

Acts of Advocacy

NEWSLETTER
NUMBER 4
OCTOBER 2007



Photo: Natasha with her 2 year-old daughter Lusha and her newborn son Alexander (on the bed).



The Mission Society

HAPPY FALL TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS!!! We pray this newsletter finds you enjoying the blessing of some cooler weather! This month we want to provide an update on a young lady we first wrote about in our newsletter this past June named Natasha. Natasha is a “higher-functioning” orphan, whom we met when she was a teenager living at the orphanage for disabled children in Pavlovsk, just outside of St. Petersburg. When Natasha turned 18, she was moved to an adult facility, as all of the children are. At this facility, she met a boy, they became pregnant, and were soon married. She gave birth to a little girl, Lusha. Initially those of us who work with Natasha were a bit concerned about her ability as a stable, nurturing mother for their daughter.

This past June, we were able to visit with Natasha and Lusha, and to meet her second child, Alexander, who was one month old at the time, and who was born with some heart problems. However, despite some very difficult circumstances, we came home from our trip in June with praise that Natasha seemed to have developed a wonderful sense as a mother. She was nursing Alexander. She was very intimate with both of her children. She really seemed to be enjoying her children, despite the difficult and uncomfortable living arrangements at the facility. We understood that the staff was working on arrangements for their family to be moved to a semi-private home, hopefully to provide a healthier, more stable home life.

This past Wednesday, we received an email from our friend, Karen Jones, who was with us in Russia in June, and who is there currently on a short-term trip with another group. She went out last week to the adult facility to visit Natasha and the children, and found that all of them, Natasha, her husband, and the children, are gone. She learned that Natasha’s husband has gotten into some trouble and has been transferred to another facility. She learned that the authorities from another orphanage came about 3 weeks ago and took Lusha, and then again Friday a week ago and took Alexander. The staff could not say where Natasha has gone, only that she left the facility. The staff said that Natasha met another man and that she had tried to sell her children. This is hard for those of us who know her to believe. In any case, this is a tragedy for Natasha and her children. It’s hard to explain how this news has impacted us. I know this type of thing happens every day in Russia, but I’ve never seen it so closely from the point of view of the mother. Single mothers and those who give birth to disabled children are regularly encouraged by the doctors and staff at Russian hospitals to give their children to the state to be raised. There seems to be little understanding of the vital importance of the bond between a mother and her children, for the well-being and development of either the mother or the child.

I confess that I’m struggling a little this week. It’s been one of those weeks when I can’t quit asking the question, “Why do we do nothing?” Why is it so easy for us to continue to keep our eyes on ourselves? After the price Jesus paid for me, why do I still concern myself so with protecting the value of my home, or my car, or even the comfort and security I

Russia by the numbers:

After leaving their orphanages:
50% fall into a high-risk category,
40% become drug users,
40% commit crimes, 10% commit suicide.

feel sitting isolated in my fenced-in back yard? In Christ we have the authority to pray and speak against the lies of the enemy in that place - to pray and work against the cycle of children and mothers and fathers separated. As a matter of fact, we have that authority in our own homes.

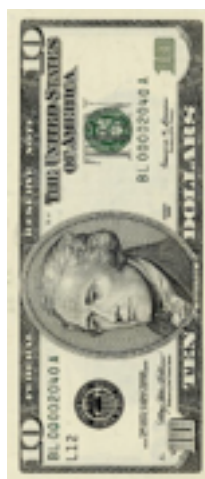
In our efforts these past few months to raise support, Charlie and I have been having a somewhat unexpected feeling that we shouldn't only be trying to raise our own support, but that we should also be encouraging others in these classes and churches who may be feeling God's calling in their own lives to go into missions on a full-time basis. In Matthew 9, Jesus says to His disciples, "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field" (v. 38). I confess, this approach has not exactly resulted in the overflowing of financial support like we were hoping for by this time! But each time we prepare for a new place, Charlie and I continue to be in agreement about the desire of our Father for us at this time.

In a bible study I'm leading at our church on the book of Matthew, we have come to see that even Jesus in His ministry experienced times of frustration that His obedience to His Father's will wasn't exactly producing the results He expected. In Matt. 11:20-24 and 12:41-42, He expresses his frustration that the miracles and teachings He has shown have not caused the people to repent and be saved. More than that, Matthew 12:14-16 describes the first time Jesus realizes that His actions were resulting in the Pharisees' plotting to kill Him. What were His reactions to this realization? Verse 15 states that Jesus withdrew from the area. Verse 16 says that He warned people not to tell who He was. When the unrepentant, ungracious people continued to come to Him at this time with their needs and desires for miracles, what did He do?

Well, of course - He healed them.

Despite all of the reason in the world that would've probably convinced me to back off and keep to myself for a while, Jesus NEVER swayed from the will of His Father. He couldn't yet grasp the vast, all-encompassing expanse of His Father's plans, He could only do what He knew He was calling Him to today.

So this month, we are asking you to pray about three things: 1 - Please do not forget Natasha and her children, not even one day. 2 - Ask the Lord to provide discernment for you, specifically regarding His call in your life. 3 - Consider prayerfully whether the Lord may be calling you to begin to support our ministry in St. Petersburg each month. A commitment of even \$10 a month for the next 5 years would probably be barely missed by most of us, and would be so valuable for this ministry, if given for Him and in His love.



The TEN Dollar Challenge



A \$10 monthly commitment by 500 people to The Mission Society would support this children's ministry for FIVE YEARS.



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 _____

TAX DEDUCTIBLE GIFTS MAY BE SENT TO:
 The Mission Society - P.O. Box 922637 - Norcross, GA 30010-2637 - USA
 Designate gifts: "Chastain Support 5/322"

A higher standard.
A higher purpose.