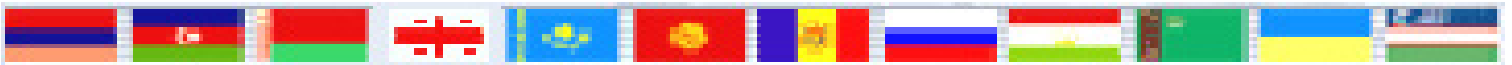


The Russian Bible Society  
**B**IBLE **J**OURNAL



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*Giving the Pure Word of God to the Language Groups in the Commonwealth of Independent States*



**Russian Bible Society Welcomes Brother Alex Thomson**

Rejoice that our RBS Board of Directors met August 21st in Asheville to interview Brother Alex Thomson with a view of becoming a consultant for the Russian Bible Society in Bible translation. After about three hours of questioning, our Board of Directors extended a unanimous call to our brother, which he accepted.

Due to prior commitments, he will only be able to work 60% to 70% of his time on Russian Bible Society projects. However, his present work commitments may change, and God willing, he will then come full-time in consulting work with the Russian Bible Society.

His first commitment will be to make contact in Ukraine with Brother Yura Popchenko as they wrap up the Ukrainian New Testament Project. Then he will begin making needed contacts for a Northern Caucasus translation. There are about 200,000 souls speaking that language, and they have never had a publication of even a New Testament in their language. Finally, he will begin arranging translators for a new Georgian translation. Pray for our brother and all of the necessary wisdom and contacts he will need for this ministry in Northern Caucasus and Georgia.



*Alex and Elena Thomson*

**Romanian Revival — 1973**

For more than twenty years, the people of Romania suffered under the iron-fisted, Communist rule of Nicolae Ceausescu—one of the most repressive and corrupt dictators of the twentieth century. Christians were especially targeted by the regime and were subjected to intense intimidation and relentless harassment. Evangelical believers were ridiculed and were referred to in derision as “repenters.”

In 1969, the government revoked the preaching license of a pastor in Timisoara. After struggling to find work, the pastor finally ended up gluing paper shopping bags to support his family. For four years, as he did this work, he prayed for revival. In 1973, his license was miraculously reinstated and he was assigned to the Second Baptist Church in Oradea.

From the outset, his ministry in Oradea was characterized by an emphasis on prayer. Church members were encouraged to pray for the salvation of their unbelieving friends, relatives, and colleagues.

However, this pastor’s burden was not simply for those outside the church. He was convinced that the revival for which he had been longing and praying all these years must begin in the church. He explained to his people that unbelievers weren’t the only ones who needed to repent. Unapologetically, he stressed the need for the “repenters” to repent.

Not content to deal in generalities, he was straightforward in pointing out what he viewed as habitual sins among the “repenters”—issues he believed were hindering the church from experiencing true revival.

In our age of moral ambiguity that asserts every person’s right to determine what is right for himself, many will struggle with the stance this pastor took in his church.

For example, he confronted his people about stealing from the state. The government had confiscated and collectivized

*continued on page 2*

## **Romanian Revival (continued from page 1)**

the farms and factories, forcing the people to turn over to the government the fruit of their labors. The people had felt justified in keeping back from their “own” farms and factories a share of what they believed rightly belonged to them. The pastor preached that this was wrong and led them to take a vow not to “steal” from the government.

Another issue related to the use of alcoholic beverages. Oradea is in an area with many vineyards, and drinking was an accepted part of the culture, even among believers. The pastor believed that drinking alcohol led to sin, and he challenged the believers to take a vow of total abstinence.

Many contemporary evangelicals would be uncomfortable categorizing these particular practices as “sin.” While there may be room for discussion, the point is that the “repenters” repented—they began to take holiness seriously; they turned from everything they believed was displeasing to God.

When they did, God sent revival. After six months of preaching, praying, and repenting, the fruits of the cleansing began to manifest themselves. One of the most obvious results was the conversion of great numbers of unbelievers. Before the revival began, this church of five hundred members had baptized about ten new believers each year. From June to December 1974, the church in Oradea baptized some two hundred fifty new converts! Approximately four hundred new believers were baptized over the following two years—in a country where a public profession of faith in Christ required a readiness to be martyred for Christ.

The revival could not be contained within a single church. It spread throughout the surrounding area, and its impact was experienced in evangelical churches throughout the entire country. The revived believers were infused with courage and began to stand up for what they believed. Many believe that this fire in the hearts of God’s people was one of the elements that ultimately led to the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime fifteen years later.

In many of our churches, we’re knocking ourselves out trying to be “relevant” so we can attract new members. We don’t want to appear to be different, extreme, or too spiritual, for fear of turning off unbelievers. By contrast, once the church in Oradea was willing to be different from the world, the very unbelievers who had once ridiculed them were irresistibly drawn to Christ.

