

Christian Studies International/Global Scholars Canada: A Story of New Beginnings

Off to Moscow: The First Year

Preface

Christian Studies International (CSI) was born in 1995 as the Canadian offspring of the *International Institute for Christian Studies* (IICS). It all began with Daryl McCarthy's vision to extend the base of operations of IICS, and the search of the Hellemans for fruitful cross-cultural ministry as a 'paradox.' Adrian had successfully finished doctoral work at St. Michael's University (in the University of Toronto) in 1992; Wendy had gotten her doctorate some years earlier through the *Centrale Interfaculteit* of the Free University of Amsterdam. Could we find a mission society willing to send out two candidates with those credentials? There was indeed one group uniquely appropriate for a couple like us! But our route to finding it was by no means straightforward.



The application process

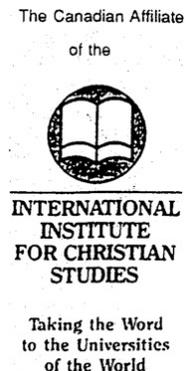
After Adrian completed the doctorate he worked for some time as an interim pastor. Our children were in high school at the time, and Wendy was still teaching on contract with the Humanities Division (Classics) of the University of Toronto (Scarborough Campus). We had both been sending out applications for (more permanent) university positions for some time and had also initiated conversations with a large international evangelical missionary society (thinking of sending us to Indonesia), but there were just too many roadblocks. Then in the spring of 1994 Adrian noticed a request in *Christianity Today* for a teaching position in Port Harcourt, Nigeria with an organization called IICS. We had no idea what was represented by that acronym, 'IICS.' The ad listed an '800' phone number and a postal box. But that phone number could not be accessed from Canada, so he wrote a letter to both IICS and *Christianity Today*. That is how we discovered the identity of IICS, the International Institute for Christian Studies (based in Kansas City, Kansas USA), an organization designed to send professors overseas to teach in secular universities and establish Christian Studies programs where feasible. It is the ancestor of Global Studies, the name given (in 2011?).

IICS soon sent us the preliminary application forms. We promptly filled these out, and in return got more in-depth questionnaires. When these were completed, we received a phone call informing us that a personal interview was next. But notably, that call came from the executive director, Daryl McCarthy, calling Adrian, and on his 50th birthday (5 August 1994)! With that call we began to have a distinct sense of something new and exciting opening up. Rather than having us come to office headquarters in Kansas City, the normal process, Daryl flew to Toronto to meet us and our family, and thus assess our credentials for international placement through IICS. At that point we learned that IICS already had significant donors in Canada and was keen on evaluating the potential of establishing an affiliate of the organization in Canada.

Our lengthy application process was completed in the fall of 1994. After full acceptance as IICS 'Teaching Fellows' in October, the next step was to raise the necessary funds. IICS is a faith mission. Fortunately, we still had a network of supporting churches and individuals from the years of teaching in the Philippines (1977-86) with our denominational mission.¹ So we began sending letters about our plans to friends and family members who might potentially support the venture. In January 1995, we were invited to attend an orientation session in Kansas City, and that summer we would attend the annual IICS Vision Conference where we were told that our preliminary efforts to secure funding would be complemented with an IICS start-up grant allowing us to actually leave for overseas placement that fall, although we didn't yet know where that would be.

Incorporating CSI in Canada

An important step remained: to set up a Canadian charity that would receive funds and issue tax receipts. After we had spoken with a number of close friends about the feasibility of such an organization, to gauge their support for this bold new initiative, we turned to other friends and acquaintances who could potentially serve on its board. Among the first of those was Fred Reinders (with whom Wendy had served on the board of the Institute for Christian Studies for some years) to receive his warm endorsement of the idea; as chair of the board, Fred was an enormous help in those early years, and has continued to provide generous support for the organization. Others who would serve on that initial board were came from Ontario (Paul Marshall of the *Institute for Christian Studies*, who had already offered his services to IICS the previous year for a conference in Belarus), from Alberta (Gordon Smith, a colleague from our years teaching at Alliance Biblical Seminary in Manila, the Philippines) and British Columbia (Wilma Bouma, our long-time friend and supporter). At the time we were well aware of the fact that this was not something we were doing just for ourselves; incorporation, organizing a board, and getting charitable status would facilitate the way for other Canadians to teach abroad at the university level with IICS/CSI. We felt honoured to be part of setting up such a new mission organization in Canada. As Paul Marshall put it, it is an exciting ministry "whose time has come!"



