

# William Wood Missions To Russia



November – December 2013

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## PRAY FOR 3 RUSSIANS TO VISIT NEXT YEAR!

William, Andrey, Simeon and Antonena have been working hard trying to get everything in place for a visit to the United States early next year. Yes, it would be in the middle of the winter, but these folks scoff at Illinois winters. As you've probably noticed, the headline of this article doesn't mesh with the four who are working to try and accomplish putting this trip together. If the trip does occur, William will not be accompanying the group. As he explained in his most recent email, William doesn't have anyone in Greva who he can rely on to watch over his house and keep the wood stove going. So he's considering the possibility of coming home in 2015. In addition, William always pays for these trips with his own money rather than using mission funds. This is in keeping with our pledge that 100% of the funds that our donors generously give always go to Russia and are used by our mission team to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ through helping others.

Right now, the hang-up is with Simeon. William has tried to get Simeon to the U.S. for a visit twice before, and the Russian government has denied the request twice. The first time was because Simeon was a single male with no ownership in any property. With the second attempt, Simeon was married with two children, but because he still had no property, he was again denied. This time around Simeon has three children and owns the "church-home" in Don so maybe this time it will happen. The interesting fact is that Andrey and Antonena apparently have had no problem in getting all their paperwork processed and approved.

William has asked me to contact the governor's office here in Illinois. But they haven't been any help at all. They first directed me to an office titled "Foreign Trade" or something like that. But they transferred me to another department, who then suggested I contact a Federal department that I had never heard of either. That was another dead end. So if anyone knows of a way to contact someone in our government who can simply make an appeal to the Russian government, that would be most appreciated! Meanwhile, prayer has always worked well. So I'm asking everyone to pray that the Lord will lift all obstacles currently in the path of Andrey, Antonena, AND Simeon to get here for a month-long visit in the United States. What a delight it would be if the Lord would bless us with a visit from this trio!

One final note: Also in his email, William described again his frustration with not having a translator in Greva who could be with him fulltime. However, that hasn't stopped him from doing as much as possible for the people there. As he puts in his own words, "...people are asking for my help faster than I can do the work...maybe someday God will give me a voice."

These are the most recent concerns of our little mission in Russia. Please lift these up in prayer in the next several weeks, and we will see and trust in what God will do with them. Meanwhile, as always, thanks to you all for your wonderful support!

## GETTING TO KNOW TAMARA TARABUKINA

In the last issue of our newsletter, we got to know Antonena. This month we are happy to present Tamara Tarabukina!



Tamara was born and raised in Komi back in the times of the USSR. She was the baby of her family and was the only daughter, sister of three older brothers. She often describes herself as a spoiled child, which often happens when you're the baby girl among big brothers. Her parents never asked her to do any chores, and she sadly describes how in her younger years, really the only person she loved was herself. She married at a very young age, but she and her husband separated very soon, and she was left to raise her son, Alexander, by herself. Then Tamara married a second time, and she had two more sons.

However, by that time in her life, Tamara had become an alcoholic, along with her second husband. At this time, she was working in an office as a secretary. Every day she drank on the job until her boss finally fired her. That's when Tamara's life hit rock bottom. She remembers a time when she and her second son were walking past a grocery store, and her son said to her, "Mommy, shall we buy some bread tonight?" But she had no money at all. That moment hit her very hard as she finally realized that her life had completely fallen apart. That was in 1993, and at that time, she pleaded for God—any God—to get her out of that mess. Somehow, she was able to stop the drinking. Although she had not really found the Lord at that time in her life, she credits Him for being there for her to give her the strength to walk away from the alcohol. Her husband was furious with her because from that time on she wouldn't join him in drinking. Finally, he left her by herself with her three sons to raise.

In 2003, Tamara finally realized that she needed to find out the truth about God, and she knew that there was a woman in Don named Antonena who was a professing Christian. The two women got together, and Antonena shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with her. And as most of you know, 2003 was also the same year that a white van with a red heart first pulled onto the streets of Don and a short, older fellow named William and a tall, lanky Russian named Andrey got out and walked into that old, dilapidated "haunted" house. Tamara started attending the Sunday services. Then one day, Antonena invited her to go with her to a church service at a Baptist church in Syktyvkar. It was at that service that Tamara finally opened up her heart to Christ, repenting and asking Him to forever be the Lord of her life!

Since that time, Tamara has been a faithful member of the Don Christian Fellowship. She has a beautiful singing voice, and she loves to join the mission team on missionary trips and home visits. Only 8 years ago, the little church in Don celebrated its first Christian wedding. The groom was Tamara's son Alexander, who married a beautiful young lady named Helen. Presently, Tamara is residing in the village of Kebanyal and works as a social worker as she goes to social worker school. She is a great evangelist on her job and in her new community. We praise the Lord for what He has done in Tamara's life!

### **SIMEON'S NEW WHEELS!**

As reported in our last newsletter, the mission team was able to purchase a new van for Simeon's use. So that means that William has the old "heart van" in Greva with him, Andrey has the passenger van to use for missionary trips and collecting folks for various events. And now Simeon has the new equipment van, which can also be used to haul people around to various events.



Like William, Simeon is the handy-man of the mission team, but only had his old beat-up and unreliable car to haul tools and equipment to a work site once William took the heart van to Greva with him. So we put out a call to all of our donors for extra help to provide Simeon a new van! By the grace of the Lord, you all responded so generously, that we had enough funds to not only get the van but also an equipment trailer as well! Our mission team is now fully equipped to go anywhere, take anyone or anything in order to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ (as long as it isn't in the middle of the Russian winter)! Let's just hope and pray that the heart van holds out a little while longer. There are so many stories associated with that old van—illegally hauling people to and from church on very slick snow-covered roads (Praise God for protecting everyone during those trips!), hauling goats and chickens and various other animals to that rehab center in the middle of nowhere, serving as a hearse to carry bodies to and from the morgue, serving as a "motel" for William and Andrey as they patiently waited for the Lord to lead them to Don. Again, to all of you who helped, thanks so much for your wonderful generosity! You have mightily blessed our mission in Russia! May the Lord always return blessings to you all!