

Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him".

(James 1:5)

June 1, 2014

Dear Prayer Partners:

Greetings from Princeton, WV! Yes, **I have returned to the US for 2 months**. This was an extremely difficult decision for me, as I did not want to abandon my Ukrainian family and my village clinic patients. As the situation in Ukraine deteriorated and I suffered some health problems, my church became quite concerned for me. After much prayer for God's wisdom and direction, in consultation with my pastor and ABWE administrator, I finally agreed to come to the US. **I arrived May 23**, and have been coping with jet lag, sinus infection, laryngitis, vertigo, computer issues, settling into a new place, retrieving my furlough things from storage, setting up a new cell phone, etc. