



A few images of our time with the orphans of Peterhof 3

Hello, Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ! Greetings from St. Petersburg!

Those of you from the South may know a term we've been using a lot lately, and which Isabel recently learned... Shoo-wee!!! We say this because it's about the only way we can express how we're feeling after all of the travel and events of the past few months.

Our training in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil went wonderfully. We learned a great deal from hearing from other missionaries who've "been there", and some of the mistakes and difficulties they experienced. (For those who might be wondering, missionaries who raised their children on the field have said that ministry when their children were young and living at home was EASIER than when their children had grown and left the home - for example.) We also discussed some insights received from anthropological studies. (Did you know, for example, that while it can take up to 2 years for an adult to come through the culture shock of living in a new place, it generally only takes children about 6 months?)

Now we know that we have to be careful about the search for "training" for a couple of reasons:

First - We have to acknowledge that, as in any area of profession/life, classroom study is extremely limited in its ability to prepare a student for the "real world". It's great to get the information you can get from those who know, but our real role as "students" starts when we leave the doors of the classroom (church?) and step out to let God lead and use us according to His will and to His glory.

Second - We should be careful not to get stuck waiting to receive the "preparation" we think we need before we step out in the direction God has called us. He will often take us through periods of preparation before we enter ministry (Jesus' time in the desert - Matt. 4, for example). Ultimately however, the presence of God our Father in our lives and His guidance through His Holy Spirit is all we will ever need.

We moved about 1/2 of our things to Russia on August 27th. Since we arrived, we've been out and on-the-go as much as possible. We've been able to visit with some friends in the ministry, some of whom the Lord has already used to care for us:

Isabel has been wanting a tricycle, and received one for her 2nd birthday a few weeks before we came to Russia. However, we were unable to bring the tricycle with us to St. Petersburg. Her Russian friend, Philip, also happened to receive a very similar tricycle for his second birthday - also in August. He and his mom and dad are spending the month of September in Serbia with family and so asked us if we wanted to use his tricycle while they were gone. Isabel has been riding almost everyday to the playground down the street! Thank you for your prayers for Isabel!!!

Last weekend, we were invited to the wedding of a young couple who attend a local church, and who met a few years ago while they were patients in a rehab started by the church. As a result of their prior drug use, both individuals are HIV positive. Both are recovered for several years and both have totally given their lives to the Lord. The couple actually requested that their ceremony begin with praise and worship, which lasted almost an hour! It was a very sweet and

moving service. We were honored to be present. (As a side note - the church, called Street Cry, is in financial trouble. Please remember this in your prayers.)

Today we were able to go with a visiting team from the U.S. to visit the adult facility in Peterhof, just outside of St. Petersburg. I'd forgotten how overwhelming the circumstances at this facility can be. So many disabled adults live here - 7-8 beds per room, almost 1000 patients there in total. Several prayer requests arose from this visit:

First - Most of the staff is off on the weekend, so while we were there we visited with at-least 50 patients, and saw only 2 staff members. Please remember these ladies in your prayers.

Second - Many of you may remember Natasha, who's two children were taken from her a couple of years ago. She lives at this facility, but has gotten into some trouble recently for stealing from another patient, and so was unavailable today. Another friend of ours, Olya, was also unavailable due to illness she is experiencing from her abuse of alcohol.

Finally, a request and a praise for one of the first very significant lessons I've received from those I've been called to serve: While at the facility we met a young lady name Luda, who has lived there since she turned 18 about 9 years ago. Luda has been unable to walk all of her life and is in a wheelchair, but is an extremely intelligent lady who has grown up in the disabled orphanage system with very little education. When Luda came into the room where we were visiting, all of the other patients there seemed so pleased to see her, and welcomed her openly. I began talking with her and she explained that she does alot to help the staff with the lower-functioning patients, and was able to tell us the status of other patients we know who were not there today.

I was greatly humbled to meet Luda and to hear some of her story. I could detect no self-pity or heroism in her regarding her circumstances. She has chosen to serve where she is - in the circumstances life has dealt. I could see that the Lord was using her in a mighty way to bring some grace and comfort to the lives of the other patients there. I blessed her in Christ Jesus and thanked her for all she is doing with her life in that facility. It was a joy to meet her, and I thank my Father for the powerful example her life is to me.

Our personal requests...

We are still in need of a significant amount of monthly commitments before we make our final move to St. Petersburg in November. We have almost all we need in the way of start-up costs, but the monthly support we need to be here for the long-term has not been fully committed. We will be in the states from late September through mid-November. We are working to plan speaking engagements and visitations at churches. Please put this in your prayers and in your thoughts! Do you know any groups or individuals who might be willing to partner with us in Russia? Could we come and speak to these groups or begin sending them our newsletter?

Plans regarding our language school and living arrangements for the next year are still uncertain.

Russian language school in St. Petersburg is considerably more expensive than we'd anticipated. We are working to find others who are seeking to study Russian so that we might study together, which will considerably reduce the cost. However, this is a decision that really needs to be made before we return to the U.S. at the end of September, or we will not be able to transfer to student visas for our final move in November. This may mean that we will not be able to study in St. Petersburg at all, and will need to seek other options for language school. We'd really hoped to have ourselves (specifically Isabel) settled into a new home by the holidays. This summer has been wonderful, but has taken a bit of a toll on all of us. We know God is working. Please pray for discernment for me and Charlie, and that all three of us will have an awareness of His presence and peace during this time of uncertainty.

Thank you for checking in on us! We love you and thank God for you and for your love and prayers!
God's blessing to you in Christ - **Miki, Charlie and Isabel**

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