

REM's newsletter is a quarterly publication of Russian Evangelistic Ministries, Inc., an independent, fundamental Christian ministry established in 1993 to represent and aid the persecuted church of the International Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists in the former Soviet Union. The ministry supports church-planting efforts in Siberia, the Far East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus through indigenous pastors and missionaries who require a monthly support of \$200. The ministry also helps churches to construct church buildings at the cost of \$3,000 - \$15,000.

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Spiritual bread is supplied to Uzbekistan



It is almost impossible to deliver Christian literature to Uzbekistan in an official way. However, the Lord opens new ways, and the Word of God reaches Uzbekistan through His secret servants. Christian literature, which is banned in Uzbekistan, is confidentially distributed through evangelical churches. For this reason, even the children treat all Christian books or magazines with utmost reverence and study their content diligently.



Pay about these needs:



For security reasons, we do not show the faces of evangelists working in Uzbekistan, but their ministry is very fruitful. Despite the economic challenges, despite the difficulties of living among the Muslims, the Christian churches in Uzbekistan are not discouraged, but continue to live a victorious spiritual life and serve the Lord with great personal sacrifice. Our earnest prayers and any other support will be a great blessing for God's people in Central Asia.

RUSSIAN EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES INC
REV VLADIMIR A OKHOTIN
PO BOX 26307
SAN DIEGO CA 92196-0307
Address Service Requested



RUSSIAN EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES, INC.

REV. VLADIMIR A. OKHOTIN, P. O. BOX 26307, SAN DIEGO, CA 92196-0307
Tel (858) 566-3441 - OkhotinREM@gmail.com - RussianEvangelism.org



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Blessed Movement

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
Acts 1:8



Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, dear friends, I would like to greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God was manifested in two ways: a rushing wind and a fire. The rushing wind symbolizes movement. True Christianity in its essence cannot be stagnant; we clearly witness this movement taking place today when we read missionaries' letters about their work to win souls for the Kingdom.

The newsletter that you are holding in your hands is dedicated to the life and ministry of our fellow believers who serve the Lord in the predominantly Muslim regions of the former Soviet Union. Islam is a world religion that has spread its influence over hundreds of millions of people around the world, many of whom belong to the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham. Reminiscent of Ishmael's cry in the desert, the mournful call to prayers from the minarets can be heard across several continents today. Every day it marks the beginning of the day for millions of people in the Middle East.

Starting in the sixth century, Islam penetrated the lives of many nations, many of which had previously belonged to Christianity, and eclipsed for them for many centuries the beautiful face of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ! Today, there are estimated to be more than one billion adherents of Islam in the world. In 41 countries of the world today, Muslims constitute the majority of the population that forms the government in these countries.

The Bible tells us that the Lord responded to Abraham one day and said: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him..." (Gen. 17:20).

There is a memorable story in the Old Testament when the Lord revealed to Hagar, Ishmael's mother, a well with water and Ishmael was saved from death. Is there any doubt about what this water well means for the descendants of Ishmael? It is Christ! Even today, He calls to the sons of Hagar: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37).

Dear friends, it is with a special prayer that we would like to share with you this update about the life of believers in Central Asia.

Love in Christ, Rev. Vladimir A. Okhotin, President of REM.

San Diego, CA.



The city of Samarkand, one of the most significant Islamic centres, impresses with its ancient temples and mosques.

UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan is a country in Central Asia that is home to 32 million people, most of whom profess Islam. Until recently, Uzbekistan was part of Soviet Union. At that time, Soviet atheism had suppressed its historical religion, but today the country is rapidly returning to Islam. In the face of resurgent Islam, preachers of the Gospel do not keep quiet and make their voices heard.



Life and ministry of a local church in the city of Karshi, Uzbekistan.



