



On September 2 our team of 6, consisting of retired 3 Star General Tex Brown and his wife Ann, Bob Burrows and his wife Chris, Connie and I boarded a plane for Batumi, Georgia via Istanbul, where we overnighted to adjust to the time change.

Batumi is a city located on the Black Sea. At the airport we were met by **Valeri, the conference coordinator**, and transported to Ureki, a resort (Motel 6-like) on the Black Sea, about 45 minutes from Batumi. All of our luggage arrived on time with us and though overweight on some bags, we never had to pay any extra fees. This was all in answer to your prayers.

- ✘ On Sunday we ministered in a local church consisting of quite a few younger people. Tex and Bob shared and then I gave the message. The conference began on Monday afternoon with 45 couples from 5 different countries — 90 people altogether. According to feedback, those five days were much needed and even life-changing for many of the couples. All of us had opportunities to speak and we could see the wisdom of having come as a team.

Here is what **Pavlik and Natalya** had to say: *“We thank the Lord and you for this conference. With 11 children we rarely find time for just the two of us to have some rest and go somewhere together. We thank you not only for this opportunity to rest, but also for all the edifying teaching about family and pastoral ministry.”*

From a Georgia conference participant: *“Coming here was a revelation for me through the sermons of each brother (and sister). Even before we came here, on Sunday I was crying and groaning at the edge of a big pit of depression due to many unsolved issues and problems at home. The Lord knew this condition of mine and He brought me here. The first sermon which I heard was from Connie on Tuesday, because we arrived late. It awakened me! The Lord brought her here and through her He told me those things that I needed to hear. At that moment a black veil was taken away from my head. I clearly evaluated my depression. Immediately I looked at myself through the eyes of Christ. But thanks be to God I was not the only one which got freedom. On Wednesday my husband opened his heart to me saying that he was glad that we came here. What a good thing did Christ do that He brought us here! You many not believe it, but during the last 2 years this was the first time that we prayed together and glorified His love. For a long time we didn’t speak from our hearts. Right here we decided to solve all of our problems as TWO, TOGETHER. I am thankful for His love and for YOU.”*



From **Levani and Irma Gelashvili**: *“First of all we want to thank our American brothers and sisters (which includes each one of you, our supporters!) for 5 wonderful days where the team shared their experience with us. Besides this, we became friends with our brothers and sisters in Georgia and were delighted by the fellowship with them. We liked very much the location of hotel, service and most importantly, that my spouse of 19 years and I for the first time had resting time alone, so that we weren’t concerned about anything. May the Lord bless you all.”* 

A final impression comes from **Alex (our gifted translator) and his wife Marekhi**. *“This was truly a wonderful week for me! I thank God and you that I had such an opportunity. To be honest, I had a vacation last month, where I rested in the countryside. But when I returned from this conference I realized that I felt better spiritually and more ready for work than from the previous vacation, despite the fact that I was translating (working) here! As for my wife, Marekhi, these were happy days. She spends her time at home working for a job at the computer and cleaning the house, plus cooking. So, for her, to be free from the daily routine was a dream. Plus being together at such a place, fellowshiping with brothers and sisters from Georgia and other countries... she said that it was the best week this year! Thanks to God and you for that.”*

 **Pastor Bob and Chris Burrows** accompanied us for the first time. They are from Reno, Nevada and both have pastoral hearts. Bob is known for his passion for making disciples. They write: *“Thank you for giving us the amazing opportunity to travel with you and Connie, and Tex and Ann to Georgia. We believe that the Lord put our team together and it was very well balanced. It was a blessing to experience first-hand the value of encouraging pastors and their wives in developing countries to continue on in the ministry God has given them. It is hard to believe that so many had never experienced a honeymoon or time together as a couple while in ministry. They so appreciated the generosity of Shepherds’ Support in providing this experience for them. During the teaching time their attentiveness and hunger for the Word was very evident. The variety of teaching by the three couples on the team made the conference more effective. We were truly blessed to have had the opportunity to go and look forward to another opportunity as the Lord directs. “*

We agree! It was a great team that God assembled. We had lots of good feedback regarding all six team members. I want to give you an account of how God protects and provides for us.



On Thursday night I was going down some dimly lit and uneven stairs (4 flights) to meet with the new archbishop of the Baptist churches. He had a number of his pastors there. Valeri, the organizer was in front of me. When I was about 3 steps from a landing I missed a step and fell head first on to the concrete, landing on my left side. I was able to shield my head from hitting using my left hand and arm. It was an exceptionally hard fall. My left knee, hip, elbow and shoulder took the blow. I laid there for a moment. Valeri wanted to get medical help immediately. I hesitated, assessed the damage, and discovered there was none! There were no scrapes, abrasions, bruises, etc. There was not a mark on me. There was no soreness at all. I said to Valeri "I will pay the price tomorrow." The next morning I had absolutely no trace of a hard fall. There was not a smidgen of soreness. It is the closest thing that I have experienced to a miracle. Tex had quite effectively spoken the night before on the soldier's Psalm, Psalm 91. Verse 11 came to my mind: "For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone." I felt that...the Lord bearing me up and keeping me from any harm. I would have been remiss not to share that with you and give Him the Glory. Your prayers are so desired and so needed! He does answer prayer!

☒ This was our last conference this year. We have 3 conferences scheduled for next year, which I will update you on soon. Several couples at this conference met with us and beseeched us to come to their countries. Many doors throughout Eurasia are wide open. Pray with us about how to meet this need. We thank God for His protection and for your provision. We are blessed to be an extension of your generosity.

***Pastor Steve Troxel***