We have accommodated to the world rather than calling the world to accommodate to Christ. When will we realize that the world is not impressed with a religious version of itself? Our greatest effectiveness is not to be found in being like the world; it is to be found in being distinct from the world, in being like Jesus.

The absence of revival in evangelicalism today certainly does not reflect a lack of activity and opportunities. We have more Christian concerts, conferences, programs, strategies, media events, books, tapes, magazines, and radio/TV ministries than any generation in history. In fact, we have more prayer gatherings and more events and resources geared toward “spiritual awakening” than ever. But something is missing.

I remember discussing this matter with a ministry leader who observed, “Lots of people are praying, and lots of people are repenting, but so few are changing their lifestyle.” A light went on in my mind when I heard that statement. The fact is, if people are not changing their lifestyle, they’re not repenting. And if we’re not repenting, then all our singing and praising and praying and producing are useless—perhaps worse than useless, because all the noise and activity may deceive us into thinking that we’re OK and that we are actually experiencing revival.

### **TAKING HOLINESS SERIOUSLY**

How important is holiness to you? How much thought, attention, and effort do you devote to the pursuit of holiness? Are you intentional about putting away everything that is displeasing to God and living a holy life? Is it your priority—your mission—to be holy?

How important is your children’s holiness to you? Do you care more about their grade point average, their batting average, and their earning capacity, or about their purity of heart and life? Are you consciously training them to be godly? Does their sin drive you to your knees? Does it cause you to plead with God to give your children a heart for righteousness and to plead with them to repent?

How concerned are you about the holiness of the body of Christ? Does it grieve you:

- when Christians are unloving and unforgiving,
- when they are gossips and gluttons,
- when they have more interest in possessions and pleasure than in spiritual riches and pleasing God,
- when they dishonor their parents and divorce their mates,
- when they are self-absorbed and self-promoting,
- when they are cantankerous and contentious,
- when they use profanity and pornography,
- when they can sin glibly and without blushing?

What would happen in our day if the “repenters” were to repent? What if believers were to get honest about their sin and serious about pursuing holiness? Might we not once again experience the manifest presence of God in our churches? Might we not see God supernaturally convert multitudes of lost sinners to faith in Christ?

C. H. Spurgeon put it this way: “In proportion as a church is holy, in that proportion will its testimony for Christ be powerful.” Could we honestly say that most of our churches have a powerful testimony for Christ? If not, what does that say about the condition of the church? And how exercised should we be about all this?

(Taken from *Holiness: The Heart God Purifies* by Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth (©2005). Published by Moody Publishers. Used by permission. [www.MoodyPublishers.com](http://www.MoodyPublishers.com).)

Part 2 will follow, God willing, in the next *Bible Journal*.

## Two New Projects

At the recent meeting of the Russian Bible Society Board of Directors, they approved printing 10,000 copies of the Russian Goetze Study Bible. God willing, 3,000 copies will go to the Russian-speaking Baptist churches in the Republic of Georgia. The other 7,000 copies will go to the Ukraine for the Russian-speaking Baptist churches there. The Ukrainian Russian Baptist churches have rejected the new corrupt translation of The Bible Society in Russia.

We have not finalized printing arrangements, but an initial quote from a printing house in Belarus is about \$3.64 a copy or \$36,400.00 for printing a 1,344-page Bible bound hardback and delivered to both Georgia and the Ukraine. This does not include color maps at the back. I'm waiting on a quote from our South Korean printer for this same project, which I'll probably receive early in September. Then we'll place an order for these 10,000 Goetze Bibles.

Rejoice that we have \$19,648.70 in a Scripture Project fund and \$3,077.50 in the Russian Bibles for Georgia fund, which means we'll only need \$13,673.80 to completely fund this project. Pray for the Lord's leadership about which printer to use and for His supply of the rest of the funds.

Pray for the Lord to prepare hearts of saints and sinners in both Georgia and Ukraine for these Bibles.

### **Are Georgian Christians Moving Toward a Time of Persecution?**

For over two months the capital of the Republic of Georgia, Tbilisi, has been in turmoil. In a recent call to friends in Georgia, there was a mention of fear of losing "freedom" of speech, as one of the two TV channels which opposed the present government has been purged of "hosts" and many are saying "they do not want to be under the government of the USSR again." The present turmoil commenced around June 20th, and the following article by Sophiko Megrelidze, AP, June 21st, gives the background of the unrest in the Republic of Georgia:

"Riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas and unleashed water cannons early Friday to drive thousands of protesters away from Georgia's parliament building and off the capital's main avenue. As dawn broke, police appeared to be in full control of the city center after a night of clashes that injured scores.

"The unrest began when thousands of demonstrators calling for the government to resign tried to storm the parliament.