One of the great examples of successful evangelism is the church in the Uzbek city of Karshi. This is the fastest growing evangelical church in Uzbekistan that also has the largest number of ethnic Uzbek believers. In general, the number of Christians in Muslim countries is precipitously decreasing: churches and other Christian institutions are closing. This, unfortunately, applies to some Baptist churches as well, but in the city of Karshi, in contrast to the surrounding decline, the church is growing!



The prince of this world does not wish to remain indifferent in the face of this triumph of life in Christ. As a result, the church is facing persecution. Living in extremely poor conditions, believers still bear the burden of numerous administrative fines. For many years, the authorities periodically interrupted church services. They storm a church, in the middle of a service, arrest the preachers behind the pulpit, film the rest of the believers on a video camera and confiscate Christian literature. To collect the fines, authorities remove life's essentials from believers' homes. One time, the authorities removed from a church everything they could find: a communion table, benches, a rug, and a piano. But these actions did not discourage the believers. The church still gathered next time for worship, as it has done in the past. According to the Central Asian custom, everyone situated themselves on the floor: the worship service, the Sunday school, and the prayer service were all held with believers situated on the floor. The candle of this church was not extinguished!



Church property being confiscated



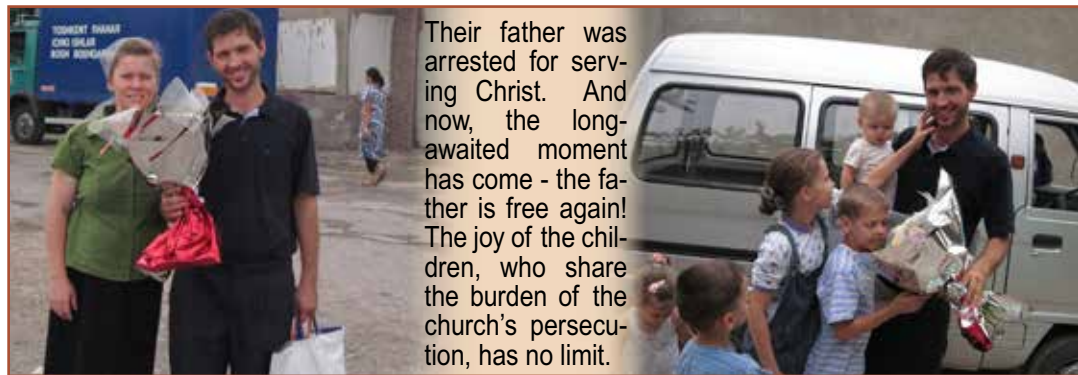
Christians situated on the floor after

Christians among Muslims in the city of Tashkent, Uzbekistan



These children from a large Christian family are waiting for the release of their father from a detention center. He should be released soon after another short-term arrest.

Christian families, as a rule, have many children. They live in a poor country, amongst poor people. They are delivered from abject poverty by their diligence and small farming.



Their father was arrested for serving Christ. And now, the long-awaited moment has come - the father is free again! The joy of the children, who share the burden of the church's persecution, has no limit.



This is the family of a preacher among the deaf people. The Lord has blessed his efforts. One third of the church consists of those who have a hearing disability. This is the result of his ministry. Recently, this believer went to be with the Lord; his wife and their ten children remain.

Persecution of the church in the city of Karshi, Uzbekistan

The fragile economic well-being of believers is affected by the excessive fines handed out by the authorities for attending church. One such visit by the authorities to the church in the city of Karshi will be remembered for a long time. That day, the authorities issued fines to nine church members in a total amount of \$24,000 USD. By doing so, the authorities intend to make Christians state's debtors.



The authorities conduct devastating house searches and confiscations in the homes of believers.

This is a large Russian-speaking family. Recently they experienced a profound sorrow: a newborn baby in their family died. Typically, this happens when the mother experiences difficulties due to conditions and a lack of nutrition.



The Apostle Paul's description of the Macedonian Christians can be aptly applied to the believers in the city of Karshi: "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." 2 Cor. 8:2