

# Chiropractic Globetrotting from Budapest to Kiev

Gregory White, DC

Photo

front photo: St. Basil's Cathedral, Moscow

Photo

inside photo: Timothy Swihart, D.C., attended to members of a congregation after services in Kiev under the curious and watchful eyes of the church goers.

Dr. Timothy Swihart left his office in Ontario, California for a chiropractic reconnaissance to destinations in Eastern Europe and the tumultuous Soviet republics with a small missionary team of DCs from the Christian Chiropractors Association. First stop: Budapest, Hungary. In Hungary we found the schools amenable to chiropractic care and wide open for DCs wanting to be involved in scoliosis screening.

Our second destination was Kiev, Russia, by way of Moscow. Moscow, a city of of nine million people, vividly demonstrated the common practice throughout Russia of a "Hurry up and wait!" approach to everything. For example, the line to get into a McDonald's restaurant was three-quarters of a mile long, with four people abreast. Military guards were posted to assure that only a certain number could enter at any one time.

In Moscow we were witness to history in the making. One of the four statues surrounding Lenin's statue was being removed. By the next day, all statuary was removed. The literal and symbolic fall of the father of Soviet Union has left the people looking for strong leadership in these unsettled times; the Russians are very vulnerable both politically and spiritually.

We next headed for Kiev, capital of the Ukraine and the most densely populated of the republics. The Ukraine is the chief wheat producing area of the USSR, with the Black Sea as a southern border.

Upon arriving in Kiev we proceeded to a church; after services we moved to the church basement and began adjusting those who had attended the services. We asked the people who were adjusted to tell their friends and neighbors that we would return in two days to care for all of them.

It is interesting to note that the Russian language does not contain the word "chiropractic," so we had to reach for parallel words, synonyms and similitudes to describe chiropractic. That evening we returned to the pastor's home and cared for his immediate and extended family, approximately 30 in all. They were so very appreciative of the care. His wife was having difficulty sleeping and complained of distracting pain in her side which kept waking her every hour. I adjusted her extensively, including her ribs. The following Saturday I saw her again and she was able to sleep almost through the night.

We were pleased to be a part of her recovery. Although I did take a portable table and an activator instrument along on the trip, the most important instruments, as always, were the ten digits at the

ends of our arms -- our hands!

A side trip out of Kiev took us approximately 100 miles southeast to a small village. I adjusted some "politicos" there. The town burgomaster (mayor) brought his wife for care. The rest of the day was spent in his office adjusting many of the local townspeople. This was very challenging and enjoyable. In our cursory differential diagnoses of these people, we noticed extensive tenderness around the gallbladder and liver. I assume this is due to the heavy amounts of animal fat in their diets. It was not at all unusual to see large amounts of grease floating on top of their borscht soup - a culinary staple. They also slice slabs of animal fat and spread it on their bread as we use margarine.

Back in Kiev we returned to the church to treat over 100 people in a three hour period. One of the highlights of this tour was our encounter with a thoracic surgeon. He stood watching me adjust, asking questions and being treated himself. Our "clinic" closed for an hour and everyone went upstairs for services, including the surgeon. He listened intently to the message and was wonderfully changed. The vast majority of Russian people seem hungry for Christian concern and the message of the Gospel. If you reverently mention the name of Jesus Christ in Russia, nine people will approach you to listen, while only one will walk away. Here in the United States, upon reverently mention his name, nine people walk away and one remains. The Russian and American people are passing each other walking in opposite directions.

The thoracic surgeon returned downstairs after services and brought his father for care. He wanted to know if there was any way we could initiate a chiropractic college here in the Ukraine Medical School or even in the medical school of the Republic of Georgia.

We experienced very similar responses in our stops through Romania, which seemed to be even greater in need than Russia.

So much is needed in the way of physical repair throughout these lands. The years of oppression have also taken a heavy toll on the spiritual and emotional side of life for these dear people.

As I returned to the states, I reflected on the fragile structure of our lives, and how tenuous all of our luxuries and conveniences are. The trip was a brush with a harsh reality that is sobering and life changing. How precious are our freedoms here.

Why did we travel to these regions? First, because of the call to answer the intense spiritual hunger. Second, chiropractic is effective to deliver sound health. The spine knows no culture, creed or color. Our reconnaissance disclosed the need for further and future care.

Editor's note: Dr. Timothy Swihart is a member of the Christian Chiropractors Association with a private practice in Ontario, California.

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