

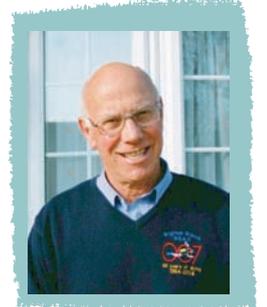
SPREAD

NOVEMBER 2011

From the Chairman—Tony Thompson

In this edition...Terry Barratt, SEAN's International Director, writes about his recent visit to Ecuador; we report on just some of the challenges faced in the far north eastern reaches of Russia; finally we share a few news items in brief. Thank you, so much, for your ongoing partnership in the SEAN story. Be encouraged by what you read, and please pray.

Tony Thompson



Ecuador

“To travel or not to travel?” - that is the question!

In these days of limited funds, expensive tickets and “carbon footprint consciousness” it is not an easy decision. I had not visited Ecuador for 25 years - I knew the local FLET (SEAN) programme continued to use our courses thanks to occasional reports and Skype conversations; but what would I find on the ground after so many years?



I was lodged in the Nazarene Seminary complex. Freddy Guerrero, its Rector is a much respected Christian leader in Latin America. This residential Seminary has an excellent reputation and is the place of study for 60 to 100 young students each year. Freddy, however, has another passion. He and his wife, Grace, are the Directors of the FLET (SEAN) programme that serves 2000 students a year distributed in 103 centres all over the country.

These centres range from small native

Indian study groups in the tropical jungle to affluent large churches in the cities - students are of different social, economic and educational status - but all are committed to the study of God's word and active in mission. In a brief four day visit I saw and heard enough to write a small book. Here are just a few sample stories and quotations:

FLET began its ministry in Ecuador in 1988 in the 'Lamb of God' Pentecostal Church in the Town of Guaranda - This, once local church has grown by training its leaders with FLET (SEAN) to become a small denomination formed of 38 daughter congregations spread throughout the country.

“Yes, it was scary in extreme, there were killings every day and they would even play football with the severed heads of their victims - it was not easy to visit there!”. These were the words of Pastor Fabián Cortez (treasurer of FLET) who was once a founding member of the ministry that saw a spiritual revival in the eighties in the infamous Bellavista Drug Barons' prison in Medellín, Colombia.

I was delighted to meet him, as I had been enthralled to read the book 'The Lord of Bellavista' and to know that SEAN studies were an important part of the revival in that prison. So I asked him: “What happened back then was wonderful! But what is happening now?”. “Oh”, he replied: “The impact of the revival in reducing internal crime and violence was such that the Colombian authorities have allowed the 'Prison Bible Institute' to be set up in twenty-one of the twenty-five main prisons throughout Colombia. This is wonderful for the ministry because, as the prison authorities have the policy of rotating prisoners, the new Christians can carry on with their same studies in the different prisons!”

Pastor Pedro Yauripoma, was a semi-literate native Indian who learned to read and write doing the SEAN 'Abundant Life' course. Serving as a Christian leader and studying SEAN for many years he was able to enter a Seminary and obtain a degree in Theology. He now pastors a large native church in the city of Cuenca.



Members of the FLET Team, Ecuador

Freddy and Grace Guerrero (back row) with (from right to left) their daughter Andrea, Olga Cujilemi and Margoth Ramos.

Pastor David Mutrhe is now the President of the Christian Missionary Alliance in Ecuador. Many years ago he saw the value of serious discipleship and training for ministry in his local church. Using SEAN and other materials he formed his local church training programme - an 11 year curriculum! His congregation has grown to 3000 members not counting several daughter churches in the surrounding area!

Carlos Montero tells his story: *"My wife, Yolanda, and I are dentists. I was once an atheist and Maoist political activist but we came to know the Lord Jesus in Mexico when on a scholarship in that country. On return to our surgery in Quito, we were still babes in Christ and knew very little of God's word. The Lord led us by a CMA Missionary to your SEAN studies and these have revolutionised our lives. Now quite a few of our patients have come to know Jesus in our surgery and we are active SEAN Tutors in our new Church plant in an affluent Quito neighbourhood that has little Christian witness".*

These are just a few samples of the many similar stories I heard whilst in Ecuador. The FLET (SEAN) Office is modest, its resources few, but its impact is immense! To hear and to be able to share these stories, made my visit well worthwhile!

Terry Barratt



Carlos and Yolanda Montero with Terry

"To the ends of the earth!"



Tamara



Masha

This story of faith and commitment is set in the far north eastern part of Russia where temperatures can reach as low as -50C in winter. It's a story of a journey made last month by two Christian women, Tamara and Masha who play leading roles in the work of ORTA (TEE/SEAN in Russia).



Russia



When, in early October, Tamara Kulesh (ORTA's Director) and Masha Vdovina (National Training Coordinator) set out to lead Tutor-Training Seminars in the cities of Magadan and Severo-Evensk (see map) they were not to know of the difficulties that lay ahead, nor of how the Lord would provide for them.

First stop was the city of Magadan. Members of several different churches got together and provided real practical support for the event. Advance preparation was taken care of mainly by a Christian woman, Galina Gerkina, who was among the participants of an intensive two week TEE training workshop held in the UK in 2004. Printing equipment and a projector were loaned. Transport was provided together with a comfortable and warm place to stay.

By the end of the seminars, a total of eight people had gained certificates and are now equipped and qualified to lead ORTA groups in Magadan.

