

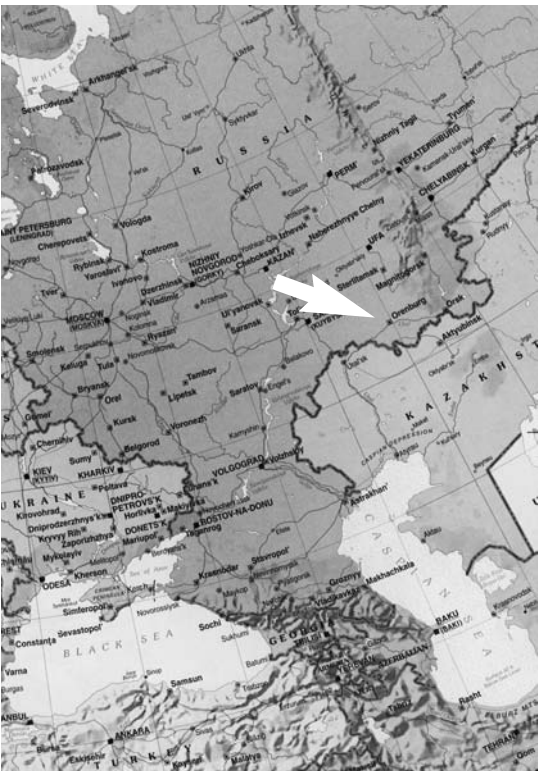


Keeping In Contact

News from Kontaktmission USA

April 2003

Reaching the Unreached in Russia



“Unreached peoples” may be defined as separate homogeneous groups of people with a common language living in a particular area who do not yet have a significant Christian church capable of thriving and multiplying. Missions organizations have identified, and some actively focus on, these groups throughout the world. (Did you know there are over 3,000 such groups, smaller ones, that do not even have the Bible in their own languages?)

And did you also know that one of the **largest** unreached regions of the planet to be identified is the Orenburg region of Russia? We have written about it in the past, because Kontaktmission has been working since 2000 to establish a work there with the capacity to transform the entire region for Christ.

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News from all over

News, notes and prayer requests from various Kontaktmission missionaries.

Nicu & Julia Gafencu, Margarete Gafencu — Iasi, Romania

We are thankful for a young man, Gabriel, who has made a decision for Christ and begun coming regularly to church from a neighboring village, Stincha. Please pray for him, since he is the only Christian in this village, and is being made to suffer for it.

Gerhard & Lena Rehwald — Novosibirsk, Russia

We are happy that approximately 60 women have registered for the women’s evangelistic studies we are offering on various dates in March and April. Please pray for both the teachers and the students.

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News from all over

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Ralf & Karina Husemann —

Hachenburg, Germany

We are in the process of setting up the nuts and bolts of the new church's organizational structure, so important for a proper beginning. We are also praying for a good place to meet in Hachenburg.

Christoph & Kornelia Stein —

Kamnik, Slovenia

With a total of 2 families and 5 more individuals we are ready to begin with real church-planting work in Kamnik. Also, once a month we are holding start-up meetings for additional interested locals wondering about our church.

Dieter & Karen Trefz (Director of Kontaktmission) —

Wüstenrot, Germany

Our annual Missionstreffen (all-mission summit meeting) will be held on Palm Sunday weekend. Please pray for safe travel back and forth for all the missionaries and participants. Also pray for our training days for our workers the following week. The topic will be juggling family and missions service.

Gunter & Gunvor Klement —

Gmünd, Austria

We have made initial contact with 75 Turkish families in town as they freely accepted the gift of a Christian calendar. Four men have checked out a copy of the "Incil", or Turkish New Testament. We are seeking the Spirit's guidance for the best way to build these relationships and initiate work among them.

Artur & Irene Schmidt —

Kaunas, Lithuania

Many of the evangelical church works here have too few leaders, and the churches are suffering. Because of the severe economic conditions many people are leaving for the west. We pray for encouragement for the churches and for strong new leaders.

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About Orenburg... There are about 2.2 million people in Orenburg region, which is located at the southern end of the Ural mountains in west-central Russia. Around 600,000 live in the capital city, also called Orenburg. When Kontaktmission made its initial contacts, there were a total of only 1000 Christians in the entire region with around 500 of these in the capital city itself. Some, but far from all, of these Christians were organized into a few small churches, none of which was thriving. Kontaktmission's start-up team held an open meeting for all interested in reaching the region, and well over 100 came. Since then, Kontaktmission has worked with those Christians to strengthen the local church in Orenburg city, to start two new churches in other population centers in the region, and to open a Bible training center.



