

Acts of Advocacy

NEWSLETTER
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Photo: Our friend, Igor, has taken 2 small row of vegetables and multiplied them into an array of foods and herbs that helps his orphanage enjoy a diet not normally available to children in state homes. .



The Mission Society

Update on our June Trip to St. Petersburg: Part II

More thoughts on our latest journey.

I pray that God's blessings are clear all around you as I'm writing today. Charlie and I wanted to send a note to tell a little more about our time in St. Petersburg in June, and to give a brief update on upcoming events.

On my first trip to St. Petersburg, in Summer of 2001, we had the opportunity to sleep and eat at the disabled orphanage in the little town of Pavlovsk for a few nights. At first, when the kitchen staff there begin to bring us plates with slices of fresh tomatoes and cucumbers, I did not even notice (noticing instead the portions on the plate, which seemed small to me). Then I had the chance to tour the grounds, which included a view of the facility's garden. It consisted of two rows of vegetables, each about 12 feet long. Barely a drop in the bucket for the needs of the 500 children who lived there. The vegetables they were serving us it turned out were quite a treat, above and beyond the typical meal for the children.

This June, when we visited that orphanage in Pavlovsk, we were again given a tour of the grounds, this time by a young man who lives at the orphanage named Igor. It turns out that Igor has a knack for gardening.

A couple of years ago he was given the responsibility of keeping the garden, which has grown under his care, and now consists of about 2 acres of cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and wildflowers. They also now have a greenhouse, in which they are able to grow several items that typically are not available in this area due to the short summer.

In talking to Igor, it is hard to determine why exactly he was diagnosed as "disabled" by the authorities when he was young. The testing that all children in Russia are required to complete at age 4 results in a very broad definition of "disabled". Igor is an example of a child who, in different circumstances and perhaps with a little special attention (such as that given to a child with a learning disorder, for example) would have led a very different life as a contributing member of society. How amazing it was to see him able to contribute so significantly to this facility, and to see the sense of accomplishment and ownership on his face. Unfortunately, Igor is 18 years old, and is due to leave the orphanage very soon to move to an adult facility, where he will spend the rest of his life.

Recently, I have been thinking a lot about my responsibilities - in a sense, my obligations - as a christian. When Charlie and I go to St. Petersburg, we typically attend a Pentecostal church there called Street Cry. They often schedule their services at times that will not interrupt with the late-night ministering several

Russia by the numbers:

Over forty million children
in the former Soviet Union

are living in "genuine

poverty". -The European Children's Trust (2000)

members often do on the streets of St. Petersburg. Sunday morning is not typically a time of meeting, for example, so that those out ministering the night before may be able to rest. During the service, their time of praising and worshipping the Lord is fairly unrestrained, consisting of singing, dancing, kneeling, and many other expressions of praise to God. Towards the end of our trip this June, we were able to visit Street Cry for their weekly service.

While we were there, a young Russian lady told us that she wanted to share a word with me. She spoke very little English, so our dear friend, Olga, translated for me what she said. The next day I wrote down her words so I'd remember:

Sunday June 17, 2007 - Your word to me at street cry yesterday from my sister - "You are being prepared for the battle. I see that you are a woman of prayer - God is going to use that weapon - your heart for intercession. You have been given many gifts that are struggling to develop. Do not give up. You are a strong warrior and very dangerous for the enemy." Thank you, Father, for Your word.

Sometimes when seeking God's will for my life, I tend to only look for one thing - some something that I believe He has called me to do with my life that I may fulfill. When I'm in the valley, I tend to pray for a way back to the mountaintop, as if the mountaintop must be God's will for me. Then I think about what my sister said to me in St. Petersburg, and the words of Paul: "Put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." (Eph. 6:13) The Lord has been revealing to me more and more that the walk of the christian is a walk engaged in battle. For so long I have believed that my "main" call was to live in Russia and work with these children - that somehow I couldn't fully serve or be used by Him until I was living there. What I've seen, however, is that as soon as I decided to step out of my comfort zone, lay down the expectations and fears of myself and others, and take that first step toward obeying Him, the enemy immediately reacted, and the battles began.

When going into battle, the warrior is called - expected - to look to God, put down fear, mistrust, and false humility, and to use the gifts with which the Lord has blessed her to fight the battle. When coming out of battle, the warrior is called to rest in Christ and to prepare for the next battle, for she knows the enemy will not give up until it's over (Rev. 21:6).

We are having a BBQ/auction fundraiser at our home church, Kennesaw United Methodist Church, on August 25th, and will be speaking at Bogansville UMC in South Carolina just outside of Spartanburg in September. If you are in the area, please feel free to join us - we'd love to see you!!! **LOVE Miki, Charlie & Isabel**



There are many ways to participate in The Great Commission! Joyce Chellis, a colleague of ours in Kazakhstan, explains it like this: He never said, "For all of you who find it convenient, or exciting and adventuresome, go into the world and preach the gospel." He told us ALL to go. The job for some of us is to stay at home and pray. The job for others of us is to provide the means for others to go. And the job for the rest of us is to give it all up and go.

That sums it up pretty well. So first we need prayer. Russia is filled with spiritual oppression, and we know we cannot succeed unless we are constantly covered in Prayer. Would you consider being a prayer partner for our family? Email us and let us know you are praying. It would be a great encouragement to us!

Second, we need financial support. We are in need of people that want to take part in the salvation of Russia. We have just begun our fundraising process. We have committed to 5 years of service with the Mission Society. To be sent to the field, we are required to have 100% of our ministry funds promised. We need churches and individuals to partner with us on a sustained monthly basis. To give to our ministry, visit actsofadvocacy.org to give online or print this form and send it to the Mission Society directly.

DEAR CHARLIE AND MIKI,

I will pray for you. Please send me your prayer letter.

Update me by email: _____

As God provides, I plan to partner with you by giving \$ _____ per month / quarter / year for _____ years.

I would like to donate a one-time gift of \$ _____.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Home Church _____

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