

# ACTS OF ADVOCACY

Orphanages in the rural areas generally receive less attention from the government and charities despite comparable needs.



## Long-awaited greetings this Thanksgiving from the Chastains!!!

We are so sorry that we have not been in touch for some time! In this past month, we have spent a great deal of time in airports!!!

In late October, Miki and Isabel spent 2 weeks in Georgia visiting with friends and family – and receiving a surprise baby shower for Jasper Amon, our little boy who is due the first week in January!

The first week in November we traveled to Istanbul, Turkey to participate in a missions retreat with other Mission Society workers serving all over Europe, Africa and Asia. Isabel was able to spend time with other kids who are growing up on the field away from their families, and we were all able to encourage and be encouraged by others who have shared very similar experiences. This was a wonderful time of learning and ministry to one another, about which we'll share more next month.

### The news we'd like to share this month is regarding the final trip taken the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in November by Charlie to London, England.

During these few days, Charlie met with our European Regional Coordinator from the Mission Society and with the International Directors of Love Russia – an organization out of the UK – to discuss the possibility of a collaboration of our efforts and calls to serve the orphaned children here in Russia.

Charlie first met **Alex and Jacqui Cooke, directors of Love Russia**, in March of this year at an Eastern Europe missions conference held in Ukraine. It became immediately clear that we and the Cooke's share very similar ideas and points of view regarding the ministry to which God has called us here in Russia. However, it has only been in the past couple of months, after much prayer, learning, and discussing, that we have finally decided to move forward in collaboration with Love

Russia, and to join our efforts, knowledge and resources to serve the children of the St. Petersburg area.

### Some facts about Love Russia:

Love Russia is a UK-based Christian charity, officially formed in 1993 to support and promote charitable efforts in the territories of the former Soviet Union, including relief of poverty, suffering and distress. For the past 15 years, Love Russia has developed and maintained 50+ ministries, all primarily in the Moscow/Ryazan region of Russia – an area roughly twice the size of the state of Georgia and approximately 500 miles from St. Petersburg.



### The ministries of Love Russia include:

50/50 capital improvements programs – Love Russia provides funding to charitable/social institutions for capital improvement projects on a 50/50 basis. This means that the institutions are responsible for providing 50% of the cost of the necessary capital project and Love Russia agrees to provide the other 50%. The institutions are entirely responsible for the supervision and completion of the project, giving them a more complete sense of ownership once the project is finalized. The institutions are also responsible for providing receipts and evidence of completion of the project to Love Russia, and a representative from Love Russia follows up with the project via regular visits to the institution (typically every 6 weeks) until completion and full utilization of the improved facility.

The Genesis Program - Love Russia provides living assistance to young adults who have graduated from the orphanage system and who desire to obtain a degree from an accredited university. Individuals receiving a monthly stipend from the government of no more than 5,000 rubles - or about \$150 - are eligible. Once approved, students must maintain good class attendance, high

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grades, and there can be no indication of alcohol/drug use. *(if you would like more info, please visit [www.loverussia.org](http://www.loverussia.org))*

### **Mission Society/Love Russia Collaboration**

During the meetings last week in London, everyone agreed that the Mission Society and Love Russia should begin working together towards the development and support of similar ministries in the St. Petersburg region. We also agreed that while some doors seem to be closing within the city of St. Petersburg for ministry, the Lord is leading us to seek relationships and opportunities for service to facilities outside of the city, which currently are receiving much less attention and support.

More specifically, beginning late March, 2010, Charlie will take on the responsibility of discovering, befriending, and evaluating these rural facilities as possible opportunities for support and ministry. His first trip in March will be with Alex Cooke to the Moscow region in order to observe and learn more about the existing Love Russia projects.

**While there are still many unknown details** regarding the Lord's desire for us in this new role, we have been at times almost overwhelmed with the blessing of His favor upon its conception. Reviewing the various paths of all parties that have brought us together at this point, realizing the similarities in the ways the Lord is leading us, and experiencing the outpouring of God's love in each of us for one another has been an amazing – and a somewhat unexpected – experience.

### **We also want to be clear that this joint effort with Love Russia will in no way change our relationship with the Mission Society.**

As workers with the Mission Society, we seek to remain open to opportunities to come along-side other ministries in our field to combine efforts as the Lord leads. As specific ministry projects develop, we plan to send out notices providing details of those projects and how individuals who feel so led may pray and support a particular project. The number of ways the Lord may use each of us in these things in upcoming months and years is immeasurable – from finances to support an orphan grad who wants to go to college to volunteering to deliver donated supplies to an institution in the St. Petersburg area.

**Finally, we want to share a specific financial need that has recently arisen for us.** Given this new ministry direction for our family here in St. Petersburg, it's become clear that we will soon need our own transportation. We will need a van that gives us room to transport people and aid, while handling the rough rural roads in winter. Love Russia will be assisting us in finding, purchasing and maintaining the van, but we will need to come up with 50% of the purchase price. Please

pray for the Lord's provision and direction as we begin this process. Please also tell your church families about this need.

We will be sending out more details in the next couple of weeks for anyone who may want to make a one-time gift toward the purchase of a van. The Mission Society has set up a project account for this purchase, so all contributions can be made through them as usual, only the description "Chastain vehicle" should be noted in the notes/memo of the payment.

**We love you and are praying that the Lord's peace and blessing be with each of you this Thanksgiving season. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or prayer requests that may arise – we love hearing from you!**

**Love and blessings - Charlie, Miki, Isa (and Jasper)**



### **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 debit:**

- go to our website: [www.actsofadvocacy.org](http://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 (678-436-3016) so that we can send you the appropriate documentation, or go to our website: [www.actsofadvocacy.org](http://www.actsofadvocacy.org) and click on "Give" to go to the Mission Society "donations" page.

**TO MAKE A SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION FOR THE VAN PURCHASE, PLEASE SPECIFY "CHASTAIN VEHICLE" ON YOUR CHECK NOTE OR ONLINE DONATION.**