

February, 2008

Happy Lent to everyone this season! This is such a beautiful time of the year for our family, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to reflect on family memories and on the amazing gift of our Lord, Christ Jesus.

We have been on the road a good bit these past weeks. This type of schedule can be challenging, especially for Isabel, but God has truly blessed us through our times with you all.

So many of you have covered us in love, encouragement and prayer during these weeks! We know you are praying, and we are really beginning to see

the Lord move in preparing us for our transition into Russia.



Miki participating in a missions forum in Aiken, SC.

God continues to bring missionaries and their families into our lives to both encourage and to mentor us on moving and adjusting to the mission field. We've seen the funds and financial commitments from supporters begin to multiply in recent weeks through your faithfulness. We've received notes of encouragement from some of you, funds for learning Russian (continued prayers also needed here!), assistance in getting our house on the market, connections for speaking engagements, and so many other blessings from God through you for which we are so grateful!

Two churches with whom we've spent time recently, St. John's UMC in Aiken, SC and Tuscaloosa First UMC in Tuscaloosa, AL are both planning to send teams into St. Petersburg in the next 18 months to work with us and with the disabled orphans and street children. We are already covering these teams in our prayers, even as they are forming.

Another truly amazing and humbling experience these past weeks - we've seen God begin to bring healing to some of the church groups to which we've been able to connect through this ministry as well.

God doesn't miss a thing, does He? I was reading earlier this week in Acts 28 about Paul's reaction after the ship (which was carrying him as a prisoner to his trial in Italy) wrecked, and he and everyone on the ship were stranded for 3 months. During those months, Paul didn't sit and mope and wonder, "Why? Why? Why can't I just get to Rome and have my trial so I can continue in my ministry?". He used that time stranded on the island ministering to and healing the local people there.

I am sorry, because for a long time I believed that my calling was to go to Russia and to serve the children there. I felt (and sometimes still feel) frustration at anything that stopped my getting to

Russia, because THAT was my calling. I'm seeing more and more, however, that my calling is, and always has been, simply to seek Him everyday, and to seek to walk in His ways, everyday. I do see that He's leading me to Russia, but my ministry as a follower of Jesus began the day I first called Him Lord.

Praise be to Him who knows those of us who are hurting and who are lost (even as we sit in the pews at church). His saving, redeeming grace through this ministry is not limited or designated only for the precious children of St. Petersburg, Russia. His desire is for all of His children to seek and find Him, and to be healed. If you're seeking through this ministry, I want to thank you, but also to encourage you. He who is faithful will not disappoint. Seek, and you will find Him.

Finally, we received a note from Karen Jones this week, with whom we first traveled to Russia in 2001, and who has worked many weeks and months in Russia over the years with these children, specifically those graduating from the orphanages and struggling to enter into society. She often sends us updates after her trips with Lifeline Missions International, but this time she had a word specifically for us, which really echoed what we have been hearing from the Lord, and with her permission, we wanted to share it with you :

Miki and Charlie, you are needed there. We are losing touch with many of these older kids and someone needs to be there to look out for them. Many of the adult facilities don't offer much in the way of occupational therapy or activities and most of them lose hope in a very short time. Alcohol and cigarettes seem to dull their senses and soon they are trapped. I am praying that God will open doors for you and speed things along so you will be able to do the work He has called you to do. I pray also that He will give you the confidence and boldness to take on this responsibility and to accomplish much for the kingdom. Be prepared to move when He says to move. I truly believe that when the time is right, you will have to move quickly. God's blessings be on your family.

If you would like to partner with this ministry, please visit www.actsofadvocacy.org

We love you so much.

Miki and Charlie



The Mission Society

Prayer Requests:

- For the smooth sale of our home
- For our continued protection during our travels, training, and move to Russia
- For the opening of hearts in local churches to missions, and to the children of Russia
- For increase in the blessing of God financially through supporters - we still have a ways to go before we can leave for St. Petersburg in August!!!

Upcoming Schedule:

March 12 - Miki speaking to women's circle - Kennesaw UMC, Kennesaw, GA

March 30 - Charlie and Miki speaking at Fayetteville UMC, Fayetteville, TN

May 26 - June 27 - Training for Chastains - Colorado Springs, CO

July 13 - July 27 - International Training for Chastains - Brazil

August - Chastains depart for St. Petersburg, Russia