



**We returned on September 17 from 17 days of ministry in Central Asia. It was an exhausting yet fulfilling time ministering to these often oppressed, persecuted and in many ways overlooked pastors and spouses.**

Arlie Francis, Connie and I were the team flying to Georgia, which borders on Russia, to meet up with 54 attendees at the conference coming from several different denominations. For many it was the same story, the first time that the husband and wife had ever attended a conference together. For others it had been decades. What a breath of fresh air this time was for them, an oasis in the desert.



One of the ladies wrote this summary of her experience:

*"It is amazing to be in such a wonderful place and hearing God's Word delivered by the humble spirit with power. God's face shown by using each speaker's life experiences and feelings will remain in my heart forever. Many thanks for this wonderful present. You are wonderful people. You woke me up once more and gave me a chance to think deeply. I am grateful to our Lord for your presence and encounter. I wish we would have conferences like this in the future." Ket*

One pastor who is a bishop over 72 Baptist churches summarized his time there in this way:

*"I have been inspired and fascinated by the wonderful lectures. Teachers had a good combination of theoretical background and practical experience. They were very sincere while sharing their personal stories. The topic was very interesting and encouraging which I have rarely come across anywhere else. I have realized how important it is to organize seminars about marriage in our churches. I also would like to express my personal gratitude to our lecturers for their care, love*



*and financial contribution (that is you who are reading this update). We hope they will come to Georgia in the nearest future. May God bless them abundantly!"*

*Pastor Merab*

Ivan, was the contact person for these Central Asia conferences. He says,

*"Pastor Stephen and Connie Troxel have had a tremendous impact on the development of the Gospel movement in Eurasia through the Shepherd Support conferences. Using the wisdom of their experience and the pure word of God, they have been building up*



*pastors and their families to serve the nations in our region. The way they design the program and recruit other team members to share makes their conferences exciting, powerful, effective and enjoyable. We look forward to host them again in other countries throughout Eurasia."*

The following weekend we flew back through Istanbul and linked up with another team member, Joe Carroll, who joined us for the last week in a country that needs to remain anonymous for safety reasons for the believers there. It was a very special time, under the radar screen with 56 attendees, mainly first generation believers who came to Christ in most unusual ways from either atheism or Islam. I wish that you could have heard their testimonies as we were able to hear some of them. Most of them are pastors of small house churches for obvious reasons. Again, this was the first time for most of them to ever come together with



their spouses and families. In fact, including the total members of their families there were nearly 100 gathered in this remote setting outside of the capital city. Since this was the first conference where Joe has accompanied us, I will share some of his comments:

*“One of the unique aspects of this conference was the inclusion of wives and children. I think every wife there indicated that this was the very first time she had ever been able to attend a ministry event conference with her husband and they were thrilled.”*



*Shepherds’ Support made this financially possible. The main*

*focus of our 14 sessions was on Finishing Well in Ministry and Marriage.*

*“One of the greatest needs that became apparent was the need for husbands to value their wives. Even as pastors and ministry leaders, there were husbands attending that struggled with spousal abuse. We directly confronted this and the 3rd day we witnessed visible expressions of conviction and repentance. We were able to counsel with some and we are hopeful for growth to occur. We received so many heartfelt words and tears of appreciation for our coming. Thanks again for your support.” Joe*

Connie and I were so thankful for the team that God put together and that Arlie and Joe were able to minister with us. It was a big relief to the two of us. And we are thankful to you for making these conferences possible. Before the end of the year I will send another update and also bring you up to speed on what our plans are for next year. Indeed the “fields are white unto harvest” everywhere we look. May God bless you. We have so much to be thankful for as we enter this Thanksgiving season. At the top of our list is each one of you.