

## CSI's "Impossible" Gospel Revolution and Its Unlikely Revolutionary Leader

Bro. Bill asked me to carefully read reports from five locations in Siberia and to try to understand what God is doing there. I have great respect for Bro. Bill as a practical missiologist and we have seen wonderful results of his vision and his faith in others who carry the Gospel torch. This started in Romania and then came to Guatemala, and I am one of those people. The work started by CSI in Romania is flourishing as is the work in Central America. It is coming back to Texas—in our prisons. It is flourishing in Viet Nam, and now is raising shouts of joy in some of the most remote areas of the world in Central and Eastern Asia. It is very doubtful these things would have happened short of CSI's leadership and strategic contribution to the beginning of the work in these places, and these happen as anointed results of Bro. Bill's vision and unreasonable confidence.

Bro. Bill's health limitations and lessened financial support for CSI could well have closed down CSI as an instrument for future gospel expansion. He did not let that happen, however, and his discovery of Skype, along with his long acquaintance of some truly remarkable National leaders in Europe and Asia brought CSI into a new era of missionary advance. Bro. Bill began to place computers and printers out among nationals in Europe and Asia to reproduce CSI materials. It may seem reasonable to pull back on these activities and settle for modest efforts that are more traditional. Neither "modest efforts" or "traditional" are words, however, we associate with Bro. Bill! And the remarkable successes laid at CSI's feet are not due to either of those two things.

All this brought me to carefully read and consider the five reports he asked me to read. I went beyond them to try to place the five places on the map, and was a bit surprised by the result. The five locations are neatly associated as five contiguous large provinces in south-central Siberia—showing careful planning on God's part and probably man's as well. The whole area is only 1/10<sup>th</sup> of all Siberia but is twice the size of Texas. The region is not like Texas however, being covered by deep forests and united by one main railway and, I can imagine, a skimpy network of lonely highways and country roads stretching over a vast area.

I have never heard of a missionary movement fueled by computers and printers! Who would have even thought of such a thing? However, they offer what was impossible just a little time ago. They are not best for the production of great quantities of materials, but on the far edges of the mission field, only small quantities are needed at the beginning and they are capable of producing of several thousand when the need arrives. In one place, the initial work is with children and in another it is with students, and yet in another it is with elderly women. Each kind of work requires its own special materials, and CSI has those materials in great variety and in many languages-available to every one of its far flung mission points and printing stations. Work on the border of Russia and China for example, can provide literature in both languages, and with English as well, for use in English classes. Workers can limit their printing costs to cover only what they need at the moment, without waste or the need of storage. All they have to buy is local paper and ink. There are no shipping costs or delays. And the same equipment serves for many other missionary needs as well. The CSI materials, are in the languages of more than 2 billion people, which is approximately 1/3 of all the people on the planet, and

are available in every CSI missionary outpost that is equipped in this way. Why was such a modern vision for a remote mission work given to a then 91 year old living in Texas? **God is laughing and happily at work!**

Turning my mind to Moldova, I read the joyful testimonies and reports of the youth, including that of the Super 13 and their children's ministries. It is this same joy that is exciting our partners and Bro. Bill's out across Eastern Europe, central Asia, and stretching to the most remote frigid steeps of our world.

Hope inspires both faith and joy as nothing else, and Bro. Bill has an irrepressible joy that keeps him and CSI moving forward. Early reports reach us of the success and potential of the CSI disciple-making efforts among remarkably different people groups. True to form for our most successful ministries, these are people who are, at the same time, both the most receptive and the most neglected. As we re-read the Beatitudes, we see this is where we must begin.

So much has happened starting late last year! Is it only a "flash in the pan" to be followed by disappointment, darkness and failure? If it were just another promotional work of man, of which we have seen so much in our society, I might fear for the worst. But the same joy I catch in these reports and in the faces of those they represent is the joy I have seen on other great occasions that have led to victories that can only be attributed to God Himself. We see on so many mission fields the frustrated efforts of others that have led only to failure or, at best, miserly success. As I look on what we could call Bro. Bill's mission fields of past years and present, however, I see so many amazing examples of success that go beyond any reasonable expectation. And the geographical range of that success is constantly broadening. I attribute all this to three things: the humility and faith of a man in whom the world might expect very little but in whom the Lord finds great glory, the vision he received almost from the start as a promise of God, and his commitment to the very essence of the Great Commission, making disciples and starting churches everywhere through the simple interactive teaching of the Word of God, to every kind and age of people.

If Bro. Bill goes ahead with what he is doing, he risks failure in a broad world that is beyond our physical sight except for pictures taken by foreigners. Risk, however, is the very essence of missionary effort. And, **"where there is no risk, there is no faith."** It is his leadership, vision and passion that has generated a powerful gospel movement in so many places, including places where Bro. Bill will never personally walk, places where he is throwing the gospel seed way out beyond the horizon, with reports coming back that they are already bearing joyful fruit!

Dr. Ted Lindwall, Bro. Bill's Missionary Partner