
UKRAINE / SWISS NEWS

Newsletter № 75

Erich and Tetyana Salzmänn

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Dear friends

Those of you, who themselves have been stuck in-between and between, know a little bit of how we feel right now. In this newsletter we want to share with you how we are doing and what we dream about.

Relax! Relax?

After a whole year of ministry and home-schooling we needed some vacation. On our way to Switzerland we made a little side-trip to the Baltic Sea, where we were able to stay for a few days with some German friends. Despite the rather windy weather, the kids enjoyed playing in the big waves and Tetyana was able to relax. As for me, I struggled to switch off. The upcoming move to Switzerland, as well as the current situation in Ukraine just didn't allow my brain to come to rest.

Meanwhile we are already since four weeks in Switzerland. So far, the weather was mostly wet. Most of the time went into searching for an apartment. This turned out much trickier than expected. To find the right combination of low price, reasonable distance to school and of some minimal requirements we have, was not easy.

Seminar with Greg Boyd in Basel

Together with about 40 participants we spent three days at the summer school of St. Chrischona, near Basel. Greg Boyd, whose sermons I am translating, was the speaker. It was the first time that we met in person and were able to



chat. His wife Shelley also travelled with him. As always with Greg, the seminar was rich in content and challenging. But most valuable were the personal conversations with him and also with his friends and co-workers, who had accompanied him. I was most impressed by how humble and down-to-earth this highly educated man is. In personal conversation he was straightforward and we never felt, that we were talking to a professor. His deep passion for Christ impresses more than his academic knowledge. Everything is centred around Jesus. And this is exactly the reason, why we

love to translate Gregs sermons. Again and again it is Jesus, who is at the centre. Everything is about Him and the importance of the Cross. We are being challenged to focus our eyes on Jesus, the beginner and finisher of our faith.

These three days have strengthened my vision, to continue our ministry also when based in Switzerland.

Move

After an intense search, we have finally found an apartment in the small alpine town of Frutigen, in the Bernese Oberland. We can move in on the 1st of December. Until then, we will return to Ukraine, where we have to find a buyer or renter for our house. While home-schooling our kids I will try to wrap things up as much as possible or hand them over to locals. For all ongoing projects we will need to set up good working and communication arrangements. And then of course we will have to pack our belongings. Our furniture is too old to make a transport worthwhile and so we will leave it behind.

Teaching the head – inspiring the heart

Many people don't get satisfying answers to their tough questions. Many believers are motivated by fear and guilt instead of excitement for God. Under the above motto we therefore want to do the following:

- **Translation of select sermon series into Russian.** This is very important, because many churches in the former Soviet Union are either very legalistic or misled by the prosperity gospel. People who ask honest and challenging questions, remain often without helpful answers. Our translations are available free of charge on the internet. Already they are being downloaded by people living in many different countries.
- **Publishing of printed books (and e-books) and Production of audio books.** We deliberately select titles that challenge to think and tackle difficult questions, but always have Christ at the centre.
- **The Video Bible in Russian sign language** for deaf people remains a central project. A whole "people group" of 20 Millions receives the Bible for the first time in their own language. The first half is almost complete. Another two years are needed for the second half. Hopefully other productions in sign language will follow.
- **Encourage our two house groups in Ukraine.** They will directly benefit from our translations. Thanks to modern communication we will be able to accompany our friends on their journey of faith a little longer, even though we are convinced that they are very well capable to go on by themselves.
- **Living out our faith practically through Aid Projects.** One project we especially would like to support is the work of a small Ukrainian organisation, who helps

kids with cancer. Medical insurance in Ukraine is basically non-existent. The majority of people cannot afford treatment for cancer. The organisation "["Poryatunok"](#)", which means "Rescue", tries to help children with cancer. Through financial help and the provision of needed medication that is unavailable in Ukraine, we want to assist them and help individual children.

