



# The Willoughbys

reaching the unreached in *Estonia and Eurasia*



July 2009

Dear Praying Friends,

Having completed our missionary “basic training,” we are now studying to be specialists in Estonian culture and language. For over five months we have been adjusting to a new life in a foreign country. Baby Ryland joined us back in April. We have learned our way around town, and we have learned where to shop. Now it is time to immerse ourselves in everything Estonian!

**Russia trip:** What a blessing it was to travel with my missionary teammates into the country of Russia! The Russian border is only about a three hour’s drive from Tallinn. We were able to meet secretly with several former Muslims who have become believers in Christ. Arif, who acts as their pastor and has led several of them to Christ, is our chief contact. I was moved to hear about the great sacrifice he has made to become a Christian. This man of God lost his job, his respect in the community, and his personal safety when word got out about his conversion. He has been physically assaulted by his own countrymen, yet he remains faithful to his Lord. In the company of such men, I feel as though I have never made a real sacrifice before. Pray for these persecuted brethren!

**Language study:** Language study remains the main focus of our work so far. The greatest hindrance to learning the language is that so many Estonians can speak functional English. I have made it a personal policy to hide my American identity and native tongue so that I am forced to practice speaking Estonian. I feel that I am successful when they mistake me for a Russian!

- Evangelizing
- Church Planting
- Bible Institute
- Translation

As a family, we are attending Estonian language churches and learning Estonian hymns. One day we were singing the Estonian version of “Holy, Holy, Holy” from memory when I forgot the next line. I was quite impressed when two-year-old RoseLynn prompted me with the correct words!

While in the midst of my “specialized” Estonian studies, a question arose in my mind that had to be answered: “Why study Estonian?” A lot of ministry can be done here just using English, making this an ideal field for short term missions. As Angela and I discussed this, the answer suddenly became clear. We feel called to spend *decades* in Estonia, God willing. We want to make a permanent impact through ministry in the national language. We want to be a part of something that will outlive us. We want to start churches in Estonia. These goals require a greater investment in the native culture.

Pray that God would lead us as we prepare for long-term ministry in Estonia!

**Ministry Phase:**

**Language Acquisition**

Yours for Estonia,

*Rob Willoughby*  
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