The first important item on the board agenda was to adapt the IICS constitution for Canadian academic and legal conditions. We examined the potential role of the Chicago statement on biblical inerrancy, a key position in IICS documents. Recognizing that this statement was taken rather differently in the Canadian evangelical and reformed communities, Daryl McCarthy (representing IICS on the Canadian board) gave his approval to use our own discretion on the matter. We also discussed the issue of 'worldview' as the basis for Christian teaching (versus what might be considered a 'tent making' approach, where a public role is used as cover for the 'real goal' of proselytizing through personal interaction/conversion). We shared our intent, to have a Christian presence in our teaching, through the materials used and the perspective from which we present them; again, Daryl was supportive. Because in Canada the IICS acronym was too easily confused with the ICS (*Institute for Christian Studies* in Toronto), we also needed a distinctive name; the name finally approved was *Christian Studies International*. This name was retained for many years until the American board selected a new name for the organization in the USA: *Global Scholars*; with our 20th anniversary in 2015, the Canadian board also adopted as current name: *Global Scholars Canada*. As lawyer (and member of our Toronto congregation), Wietse Posthumus gave critical legal advice. And finally, a friend and accountant, Esther

¹During these months we did initiate discussions toward a joint agreement for ourselves with our denominational Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM, now called *Resonate*). Our proposal was endorsed, and we eventually established an arrangement which allowed us to receive a percentage of our budget through CRWM; the denominational agency also processed funding for our work through Christian Reformed churches and donors.

Steen, would process incoming finances and keep the books. For other relevant organizational support, as in matters of communication, we (Hellemans) would rely on the IICS staff in Kansas, particularly on Dana Preusch, one of the assistants, who was incredibly helpful that first year.

The incorporation of CSI as a charitable organization did not happen without numerous challenges. In May of 1995 Canada Post managed to lose the CSI incorporation documents sent to the Canada Revenue Agency in Ottawa for government approval. This was a significant setback, for it took time to resend them, and have them processed to give CSI charitable status, and the capacity to issue tax-deductible receipts for donors. So a process that should have been completed in April was not realized until well into the summer. Incorporation was critical not only for us personally, to raise the necessary funds before going abroad, but also to establish the board that would take responsibility for the new Canadian organization, supervise our work and pay out a salary.

Placement: Moscow State University

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. We also needed to find an academic placement. We were first considered for teaching in Lithuania at the (Mennonite-initiated) *Lithuania Christian College*, or Romania (for its deep roots in the Reformed Christian tradition). But in the spring (1995), we learned that at Moscow State University, Dan Clendenin felt burnt out and had asked IICS to find a replacement for the position there. Since 1991, he had been lecturing with the Department of Scientific Atheism (later the Department of Religion) within the Faculty of Philosophy, where he was invited to teach a Christian Worldview to students who, in Soviet times at least, would have been taking the compulsory courses in Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism. Dan had heard of our availability and thought that these two candidates, each with a doctorate to their name, could probably do well in the Faculty of Philosophy at Moscow State University. So, he worked with the department to arrange for our invitation to the Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty.



We anticipated this opportunity with some excitement – this was a new Russia, with open doors! During the years of our teaching in the Philippines we had contended with guerilla movements inspired by Chinese and also Russian communists. As a superpower, able to manipulate the affairs of the smaller nations of the far East, the Russian presence had a decidedly ominous aspect. Would we really be teaching, not just in Russia, but going right to the very heart of that powerful state? We knew that its presence had been considerably reduced after the breakup of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but we also had some inkling

of the role played by Moscow State University (*Moskovsky Gosudarstenniy Universitet, MGU*), as flagship university of the Soviet world, the ‘Harvard’ of Russia, and bastion of atheism for the communist world. It was an incredible opportunity. Dan Clendenin spoke of the amazing opening to teach from an evangelical Christian perspective in that context, but also warned of the sensitivity needed in interaction with a deeply rooted proud cultural tradition. We approached the assignment with hopeful anticipation but also a considerable degree of trepidation.