- One or several times per year we will **travel to Ukraine**, so as to bring material, visit projects and of course to visit friends and relatives.
- **Developing a Partnership with MEOS, a missions agency working among foreigners in Switzerland.** Since a number of years they have nobody to work among Russian speaking people in Switzerland. As we develop contacts with such people, we will see how that ministry can develop.
- **Expanding the Translation of Sermon Series into German.** It is our desire to make the message of the 'God of love', of the 'Jesus-looking God' available also to German speakers. So far, two sermons from Greg Boyd are complete and can be downloaded from our website. Three more translations on the topic of suffering are almost ready for recording. If possible, we would also love to translate at least a few of the key books from Greg.
- **Involvement in the local churches**, to share of our passion for Christ wherever we will be invited.

The translation ministry is central in what we do. We want to do it in partnership with Greg's organisation [ReKnew](#) and with [Woodland Hills Church](#).

What motivates us to go on

Oleg Los, musician, in a wheelchair because of muscular dystrophy, doing the sound engineering for the Russian translations, gives four reasons, why these sermons are VERY NEEDED for the post-soviet believers:

Mentality: Our believers were for a long time under the influence of communism, dictatorships, atheism and orthodoxy. This led to the believers being more ready for persecution *for the sake of* Christ, than for a relationship *with* Christ and other people. Guilt and fear are the basic motivating powers for believers in the churches. Greg Boyd helped me through his sermons about forgiveness and freedom in Christ to get free from guilt and fear.

Not knowing God: My heart aches from pain, when I see the distrust with which people in the churches listen to the message about Gods love towards people. A passionately loving God – that is almost the biggest heresy in Christianity! But that is exactly how many people see and approach God and his love: with distrust. Through Greg's teaching I came to understand that the true God looks exactly like Jesus Christ and that his love for every person is limitless. It is my hearts cry to help others see this truth.

Limited knowledge of English: Only few, mainly young Christians understand sufficient English so as to follow Greg. Translations will be needed at least another 20 years.

Personal experience: For me God was always the Lord, but now he became my DAD! In the past Jesus was always the good God, protecting me from the ever angry Father. But now I am "bathing" in the love of my DAD! Earlier I served him out of fear, but now I live for Him, enjoy Him and love to meet with Him! Greg's sermons very strongly influenced me, and I am certain they will also influence other believers.

I am so convinced of this, that with great joy I commit myself, my time and abilities, to do the sound recording and video engineering for the sermons in Russian, so as to bring the truth about the loving God to our people.

Will you join us?

Will you join us and help us to make our vision and ministry possible? It would be a huge encouragement for us if you would accompany us on this adventure of faith. Most of all it is a financial adventure. Our living costs will be much higher here in Switzerland than in Ukraine and we will need additional support. Please will you pray and consider joining our monthly support group. If we cannot reach our needed target, we are willing to look for part-time work to have the necessary income. However, this would affect the amount of time and energy available for ministry.

You can also support us through gifts in kind such as clothing, shoes, household goods and groceries. We don't mind second-hand stuff.

If you are a native German speaker, you can help us by proof-reading sermon texts. We need more such volunteers who help us ensure good quality before sound recording.

One of the most important things will be your prayer support. Without it, all we have experienced would not have been possible. What will come to pass in the future, depends partly also on our prayers.

Please contact us within the next few weeks and let us know whether and how you would like to partner with us.

Many greetings from Switzerland and Ukraine

Erich & Tetyana with Darja & Dan

Prayer requests

Give thanks for

- all God has done so far
- the growth of the house church members
- the apartment we found

Pray for

- a good closure in Ukraine
- the move
- sufficient support
- peace for Ukraine

Contact details:

Email: erich@salzanzeiger.ch www.salzanzeiger.ch

For financial support from within Switzerland
Schweizerische Missions-Gemeinschaft SMG
Industriestr. 1, Postfach, 8401 Winterthur
PC.-No: 80-42881-3, Annotation: Erich & Tetyana Salzmann

For financial support from within Germany
DMG interpersonal e.V.
IBAN: DE02 6729 2200 0000 2692 04
Volksbank Kraichgau, Konto-Nr.: 269 204,
BLZ: 67292200, BIC: GENODE61WIE,
in favour of: DMG interpersonal e.V., DE-74889 Sinsheim
Annotation: „SMG, Erich & Tetyana Salzmann“

If you live in another country, please get in touch with us. We will figure out, which way will be the best to transfer funds to us.