The next stop was to be Severo-Evensk - a key town from which many small churches scattered in the north eastern part of Russia could be reached. The seminar was planned to run from 11th - 13th October, but Masha emailed from Magadan:- *"We are facing an unexpected problem. All plane tickets from Magadan to Severo-Evensk are already sold out. There is a chance that tickets may become available on the night of October 10th? Please pray that God will provide."*

Twenty-four hours later, Masha emailed:- *Dear friends, thank you for your prayer support! God has done the impossible! We've been told to come to the airport tomorrow morning early to get the tickets to Evensk. Please continue to pray about our trip, especially about the weather, as it can be rough this time of the year when it starts snowing. We need to go to Evensk on Tuesday and come back to Magadan on Friday as we have tickets for the flight back to Vladivostok on Saturday.*



Tutor Training Seminar—Magadan

The following day Masha wrote:- *We are still in Magadan!! We got our tickets in the morning and even checked in, but then the airport was closed because of the snow. So we are now in a hotel. Our flight is delayed until tomorrow. Please pray for our trip there and back. Even if we get there tomorrow we now only have 2 evenings to teach the seminar, so please pray that we still manage to prepare quality tutors (I am not sure how!)*

The next day, their plane did, in fact, take off and, in spite of the fact that snow had already fallen in Evensk, they were able to land safely. (Those who know that part of the world call this a 'miracle' in itself!) So Tamara and Masha had reached their destination but had only two days in which to complete a three-day seminar and prepare good tutors! So what happened? How did they get on? We quote from Tamara's report:-

As you know, for the seminar in Evensk, we had only two days instead of three at our disposal. When we finished the second day, Masha and I were dissatisfied, as we did not have a clear picture of who could start and lead (God willing) ORTA groups in that place and because of this we did not give out certificates to anyone.

When the next morning dawned, we were informed that our flight out of Evensk had been delayed and would not depart until the following day. We were shocked at first, but then we realized that God had given us an opportunity to complete the work we had been sent to do.

So in the evening that day we gathered again at the church and continued our seminar. There were thirteen students, in two groups, doing the practical sessions.

We watched carefully what was going on - they did so well that all thirteen gained certificates. Some of them will be able to start, and lead, a group immediately, others will first study as students.

Masha takes up the story:-

We left Evensk as soon as we could on the Saturday morning. We reached Magadan with only about 20 minutes to spare to get onto the Vladivostok flight, but we did it alright. It was snowing when we departed and the weather was getting worse. We thankfully got back to Vladivostok that evening!



The church's cross country vehicle which is named "The Missionary"!



New born tutors at Evensk Church

POSTSCRIPT—To illustrate part of the history of this region, we include two more photos of Magadan. Both are reminders of the tens of thousands of mostly innocent people who suffered and died in the gulag prison camps there during the 1930's, 40's and 50's. On the left is Nagaevo Bay with the quay where prisoners were unloaded from the boats on their way to the prison camps.



On the right "The Mask of Sorrow" - a monument to their memory which stands above Magadan. The right eye is a barred window. From the left eye flow tears in the shape of facial masks. The stones below list the names of the camps and the religions of those who suffered there.



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SEAN trustees news

After 40 years with SEAN, **Alf Cooper**, has decided that, due to his other commitments he needs to step down as a trustee.

Alf pastors a church of around 1000 members in Santiago, Chile and also has oversight of several daughter churches. He is also a Chaplain to the President of Chile.

We are very grateful for all that Alf has contributed to the life and work of SEAN over the years in writing courses, promoting SEAN and providing a model for effective discipleship and leadership training with SEAN courses in the local church. We know that his heart will still be with us.

We are delighted to announce that **Tanka Subedi** (pictured here with his wife Rita) has accepted our invitation to serve on our board of trustees. He is Director of ITEEN (Institute of Theological Education by Extension in Nepal).



Through ITEEN, lives and communities have been transformed, not only in Nepal itself, but in regions of the world where Nepalis live

and work. We look forward to gaining much from Tanka's knowledge, experience and insights.



India

TAFTEE, our partners in India, have embarked on a programme of translation of the 'Abundant Life' and 'Abundant Light' Courses. They plan on translating these courses into 17 or so languages during the next three years—a truly ambitious project!



Argentina



Sean Hispanic Conference—Buenos Aires 2012

SEAN was born in Argentina 40 years ago! What could be more appropriate than to hold our first ever Hispanic Conference in that country.

So, from 24th—28th September 2012, our partners in this ministry, from right across Spanish-speaking America and beyond, will come together for what promises to be a significant event for TEE/ SEAN in the Hispanic world.

The Conference will be held in a Catholic Retreat Centre. Planning is well advanced. Many are already signed up. More details later...



Kyrgyzstan

The SEAN 'Work for All' Course is now being translated for use in Kyrgyzstan by our partners there who operate under the title KuCh.



Nigeria



During the summer we met with **Bishop Ken** and **Mrs Ngozi Okeke** (pictured) who are hoping to set up a TEE/ SEAN programme there initially within the Anglican Church.

Courses

For courses in US English, + other languages, contact SEAN International at: **contact@seaninternational.com**

For courses in UK English, contact SEAN UK at: **admin@sean.uk.net**

Websites

www.seaninternational.com (English & Spanish)
www.sean.uk.net (English)

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