Introduction

We have vivid memories of our approach to Moscow as our plane made its descent to the airport. Coming through the clouds, we had our first glimpse of the vast country which had captured our imagination, and the imagination of many others: Russia. It was September 5, 1995. Strangely enough, it did not seem so different from Canada. We saw fields and trees stretching away to the horizon, with here and there villages and small towns punctuating the landscape. The all-pervasive birch trees were identical to those at home. But we were quickly jarred back to reality when we spotted onion-domed churches hiding among the trees. Approaching Moscow, we found unmistakable signs of urbanization in the distance: grey blocks of high-rise apartment buildings. Then we realized we were indeed in Russia. Almost the entire population of Moscow, as we would soon discover, lives in these apartment blocks.



We had arrived. And it was time to put behind us an incredibly busy summer, with so much on the agenda. At the beginning it was by no means clear that the necessary financial support could be arranged for a September placement, but we proceeded on the assumption that we would go. We had arranged for the lease of our house in Toronto, stored our furniture, and most important, found a place for our older two children, who were not going to go with us. Sharon would live with friends Martha and Aija Laing, and David in a room not far from the university. It was a difficult separation for them,

and for us. Pauline, our youngest daughter, was to finish the last year of high school at the International School in the Hague (the Netherlands), so she could spend time off with Wendy's sister, living not far away (though eventually she would come to join us in Moscow). By August a significant grant from a donor in the USA had opened the way for the September arrival.

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Wendy had left Canada more than two weeks earlier, in mid-August, in order to attend an academic conference in England and to settle Pauline in the Netherlands. Adrian had left Canada less than twenty-four hours before, travelling via Buffalo, Detroit and Amsterdam, loaded down with eleven large boxes and one suitcase filled with

teaching files, books, and some clothes. We had been warned that only by taking these with us on the flight would they actually arrive and clear customs.

We met at Schiphol in Amsterdam to take the last leg of the journey to Moscow together. The plane was only two-thirds full. Sitting across the aisle from us, however, was a young lady who looked somewhat familiar. We struck up a conversation, and discovered that she was the youngest daughter of friends from Kentucky, whom we had not seen for several years. She would travel on further east to Nizhny-Novgorod to spend a semester abroad, studying the Russian language and culture there. Although she had heard that we too were on our way to Russia, she certainly never expected to meet us on the same plane, much less be seated across from us. Life is full of surprises!

Soon the airport loomed before us and we touched down at Sheremetievo II, the main international airport of Moscow, though it is neither big nor beautiful. Birch trees are posted as guards behind fences along the edge of the airport. We saw only a few airplanes parked beside the building, certainly not as many as one might expect at an airport for the capital of a country of 150 million people, vast enough to encompass eleven time zones.

After we disembarked, we descended into a large, dismal room with a low ceiling. And we soon realized that a number of flights had landed at about the same time. There were a few hundred people waiting to go through immigration, but hardly any lines were evident. We finally joined a group of people waiting in front of a booth reserved for diplomats, although clearly, none of us belonged to that category. As we struck up a conversation with a Roman Catholic priest from Austria, on his way serve a mission far from the Russian capital, we knew we were not the only 'missionaries' in the group. It took more than an hour before our turn came, but before we got there a Russian diplomat inserted himself before us, and two Russian speaking East Europeans also went ahead. Each person was examined separately by an unsmiling dour-faced official; apparently Russians have been trained for years not to smile. But for us this part of the admittance went smoothly, and we were ready to begin our Russian saga. Little did we know what kind of adventures and challenges lay ahead.

Baggage could be found in a nearby room, scattered off the revolving belts by that time. After collecting all our pieces, boxes and suitcases, we faced the next challenge: how to transfer them for customs inspection? All available baggage carts had been cornered by porters. When we inquired about the charge, we were told 150,000 rubles. Actually, this was not quite as bad as it sounds; the Russian ruble has been inflated out of all proportion over the years since the end of communism. The charge amounted to about \$33.00 US in total, or \$2.00 per bag.



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A	MO	04SEP	LV	BUFFALO	115P	NORTHWEST	697H	OK	
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FLIGHT: 600
CLASS OF SERVICE: Y
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CARRIER CODE: 024518550
DATE OF ISSUE: 08/04/95
ISSUE AT: DETROIT MI

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FARE: USD 1128.00
TAX: US 6.00
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The customs officer was astounded at all our boxes and before scanning them, asked about the contents. We explained that they were filled with books and clothes, as we had also labeled them. She remained sceptical until we showed her our letter of invitation from Moscow State University. At that point she consulted with a colleague, approved our baggage and waved us on to the exit. This was our first experience when a letter with Moscow State University letter head would make the difference; it was not the last!

