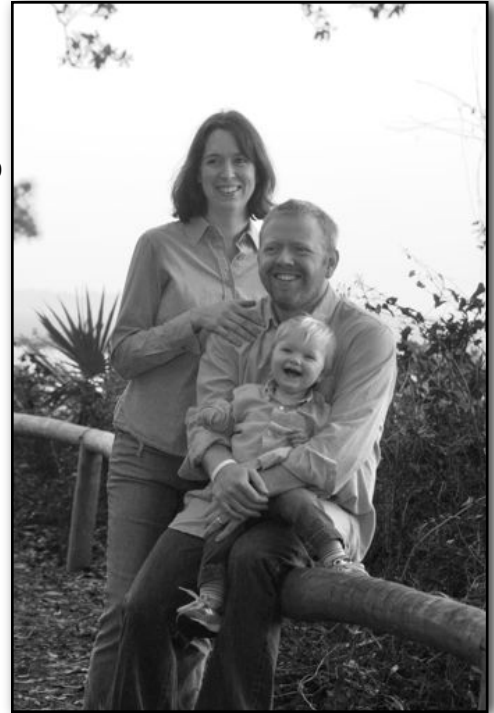


Happy New Year to you all in Christ Jesus!

Miki, Isabel and I hope you had a peaceful Christmas season. I'll be honest- our time was very busy. I was picking up production work as it came, and Miki was searching for contract positions to cover our stateside expenses while we continue to raise support. Thankfully, the LORD provided for every need along the way. Miki is now accounting again, and I've become Mr. Mom. It has been quite a season of change. As always, Isabel has been a trooper through it all.

Now that Miki's on-the-go and I'm relatively still (as still as a two year-old will allow), I've begun to reflect on these latest developments. I'm struck by all of the things that God did during this season; and a little embarrassed that I missed most of it while it was happening! You would think that in the midst of all this self-centeredness, I'd notice all these amazing things that He was doing for us- but somehow I allowed other situations to come first. Father, please forgive me.

You see, we had our hearts set on moving to St. Petersburg in November. When it became evident that it wasn't happening, we took it as a severe blow.



During our latest visit to St. Pete, we had found the *perfect* apartment- center of the city, large rooms, etc. We just knew this flat was made available for us- except it wasn't. We couldn't get peace about signing a lease at that time, and I saw coming back to the states without a lock on housing as a missed opportunity.

You may recall from our last newsletter that upon arrival back in Atlanta, our finances took a big blow. We had to replace the transmission in our van and a production client started cutting back projects due to the US's poor economic outlook. I had planned for those now-defunct projects to play a substantial part in our monthly income in Russia. In a matter of days, we went from being on the brink of moving to wondering if we would have enough money to get us through the rest of the year.

Out of nowhere, I get a call from an old live sound friend who wondered if I was available to run a few shows. And for this rare moment in the last three years, I was! So I jumped back into live sound, and was thankful for the work. Little opportunities here and there continued to happen until Miki was able to find a job in late December.

The job she found was in South Atlanta, which meant an 80 mile round trip every day. **Then a house "found" us.**

Back in November when we were mourning our delayed move, Skyland UMC in Brookhaven received word that a recently deceased member had left an endowment to renovate and maintain a piece of property they had designated for missions. They got to work immediately and were able to invite us to move in to the Conrad Meaders Memorial Missions House on January 3rd! After 8 months of travel with the three of us sharing one room, we finally had our own space again. And Miki has a twenty minute drive to work! When we met our new landlords, we were stunned by our shared connections to Mike Cantrell, our close friend and mentor in Russia, and Dr. Wheelles from Kennesaw UMC. It's clear to us now that God had this planned the whole time.

I'm in awe. Imagine if we had signed a lease in St. Petersburg and were struggling to pay the rent right now? Imagine if my friend Chris hadn't decided to call me on the slim chance that I could work on some shows? Imagine if Skyland UMC had decided to sell this house instead of make it a missions home for us? **I'm so thankful that they accepted us!**

"We are intimately linked in this harvest work. Anyone who accepts what you do, accepts me, the One who sent you. Anyone who accepts what I do accepts my Father, who sent me. Accepting a messenger of God is as good as being God's messenger. Accepting someone's help is as good as giving someone help."

This is a large work I've called you into, but don't be overwhelmed by it. It's best to start small. Give a cool cup of water to someone who is thirsty, for instance. The smallest act of giving or receiving makes you a true apprentice. You won't lose out on a thing." Matthew 10:40-42 (The Message)

I believe in those "small acts"! When I consider the overwhelming situation for at-risk children in Russia, my efforts feel like a vapor-almost nothing. But God turns that vapor into a mighty wind and I become overwhelmed by His enormous nature. He turns a "simple act" such as holding a child (a child who maybe gets held once a week) into pure peace. I was showing some video clips of our time in Russia to some people last night, and was surprised that I forgot about that. We see children living in a constant state of unease, but when we give them a little bit of affection their bodies relax; their minds let go and they just rest. It makes you want to hold that child forever.

My brothers and sisters, those simple acts are all around us; and Jesus is right- you won't lose out on a thing. I have a simple act in mind for you during these challenging financial times: consider giving ten dollars a month to this ministry. We are currently looking for 100 individuals to do just that. Let's be honest, many of us would hardly notice a 10 dollar drop in our monthly budget, but in the context of The Kingdom of God, that small sacrifice can make a big difference. Do you trust God to make your humble sacrifice into a bounty for Christ? God is looking for you to step out on faith!

I know it must be hard for some to hear our appeal for financial support in these uncertain times. But as a member of the "laid off club" myself, I thought I'd take some liberty and give you my take on things. There is no doubt- people are struggling right now. But there is also no doubt that some of our reactions in the past few months have been made out of fear- not necessity.

Faithful donors started pulling back on their giving. When this financial turbulence began, Miki and I started receiving email appeals for immediate help from colleagues all over the globe- that if the support fails to come in, these families will have to come back to the US. Large scale projects have been put on hold. Even our sending agency, The Mission Society, had to lay off 6 servants from its already overtaxed staff. These were people who helped over 200 ministries throughout the world, from training new missionaries to finding this amazing house that we're in now.

Now compare this trend to charitable giving during the Great Depression- the event in which today's news is constantly compared: At the peak of The Great Depression, giving went dramatically up- and the gains weren't from the upper class. Everyday Americans saw the benefit in giving a little- *and their situation was far more dire than ours*. Imagine today if all the people who can decide to do just 1 thing. It would make a world of difference. Brothers and Sisters, let's not give into fear. Your philanthropy is needed now more than ever!

As I conclude this newsletter, I'm reflecting on the connection of yesterday's MLK day and today's inauguration of our nation's first african-american president. I thought I'd leave you with a quote from MLK that seems to grow in relevance with each day.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Martin Luther King Jr., Strength to Love, 1963

May we stand firm to God's call- and may God bless us and our efforts!

Charlie



Ways to donate to this ministry:

To make a donation by check:

- send a check to the following address, noting "Chastain/Russia 322" in the memo:

The Mission Society
6234 Crooked Creek Road
Norcross, GA 30092

To make a donation by credit card or electronic debit:

- go to our website: www.actsofadvocacy.org and click on "Give" to go to the Mission Society "donations" page.

To make a monthly pledge:

Either contact us via email or phone (404-455-4732) so that we can send you the appropriate documentation, or go to our website: www.actsofadvocacy.org and click on "Give" to go to the Mission Society "donations" page.