

ACTS OF ADVOCACY

We had an unexpected snow day last week- and Isabel took full advantage by building a snowman! It felt a little like Russia!



**The Mission
Society**

Happy Lent to our Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

We've set a departure date!!! The Mission Society has given us the go-ahead to finish our move to Russia in May! So that set a lot of items (and new prayer requests and praises) in motion:

- Through work God has provided temporarily here in Atlanta, the expenses incurred due to our van's transmission last fall look to be completely paid off by the end of March! Praise be to God!

Prayer requests – for God's will and anointing in our decisions and steps specifically regarding:

- We've sold one vehicle (praise God!) and are in the process of selling the other one.
- We've sent in our invitation requests to Russia- the first step to acquiring our new Visas to live there.
- We've learned of a potential flat in St. Petersburg that is coming available soon, which may be our new home in May!

Thinking back to our situation at the end of last year, I can hardly believe what we've witnessed. We've gone from wondering how we were going to support ourselves in November to planning how we will move the rest of our stuff today. God has provided for every need perfectly- that's the only explanation. I'll step out and say it- these are miracles.

Yet with all of the packing, fundraising, apartment-hunting, goodbyes and preparations going on for us now, God has also put the CHURCH in front of us during this time.

He's made it clear that there are a couple of other things to do before we start into full-time language courses in Russia. We've been invited to 2 conferences to help churches better engage in missions- one in the Atlanta area and the other in Eastern Europe. I'll admit I'm a little weary of talking more about missions, but the LORD has made it clear that we need to take part. Please also keep our upcoming speaking engagements before we move in your prayers at this time.

Last weekend, I was able to represent The Mission Society at a mission conference called Cultivating Compassion: Preparing Hearts for Mission here in Atlanta. The conference leader was Rev. Trevor Hudson from Johannesburg, South Africa. Some of you may know him from his books for Upper Room Publishing. Over the course of 2 days, Rev. Hudson broke down the Biblical foundation for missions with a detailed look at Bible stories mixed with his own unique post-apartheid perspective. A few things from the weekend really stuck out to me, and I thought I'd share!

We all know Jesus taught his followers with parables throughout the gospels, but Rev. Hudson suggested that many of Christ's actions also had a similar metaphorical significance. For example, of all of the recorded healings of Jesus throughout the Gospels, it seems that He worked with the blind and the paralyzed more than other ailments.

Continued from page 1...

Why is that? Rev. Hudson suggested the focus could've been an assessment for mankind as a whole- that we are blinded to the Truth and paralyzed to respond to His call. This concept hit me so hard!

As the weekend progressed, it became clear that God the Father sent his son to heal us all, not just the outwardly afflicted. It became clear that we are responsible for each other - that our calling is dynamic and our talents were given to us specifically for The Kingdom. But first we have to let Jesus heal us of our blindness and paralysis.

We have to LET Jesus heal us, you ask? He's Jesus, He can do whatever he wants, right? I think the answer is yes, but upon further study of the Gospels with Rev. Hudson, it seems that those receiving the healing were required to meet two criteria: (1) receiving healing grace and (2) giving risky obedience to Jesus.

(1) –Are we willing to let Jesus heal us of the pain and wounds we carry, especially those wounds which we may feel to a certain degree that we deserve or which have become so much a part of our lives, we're not sure who'd we be without them? Do we believe that having only the grace of Jesus filling our lives is enough?

(2) - Sure Jesus can heal, but are we willing to do what He asks to receive that healing? It IS risky! Imagine being paralyzed all of your life and some guy comes along and tells you to "pick up your mat and walk." You're already the lowest of the low within Jewish society, and Jesus asks you to further humiliate yourself by doing what you know is not humanly possible. But the paralyzed man risked it all that day, and he became new for it. Are we afraid that we'll look foolish if we do what we feel God is calling us to in order to bring healing into our lives?

Healing grace and risky obedience. Many people say that miracles don't happen anymore. If they don't, I wonder if either of these two criteria has been in short supply these days?

I've never considered us in the West as "paralyzed." We're the get-it-done people, right? I can't help but to question that position when I consider our actions. Most of my actions - and maybe yours - are meant to maintain a certain level of comfort in my life – to maintain a status quo. Be it my finances, my personal relationships, my role within the Church and even my personal relationship with Jesus. It seems that we all like to be in control, maintaining only a certain level of obedience

to God, and giving the rest of our obedience to something or someone else (or someone else's approval). And if you're like me, you frequently ask God why He's not giving what we think we need, and He's sitting there saying, "Charlie, I've done my part on this. What about you?"

But what if He asks us to do something *crazy*? Like take the homeless person on the corner for a bite to eat; or call that person from the past and ask them to forgive us. We don't like to acknowledge problems, do we? As Rev. Hudson says, "We often go as Easter people into a Good Friday world." What are you turning a blind eye to? What paralyzes you? What is Jesus asking you to do? What do you need healing from? These questions aren't separate, but intertwined!

I've just returned from Donetsk, Ukraine where I gave a presentation to The Eastern European Summit on Orphans and the Church. I had the honor of traveling and presenting with Mr. Michael Norton, Missions Lay Leader at St. Johns UMC in Aiken, SC. We had the unique opportunity to help cast a vision for the Eastern European Church's response to the plight of disabled orphans in their region. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement during this trip. More about the event next newsletter...

Although we are starting our first term in May, we still need considerable financial support to maintain the entire 5 years. Once again, please consider giving to this ministry! We need your help!

Love and blessings in Christ,
Charlie and Miki

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.