Finally, we found the university representatives who had come to greet us. Two friendly professors introduced themselves as Genia and Tolya, colleagues from the Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philosophy. They must have known that we would bring significant luggage, because they had each come to the airport with a small car and had hired a driver with a third car. When all three vehicles were loaded, we set off on the last stage of our journey, along roads circling the city,



taking us from the airport to our apartment in the university district in the southwest corner of Moscow. Our convoy joined a fleet of old cars heading toward the city. Not only are most Russian cars small, many are ancient and rundown (reminding us immediately of vehicles only too common in the Philippines). Along the highway we saw gas pumps bearing hardly any resemblance to what we would consider a service station; on the side of the road were also people selling fuel from jerry cans.

Moscow State University dominates the south western part of the city, as one of the 'seven sisters.' At the height of the communist period seven towering structures like this were built to serve government purposes.

Moscow is a large city with about nine million inhabitants (at the time). From the heart of the city, the Kremlin, a series of roads

radiate in all four directions, like spokes on a wheel. Three concentric circular roads complete this web of main streets. After a considerable drive, we arrived at the apartment where we would live that first year, located on one of these spokes, Leninsky Prospect, named in honor of Vladimir Lenin, Russia's leader in the early days of communism (still entombed at Red Square next to the wall of the Kremlin). The entrance to our apartment is on a sidestreet named Krupskoy, after Lenin's wife and a statue of Lenin and his wife seated together is located almost directly below our bedroom window. In fact, Lenin's wife is hardly noted in Russia except for the statue on our street. The apartment was not far from the university (about a 30 min. walk), and had been kept for us by Dan Clendenin, our predecessor with IICS at Moscow State. Dan and his family had left for the USA a few short months before our arrival.

When we started communicating from Moscow in September 1995, very few of our supporters had their own computers, access to internet or an email address. Nor did we have a digital camera; from time to time we sent along printed photos, but they were not part of the letters themselves. So, in sharing the letters at this time, we did edit them to introduce (digitized) photos. If a picture is worth a

thousand words, we hope these photos will greatly help in visualizing the university context of Moscow State University (MGU) in the southwest of Moscow, as well as other locales of our experience there.

We continued teaching at MGU from 1995 to early 2002, and plan to share letters from all the years in Moscow. At this point we begin with the first year; this *Introduction* is intended primarily for 1995-1996. That academic year was perhaps the most difficult, since we were adjusting to life in Russia, settling into a Russian apartment, beginning our work of teaching at MGU, finding a spiritual home there, and learning the Russian language. Each of these factors posed their own challenge, and our letters reflect them. We enjoyed teaching at the university, appreciated our colleagues and worked hard to learn Russian; in fact, our growing facility in the language would be especially significant in being able to negotiate the city and broaden our circle of colleagues and acquaintances in Moscow.

As we look back over these letters, sent to our supporters during the years of teaching in Moscow, we have the benefit of hindsight, to detect how God prepared us for our Russian ministry, and especially as he facilitated all the necessary steps for us to leave Canada and make this incredible transition. Rereading the letters has resurrected many memories of those years, the highs and lows. It was a time of incredible transition also in Russia itself. This is an important factor in our desire to share the letters at this time.

Moscow Messages (vol. 1, no. 1)
September 1995

“See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.” Rev. 3:8.



Adrian and Wendy in Moscow, along the Moskva river, with the Kremlin in the background

Students conversing with excitement in an unintelligible language -- one with hundreds of variants of s's and z's. An old woman cautiously taking handfuls of breadcrumbs from the obligatory shopping bag to scatter to eager pigeons. Sidewalks crowded on a sunny day with men and women holding up individual items for sale: slippers, a child's snowsuit, sweaters and warm mittens. And a waitress calmly waiting for two newcomers to decipher the menu in Cyrillic script, not with the brusque impatience they had expected; she finally picks up the dictionaries they consulted and points to the words for beef, chicken, borscht and coffee. At least they can say, *Spaseeba!* (Thank you!)

At times we can hardly believe that we have arrived in Moscow. After months of preparation, we are here. But we have only to walk outside our building to realize that we have arrived in a country still very new and strange for us. At first, we could hardly read the signs, but we are learning to travel through the city using the public transportation system. A monthly pass allows full access to buses, trams and an excellent subway system.

