

# TRIP REPORT - RUSSIA

October 4, 2006

Hello again from Tula.

I'm very happy to report we had about 50 in attendance at tonight's lectures. Almost everyone returned who was present last night, and many of them brought friends. I can't really express how encouraged I was to see so many take an interest in these lessons. Admittedly, my being a native English speaker played some role, since several of our visitors have been English students, but they paid good attention and asked several good questions. Tonight they heard a lesson on the historical Jesus and why we can believe He is the Son of God. Then they heard a lesson on Mary Magdalene, since she is at the heart of The Da Vinci Code controversy. However, we were able to use her to teach a valuable lesson on what it means to be a disciple. Again, our visitors were very attentive and expressed their thanks for our lectures.

I want you to understand how big of a step this is for the church here. The church in Tula is not an "official" church as recognized by the Russian government. As such, they cannot legally advertise or hold public meetings such as these. However, the brethren have formed a club of sorts, which gave them the proper registration to be able to hold such a public meeting. It is also technically illegal for foreigners to preach in Russia. That's why I always refer to these lessons as lectures and not gospel sermons. So, while I was not able to preach the gospel in its simplest form, our hopes are that those who attended found them interesting enough to study further and hopefully come to a worship service of the church here. At the conclusion of tonight's lessons, one of the Christians here stood up and invited everyone to join us for Bible study on Sunday. He couldn't legally say the words "church service" but I think everyone got the point. Hopefully, we'll have some join us.

I've been "volunteered" to teach an English class tomorrow. I'm not very qualified to teach such a class, but I'll take the opportunity to invite the students to our studies Sunday and the two studies we have scheduled for next week.

Thank you again for all the prayers. They have certainly been answered! I hope what I've written makes sense. It's almost midnight here and I'm pretty tired :)

May all praise be given to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Josh