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Dear Friends,

July 2009

Since our last letter, Botho has been to Volgograd. To organize this trip was not easy - or rather unusual. In January, Botho bought all the tickets and everything seemed to be ok. But, then it turned out to be an adventure! In March, he received information that the flight plans had to be changed because there were no more late evening flights from Moscow to Volgograd. To stay overnight in Moscow is extremely expensive, so we chose a connection from Berlin (about a six-hour drive from our house) to Volgograd and back from Astrachan (about a ten-hour trip by night train from Volgograd) to Frankfurt. On Thursday, three days before our departure, Aerflot called from Moscow to our home to say the flight from Berlin would be later; so much later that the arrival time would be exactly the departure time of the connecting flight. (This was not about changing airports.) The person on the phone agreed we were confronted with a problem but could not fix it. Botho was told he should call the Aeroflot Office in Frankfurt. Finally, he got the evening flight to Volgograd that he had booked in the beginning! Remember, all the changing happened because this flight was cancelled. We were glad that we had not already left for Berlin to visit our friends there before the airline contacted us by phone. Fortunately, we had attended a meeting at a local church that evening to share the possibilities and needs of evangelistic children's camps in Ukraine that a volunteer missionary of Theological Teaching Service is answerable for. *If not for that meeting, how could we have received the information about the flight?*



A CHURCH IN ASTRACHAN



MOTHERLAND STATUE
IN VOLGOGRAD

Over the last several years, the churches in Volgograd have asked Botho to give seminars about Ezekiel. Finally, he accepted the challenge and took the time to prepare the new curriculum. The teaching was well received. The pastors, especially, made a lot of notes. On both Saturdays when Botho was in town, he was asked to teach about the Major Prophets at the Volgograd Theological College. Fortunately, he could use an older curriculum which 'only' had to be extended and adjusted. Because Botho had to travel to Astrachan on his way home, he had the opportunity to explain the Book of Ezekiel there also. The members of two churches met for more than seven hours to listen to the teaching.

SHARING 2 THOUGHTS

√ God explained to Ezekiel why he had to judge the city of Jerusalem. It was not because God was in a bad mood, but it was the consequence of ongoing faithlessness of the people of Israel. It became clear to Botho of the parallel teaching of the Major Prophets; that not only Ezekiel spoke about judgment, but his contemporaries, Jeremiah and Daniel, did also. God's judgment is not inappropriate. We read that the Jews did not observe the Ten Commandments. (The first commandment was "You shall not have any other gods besides me.) In Daniel, we read that Israel did not observe the year of Sabbath that was to be held every seventh year. Israel disobeyed God's will more than once. With His great patience, God waited . . . and seventy times Israel skipped the year of Sabbath. So, He applied the emergency brake and let the land rest exactly the same amount of years that Israel did not obey. After that, Israel returned to a country that had rested and was now clean in the eyes of God.

√ Ezekiel's responsibility was mentioned twice. God told him that he was the city guard and to pay attention so that no harm would come to the city. He was to warn those deported to Babylon that they should learn from the mistakes of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. How can we apply this? Do we warn the people around us about the coming judgment? We have to do it as best we can and share the Gospel. This is our responsibility. Now, we are the "city guards".

Botho has been home now for two weeks and, day-by-day, the routine slowly takes over – office work, mowing the lawn and preserving the fruits from the garden. We don't have a nice, dry, warm summer yet. But, when the sun comes out and the evenings get warm, we enjoy our yard.

Please pray for "the vacancy under the Word of God" in a Christian vacation home in former East Germany where Botho will teach the book of Job this month.

We wish for you a great summertime!

Yours,



Botho and Gisela

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