This past week we started classes in the Russian language, and also started teaching at Moscow State University. We are each responsible for three courses, with about fifteen students per course. Within the Faculty of Philosophy's Foreign Languages Department, where we teach, students do understand



Churches and monasteries remain a visible part of the city and countryside, a reminder of a more Christian past

English quite well, many having studied the language since elementary school. In a class introducing worldviews, Adrian asked his students what they wanted to become; one ambitious student replied, “President of Russia.” The dean has also invited him to teach a course on Canada. “You are the expert here,” she told him. There is no shortage of work for us. Wendy is giving a course on lives of philosophers in antiquity, pagan and Christian. When asked to explain why they study philosophy, numerous students respond: “We think we can improve ourselves.” We could hardly ask for a better opening to introduce a Christian philosophy which can truly help them improve their life.

September reflection: September was a heady month. There were a number of issues which caused us considerable stress. Among the most significant was our discovery that Pauline's situation at the International School in the Hague was untenable. Because our phone in Moscow was not working properly, our daughter Sharon heard of it in Toronto before we did, and she enlisted the help of colleagues at IICS and CRWM to have Pauline return to Canada, not knowing that we might be able to provide a way to get her to Moscow and finish high school with us there. At the same time, we ran into serious challenges in retrieving our address lists (for sending newsletters) from complicated computer systems in Toronto. And finally, before the couple who leased our Toronto home had finished living there for even one month, they abandoned their commitment. Again, the burden fell on Sharon to look for new tenants and, with the help of our good friends, especially the Van Meggelens, prepare the house for a group of renters who did not want to use the furniture! Challenges galore!

On the other hand, in Moscow we were meeting many key people within a short time after our arrival. On one of the very first Sundays in Moscow, when we attended St. Catherine's Orthodox Church (a congregation of the Orthodox Church in America, with representation to the Moscow Patriarchate) we met Alexander Dvorkin, godfather of a friend in Canada, originally a refugee from Russia (now a naturalized American) who returned to work there with his Russian wife; he supervised religious education for the Patriarchate and was teaching on cults. We also discovered that he was our neighbor, living in the building just behind ours (and we soon had a dinner invitation from them). At the university we attended a conference on teaching English as a second language, organized by the publisher, Longmans, and were introduced to important colleagues from the university administration. And later, after a special lecture at the university given by a professor from Germany (on Plato), we met Dean Panin, the head of the Philosophy Faculty. In a context in which, as we kept hearing, it is not easy to establish good connections, we can only be amazed at the quick succession in which we made the acquaintance of so many of those we did wish to meet, as we sought to find our way among the challenges of this city.

Moscow Messages (vol. 1, no. 2)
October 1995

The Lord Almighty is with us:
the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Ps. 46:11)

Moscow, October 29, 1995: Reformation Day Sunday!
Yes, even in Russia the heritage of the sixteenth century reformers was observed with a fitting celebration service led by a pastor from the Reformed tradition in the Evangelical Lutheran church of Moscow. An acquaintance at Moscow State University introduced us to this group of Christians. Since they had no ordained pastor that Sunday, it was hard to refuse the request that Adrian lead this special service.

Without much difficulty we found the church, located in the old Kitai-Gorod district near the centre of Moscow, a sector traditionally occupied by merchants from east and west. The German settlement there goes back many centuries. The actual church building was distinctively European; no onion domes for it. But the congregation does not worship there. Although promised back to the Lutheran church, it is still occupied by a factory - less fortunate than most churches which in communist times were turned into museums. With help primarily from Lutheran sources in Germany, a small but tastefully refinished chapel has been restored for use in what was once a church office building.

More than one hundred people gathered for the service. German was still used for much of the liturgy, the creed, the Lord's prayer and hymns. But the message, preached in English, was translated into Russian. German was retained as the language of the home, but public use was forbidden and few of those present used it with ease. When we spoke with them after the service we communicated in a mixture of Russian (mostly theirs), English (mostly ours) and a little German to cover the gaps. Living in Moscow has given us some unique linguistic experiences!

Uppermost for numerous parishioners, when they realized that we were Canadian, was the request for help in tracing relatives who had fled there many years ago. The congregation itself was disbanded in the 1930's and is only now slowly getting re-established. One older woman told us about her father who had been a teacher in the German secondary school; with the pastor and other relatives he was arrested a few years before World War II. The church and its property (up to seven hectares!) was expropriated at that time, and the community scattered. These people have suffered greatly in the past decades. It was a joy to remind them of the Reformation heritage, of our salvation which comes through faith in Christ alone.