Block housing in Orenburg



Peter and Olga Vogel

Peter and Olga Vogel, who are proud new parents since February of their first child, Alena, are Kontaktmission missionaries living in Orenburg city, and they are involved in the Orenburg project on several levels. One of their responsibilities is providing **team leadership** for other new church planters in the region, who are locals who have been trained or are being trained in the **Bible training center**.

Peter also works closely with the school itself. And, not least, Peter and Olga are already working toward **starting a new church** with some of the friends and contacts they have made. The Vogels already spoke Russian when they began to work in Orenburg just last year. Peter writes with excitement about their work, and always has both great news and challenges to report. They will be joined by another Russian-German couple, Alex and Helene Friesen, this summer.

The Bible Training Center. Key to the rapid spread of the gospel and development of new churches in a region like this is a *source of equipped leaders*. It would take years, even decades to generate enough interest in foreign lands like the US to raise up enough missionaries to make a difference. Instead, Kontaktmission uses the original pool of interested local residents by training them *theologically* and *practically* to be missionaries in their own region and helping them to begin their work. There has already been one graduating class from this program, and more will be produced in a steady flow.



The “Andrejs”

success will be the leadership and fellowship of the Kontaktmission team.

Let’s summarize: about **4 years ago** an initial meeting was held in an “unreached region”. Now there are encouraged Christians, a fully functional leadership training center, a group of trained local leaders, a great missionary family in place with another one coming (all of whom already speak Russian), 3 new church planting projects, and great hope for the future. ***It’s all in God’s hands for sure, but we believe the Orenburg region will not be remaining on the “unreached peoples” list for very long.***

Candidates on their way

As you receive this, a US couple just entering the candidate phase with Kontaktmission, **Mark and Corinne Wilson**, are in Germany becoming acquainted with the Kontaktmission team, doing some initial discovery and research about where they might serve, and beginning the long process of preparation. Mark and Corinne have been working for years in their careers in the States, and their kids are raised (hard to tell by looking at them, we know), so they are now ready and excited to begin a church planting ministry in Germany.

Kontaktmission’s leadership is convinced that American couples, especially when teamed with German couples, are a great choice for planting churches in Germany. We believe Mark and Corinne have the gifts and maturity that will make them excellent church planters, and they believe with us that teaming up with German partners is the right way to go. We will keep you informed as their journey progresses.



Mark and Corinne Wilson

The “Andrejs” Andrej Nikitin and Andrej Plastun are the two *already-trained* church planters already on the job in other cities in the Orenburg region. We hope to be able to share about their works in more detail in the future, but suffice it to say that great things are expected from both of these new churches, despite severe economic hardships. Key to their

Just
\$30
per month
totally supports a
future Russian-speaking
missionary!

Kontaktmission is also helping to finance the Biblical and pastoral education of many of these committed young future church-planters. Please let us know if you would consider personally supporting a future Russian-speaking missionary for only *\$30 per month*. This amount – amazingly – takes care of nearly all of the student’s needs. You will receive information about the student you sponsor as well as communication from them.

*Contact us if
you can help!*

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The Harris Family
Rob & Carla with Alissa & Ryan

A Cultural Insight...

by Rob Harris

Because of our connection to Germany, we have often been asked in recent weeks about the Iraq situation and the European reaction to it. I just shuddered as I typed my name as the author of this article, because it may offend someone, and possibly misrepresent someone. But when the United States delegation began to angle toward a UN vote on war in Iraq, I knew that Germany would vote against it, and would side with those on the security council who would vote against it. Because I know after living there and countless conversations about The War, "*Der Krieg*" (which always seems to refer to WWII, almost as if there were never any others), Germans are now pacifists, at least most of them. They were arguably one of the most warlike nations on earth, but *Der Krieg* and its outcome changed all that.

Once, at the end of a fun evening with some German friends (he was also a church leader), I casually made a comment about some aspect of The War and asked their opinions. I got silence, then a rushed excuse to break off the evening quickly. The friendship was not injured, but that conversation was not going to

happen, as if it would have been too painful or shameful to speak with an American about The War, or just to talk about it at all.

A dear friend of ours, a wonderful Christian man who was like our German father in many ways, just died three weeks ago. He had been a *Waffen SS* soldier on the Russian front in The War. He was horrified to learn upon returning after 4 years in a POW camp in France that only 13 of the 39 young men in his neighborhood ever returned. "Hitler made us all cannon-fodder", he said, and "*we never even realized it until years later.*"

Another German friend of mine and I were e-mailing recently about the current Iraq situation, among other things. He plans to visit us in the US, and asked if he "would have to constantly explain the German *nein.*" Then he added, "Nah, everybody already understands why we're all against war, don't they?" To most of them, including the politicians, it just seems all too obvious they don't belong in the business.

Kontaktmission USA

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