



CHRONICLES

THE

Summer 2008



Dear family and friends,

We have been very busy with several changes in the organization of our national staff over the past few months. God is at work expanding the vision and ministry of developing leaders from the Arctic to the Caucasus. See the back side for a special report one country.



The major happening in our family has to do with Linda's health. She has been greatly limited in her mobility, so this month she underwent the surgical knife and got a partial knee replacement (see picture taken right before surgery). She is recovering quickly and well, and is looking forward to being fully mobile when we go to Colorado for the wedding of our son, Chris, to beautiful Jessica.

Family News

- **Caleb and Marissa went away to Camp Peniel for a week—first time for both of them.**
- **Plans continue for the wedding: Chris and Jessica on October 4.**
- **Scot writes a weekly column for the local newspaper "The Potpourri." Lately he has been getting a lot of very positive feedback from people in the Magnolia area.**
- **Darcy is one of the leaders in the youth group at Magnolia Bible Church, and in July she will be a part of the summer mission project of the young people in Ecuador.**

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In this newsletter we will provide you with a little perspective on one of our newer, developing fields: Azerbaijan and the Azeri people who live in the region.

Azerbaijan and the Azeri People

Azerbaijan was one of the 15 republics in the USSR. It is bordered by Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Iran and the Caspian Sea. The Azeris (or Azerbaijanis) live in the territory of the ancient Parthians and Medes that were a part of the ancient Persian kingdom. Most are Muslim, but many are now open to the Gospel.

Azeris speak their native Turkish dialect along with another major language. In Azerbaijan, they speak Azeri and Russian. In a neighboring closed country, they speak Azeri and the local language. Eight and half million Azeris live in Azerbaijan, and it is estimated that 30 million plus live in nearby closed countries.

The Azeri Church and the East West Training Center



The Azeri churches in Azerbaijan are persecuted and, although it is unconstitutional, local bureaucrats will not allow them to own their own church buildings. So, one of the growing Azeri churches, the “Love Church,” meets on Sunday afternoons in the registered Russian Baptist church, which is pastored by a good friend of our ministry, Iliia Zhenchenko, the leader of all Baptists in Azerbaijan and recently elected leader of the alliance of all evangelical ministries in the country.

The Love Church has a very evangelistic pastor by the name of Sari (see picture to the left). Sari has been abused, falsely attacked on television, and imprisoned. He was an alcoholic, who in 1989 was saved. Later he led a leader of the Azeri Hezbollah to Christ, who now leads EWMI ministry in a nearby closed country. This church of about 400, in the capital city of Baku, continues to grow and do evangelism and church planting all over Azerbaijan and in the neighboring countries. Currently EWMI is providing training for 35 Azeri young leaders and church planters for the region. If we can complete the top story of the church/training facility in Baku (which will house dormitory space), we will be able to bring in another 30 students from distant places in Azerbaijan to be trained.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Praise God that . . .

1. Linda is recovering well from her surgery.
2. Joe’s trip to Russia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan went well.

Please continue to pray that . . .

1. Linda will continue to recover full use of her leg.
2. God would protect the aggressive evangelists in countries of the former Soviet Union and neighboring closed countries, and that the gospel would continue to impact thousands. Persecution has become especially strong in Uzbekistan and nearby closed countries. Also several other former Soviet republics with large Muslim populations are increasing their restrictions on evangelical ministries and limiting visas for western missionaries.
3. Funding will be supplied to complete the construction project in Azerbaijan where we house our training center for the region.