



# the SAMPSONS

To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light ... that they may receive forgiveness of sins... Acts 26:18

November - December 2017

## \* Which Christmas do you celebrate?



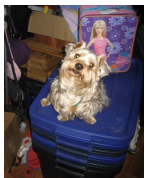
Teen Christmas Party

Christmas celebrations in Narva, Estonia vary. It all started a 1,000 or so years ago. Pope Gregory XIII introduced an updated calendar (Gregorian calendar) because the Julian Calendar had 365.25 days a year and needed adjustments often. The Gregorian calendar has 365.2425 days a year only needing a leap year every 4 years. The Catholic countries adopted the new Gregorian calendar celebrating Christmas on Dec. 25th. The eastern countries including the Orthodox churches kept the Julian calendar which had Christmas falling on January 7th.

In addition to this change, Russia and the countries of the Soviet Union in eastern Europe had another adjustment to contend with. The Communists outlawed Christmas! So, since Russian Orthodox celebrated Christmas on Jan 7th, they decided to have the Christmas traditions (minus the birth of Christ) celebrated a week earlier on New Year's Day. On New Year's they have a New Year's tree all decorated, have a family dinner with all the trimmings the night of New Year's Eve, have tons of fireworks after midnight, and then open presents. Christmas is hardly celebrated.

Because of this, many here do not know the real meaning of Christmas. This presented a great opportunity. I came up with a survey for street evangelism with 3 questions. **1.** Why do we celebrate Christmas? **2.** What is the connection between New Year's and Christmas? (Jesus was born about 2018 years ago). **3.** Why was Jesus born? Since the Christmas season here is 2 weeks (Catholic Christmas, a week of New Year's, and Orthodox Christmas) I was able to go out every day for 2 weeks and talk to people about the meaning of Christmas. One hundred people took the survey and I was able to have some great conversations about Christ. Please pray for these people that God would open their eyes to the truth of the saving gospel.

## \* The Family



We returned to Estonia on Dec. 5th to a very sick puppy. Winston had an aggressive cancer. For the next day we cuddled and spoiled him, saying our goodbyes. Then on Dec. 7th he was put to sleep with Candice and Corissa (at university) on FaceTime, and my wife, Phillip, and I petting him; thanking God for the good years we had with him. He was 13 years old and traveled the world with us. He will be dearly missed.

**PRAISE  
THE  
LORD!!!**

1. Had a relaxing Christmas
2. Teen Club Christmas party telling the story of Christmas with 21 teens!
3. Spent a precious day with Winston (our 13 year old dog) before he passed away
4. Had great conversations about the Christ of Christmas to people on the street

For lost Russian souls,

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