"Nearly 70 people — 39 police and 30 civilians — were treated in hospitals for injuries in the night of clashes, said David Sergeenko, an adviser to the prime minister. But the Rustavi-2 television station reported 100 injured demonstrators had been counted at one hospital.

"After demonstrators were pushed away from the parliament, police tried to drive them away along Tbilisi's main avenue. But demonstrators resisted for hours and police launched barrages of tear gas.

"Many of the demonstrators tried to fend off the tear gas with surgical masks or by holding clothing to their mouths. Some brandished shields that apparently had been taken from police.

"By 5 a.m. (0100 GMT), protesters appeared to be fully dispersed and phalanxes of police accompanied by armored vehicles strode down the avenue.

"The unrest was sparked by the appearance Thursday of Russian legislator Sergei Gavrilov in the building as part of an assembly of legislators from Orthodox Christian countries.

"Gavrilov has supported calls for independence for the Georgian breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, over which Georgia lost control in a 2008 war with Russia. He is also a supporter of Russian President Vladimir Putin, a figure despised by many Georgians.

"Georgia and Russia broke diplomatic relations after the war and although steps have been made to restore normal relations, animosity toward Russia is strong and many Georgians resent any sort of official visit by Russians.

"The visit of the Russian delegation of the Orthodox assembly already had prompted complaints, but the anger turned into a street protest after Gavrilov sat in the chair of the Georgian parliament speaker during a session of the assembly.

"We asked the government not to allow this guy to come here, but they have allowed — not only allowed to cross the Georgian border, but to sit in the chair of the president of the Parliament. So, this was the biggest humiliation of the nation and that's why this big crowd came despite these bullets and tear gas people are here and still fighting," said Gigi Ugulava, a top figure in the opposition European Georgia party."

*continued on page 4*

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## RESPONSE COUPON

**YES, HERE IS MY GIFT OF SUPPORT TO MEET THE SPIRITUAL NEED OF PRECIOUS SOULS**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75.00 \_\_\_\_\_ \$150.00 \_\_\_\_\_ \$300.00 \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER

\_\_\_\_\_ Georgian Projects

\_\_\_\_\_ Georgian Widows

\_\_\_\_\_ Russian Bibles for Georgia and Ukraine

\_\_\_\_\_ Ukrainian Translation

**Are Georgian Christians? (continued from page 3)**

Our concerns are not political, but will the present government of Georgia impose the same restrictions imposed by the Russian government on Christians, holding prayer meetings and Bible studies in their homes, resulting in persecution by the Soviet police? Remember the Russian Law effective July 20, 2016. We reported in our third quarter 2016 *Bible Journal*: *Sergey Ryakhovsky, who is co-chair of an advisory council of heads of Protestant churches in Russia said: "The bill violates the fundamental rights and freedoms in the sphere of religious freedom. The Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 28, says that everyone is guaranteed freedom of religion, including the right to freely disseminate religious and other convictions." He also noted international law asserts the "inalienability of the right to distribute their religious beliefs." And, he pointed out, the plan "is in contradiction with Article 30 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Believers tend*

*to talk about their faith, and no law can forbid...it," he said. "The Soviet past reminds us that many people of different faiths were persecuted for their faith, for spreading their beliefs, the Word of God. ...Our fathers paid fines and were sentenced to prison terms for 'illegal assembly,' for 'religious agitation,' for preaching and prayer. And today we see clearly that the proposed bill gets us back to that shameful past." Therefore, we need to pray for our brothers and sisters in the Russian Federation as they again have a law hanging over their heads prohibiting any witness outside of "authorized church buildings and religious sites." The "anti-evangelism law carries fines up to US \$780 for an individual and \$15,500 for an organization. Foreign visitors who violate the law face deportation. Russia has already moved to contain foreign missionaries."*

Please pray for the Christians in Georgia to use their present freedom to evangelize and to use each day to be witnesses.



“And the times of this [our] ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” (Acts 17:30)

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**The Lord's Treasury  
for Last Quarter 2019**

	Total Need	In Hand
Georgian Projects	\$2,405.00	\$2,368.85
Georgian University Student Ministry	\$675.00	\$776.52
Georgian Widows	\$1,125.00	\$968.36
Russian Bibles for Georgia / Ukraine	—	\$3,077.50
Ukrainian Translation	\$3,150.00	\$4,468.11
Scripture Projects	—	\$19,648.70

**RUSSIAN BIBLE SOCIETY**

THE RUSSIAN BIBLE SOCIETY has been at the frontline of providing Bibles for Russia and its people since 1944. We believe the greatest gift we can give to any people is the pure Word of God in their native tongue. Therefore, we are committed to continually providing word for word translations based on reliable manuscripts, such as the Received Greek Text. Thus, the Bibles we publish are the "Synodal Translation" of the Russian Bible and its accurate translation into the minority languages of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

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*“For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.” (2 Corinthians 9:12)*