*Adrian in front of one of
Moscow's many Orthodox
churches in dire need of
renovation*

It is also a joy for us to share with Christians here, now worshipping freely; it is a freedom which they do not take for granted. As we interact with them, we are reminded of the significance of our presence at this time and pray for the grace to speak words which give true encouragement and hope. This is our prayer for our students too, that we may be given words which speak to their hearts and minds.

Earlier this month (on Oct. 6) we welcomed our daughter Pauline to Moscow. The arrangement to finish high school at the International School in the Netherlands (the Hague) did not work out for her. As soon as we realized this, we contacted Hinkson Christian Academy,



Pauline with us in the kitchen of our Leninsky Prospekt apt. Her arrival coincided with the visit of longtime friends John and Willy van Schepen (in Russia for a short stint of teaching with the churches)



Between classes and at lunchtime we share time and tea with colleagues [from left to right, Emma, Tanya, Wendy, Valla and Genia].

a school for expatriate students started by Campus Crusade in Russia and located not too far from us here in Moscow. They agreed to take her, even at this late date in the semester. After numerous obstacles in our efforts to arrange a visa, our colleagues at the university helped us arrange an invitation for her as a 'special student' with MGU. That worked! The weeks since her arrival have been busy; she has been more than a little swamped, trying to make up for the month's work at the beginning of this, her final year of high school. But we are so grateful to have her here with us, and thankful to teachers and fellow students at Hinkson Christian Academy who have gone out of their way to help her make the adjustment.

October reflection: Pauline's arrival was such a highlight. What we did not specify in the letter is that her flight from Amsterdam was postponed a few times, and the day and time of her arrival coincided exactly with the arrival of our friends, John and Willy van Schepen. No problem? One trip to fetch them from the airport, together? What we did not anticipate was that Pauline would be arriving at Sheremetievo, where we had landed early in September (north of Moscow), but the Van Schepens, coming on a flight from within Russia, would land at Domodedovo airport, at the other end of the city, to the south! As we often remarked, "it never rains in Moscow - but it pours!" We were so grateful for university colleagues who offered to help us, so Adrian could welcome Pauline, while other colleagues went to the airport south of the city to welcome the Van Schepens. The day after these arrivals was the occasion of our anniversary, and our celebration was all the more special with their coming!

And that was only one of our 'social events' of the month! The next weekend we hosted IICS colleagues Brian and Andrea Burnett, teaching courses in business management and ethics in Nizhni Novgorod. Not long after that, we met with John Bernbaum, involved with Russia since 1990 as former director of the *Christian Colleges Coalition* in the USA, and now directing the *Russian American Christian University* (RACU) in Moscow. Connecting also with Stan and Susan Clark, the couple in charge of administration for RACU, we discussed the potential of our involvement, perhaps in teaching some courses. John expressed his delight at our presence and commitment to teaching in Russia, and we were certainly open to where this might lead.

From October 16-21, Adrian attended a conference in St. Petersburg, at 'Open Christianity.' It was co-sponsored by several Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and focused on "Orthodoxy and Calvinism." Adrian did not himself make a presentation, but he did help translate proceedings for the delegation from the Netherlands, surprised to find himself stretched in using Dutch for much of the week. Some of these delegates came back with him to Moscow and stayed with us that weekend.

These developments are relevant, particularly in light of the ongoing turmoil over elections to be held in Russia that year. Consequent on the weekend's meetings, plans were made to hold a conference in Moscow (possibly at the Kremlin), with a focus on a Christian understanding of the state. Some local Russian politicians were willing to help organize this. The intention was to invite Christian politicians from the Netherlands, among them a member of the Dutch Senate known to us personally, and well-known also among European and North American academics.

To top this, at a meeting of Christian expat women in Moscow, Wendy met Vicki di Gangi, whose husband was working at the Canadian Embassy in Moscow; he was a son of Rev. Mariano di Gangi at Knox Presbyterian Church in Toronto – where Sharon was attending! We heard that their daughter Theresa would visit at Christmas and could easily take along something (small) for us, as well as bring back some gifts from us for Sharon and David in Toronto. What a gift to us that was!

