYC to Moscow, the questions penetrating my mind were: *Why are we going all the way to Moscow, Russia? Do missionaries really need the support of the body of Christ in order to minister in foreign lands?* These questions were answered immediately upon arrival in Moscow.

We received a phone call from a distraught missionary couple regarding their 15 year old child. The preliminary diagnosis was cutting on the arms and severe anxiety attacks. Further evaluation revealed a young person experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder with suicidal ideation.

This young person cited strong fears of terrorism. In the past few weeks, terrorism episodes in Moscow had been increasing. A car bomb had gone off at a relatively close subway station entrance killing 11 people and injuring many more. Terrorists had killed over 350 innocent children and adults in a southern Russian school. Add to this the bombing of an arcade in Moscow (about a year ago), only an hour after her older brother had left the arcade. This student cited fears for her safety. She stated that life is not valued in Russia

to the same degree it is in America. She had seen 4 dead bodies in the streets of Moscow since living there as a missionary child.

There is a law in Russia that states that the last person seen touching a dying person is responsible for their death and legally liable. Consequently, people are frequently left in pain in the streets to die following accidents or health-related problems. Our FLM team can verify this first-hand as well. In returning from the retreat we conducted with HCA staff, we witnessed the carnage of a car accident with bodies left in full public view. I cannot imagine allowing adults to see this, much less children.

Unfortunately, this student's level of trauma necessitated immediate return to the U.S. for inpatient treatment for post-traumatic disorder. This young person's father is the director of a ministry which will now be without crucial leadership: a casualty of the trauma and stress of living in dark places to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a needy world.

The reason we go is because missionaries really do need the body of Christ to support them. flm

Bill Wakefield

Visit our website: www.front-line-ministries.org

The Tears of Teachers

by Keith Boyer

The planned purpose of our trip to Moscow was to conduct a retreat for the staff at Hinkson Christian Academy and to provide the students with a number of tools to assist them in their college and career choices. We sought to encourage the missionary teachers who minister to the children of other missionary leaders. Those missionary leaders direct a multitude of ministries throughout Russia.

The teachers of Hinkson Christian Academy are more than academic instructors. They provide support and community for the children of missionaries. That support and community helps to lift some of the concern that missionary parents have for the education and well-being of their families and, as a result, allows those parents to remain on the field.

Over the last several years, Moscow has become a fright-

ening place. The missionary children are affected by the sights they see and the news they hear. As we worked with the staff of the school, I was moved by the tears of concern that were shed by the faculty and staff. The staff members long to address the needs of their students in ways that would assist them in dealing with the struggles of an alien and, at times, cruel culture.

The FLM team was able to both provide critical incident stress management training and to assist the staff in the establishment of school community groups that seek to address some of the concerns and stresses of these students. By instructing them on characteristics necessary for effective community groups and the methodologies for using reflective communication in dealing with the students, we were able to enhance their effectiveness in accomplishing the teachers' stated desire to minister to the students. flm

Moscow on the Inside

by Tara Sedlacek

I didn't really get to know Moscow on this trip. That wasn't the point. While I didn't experience Moscow, I did experience missionaries experiencing Moscow. And that was the point. I wasn't on a tour to learn about Russian history or culture. I was in Moscow to minister to missionaries.

One of my tasks on this trip was to conduct a Ladies Night Out for the missionary teachers. I had just finished reading *The Ragamuffin Gospel* by Brennan Manning and thought some passages from the book would speak directly to the missionaries in Moscow – especially after participating in the retreat with them and talking to them about their work and life. I also had the sense that I was supposed to give the book to one of the missionaries. When the activities of the evening had ended and the snacking began, one of the women came over to me wanting to see the book and the passage that I read. She thought it would really mean something to her husband who was

struggling in his ministry. She was overwhelmed when I told her to take the book home – asked me three times that night if I really meant it and once more the next day!

Another missionary teacher gave us a card before we left thanking us for our visit to Hinkson Christian Academy. She wrote, *"Thank you for taking the time to talk, to ask questions, but most of all, thank you for taking the time to really listen. Though I have only spent a few days observing your group, you seem to me to be the rare people who actually listen with their whole beings . . . I hope you'll visit us again soon."*

I have been on 4 trips overseas working with missionaries. After each trip, I am even more convinced that missionaries need to be lifted up, encouraged, and cared for in tangible ways. FLM is meeting their needs, contributing to their effectiveness, and developing them to do the work to which God has called them. flm

Praise God with us for His provision and presence on this ministry trip to Moscow!

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*

Partnership

by Johnny Ervin

As I observed missionaries at work on the mission field, I was humbled. I quickly realized they are special people. They have responded to a call from God to live in settings that most of us would consider extremely challenging. They raise their families, perform their assigned jobs, build friendships and do their part in spreading the Gospel, all in what seems like a natural way of life. Yes, they learn how to navigate complicated transportation systems like the Moscow subway. They learn difficult languages with confusing alphabets, and they adapt to cultures that are not always easy to understand. They also face all the challenges that people that live in the United States face, such as paying bills, raising children and finding time for a daily devotional.

Missionaries are special to me because they are willing to trust God to guide them through these challenges. They are not super-humans. They have fears, worries and struggles like I do, but they are able to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to get them through the challenges they face. Watching them exercise their faith by relying on God to provide for their needs motivates me to exercise my faith in greater ways and to make myself more available to minister to others when the Holy Spirit

prompts me. One enormous opportunity for ministry is in the early stages of development with FLM.

Bill and I met with the leadership of Hinkson Christian Academy and outlined a detailed proposal for a partnership that will allow FLM to work regularly with HCA's missionary teachers, students and families to nurture, renew and equip the saints for the work of the Lord. Both FLM and HCA are beginning the process of raising the needed funds to allow this collaborative effort to be launched in the near future.

FLM is currently contacting selected organizations and individuals to secure funding support for FLM's part of the partnership. Hinkson Christian Academy in Moscow, Russia, is evaluating their interest and ability to partner with FLM, including providing funding for their part of the project. Our goal is to have two agencies ready to start this project by early 2005. Front Line Ministries continues to seek how God might use the diverse skills of our team to serve overseas missionaries. Even as we know God cares for missionaries, we believe he intends to use FLM to provide care on their behalf. flm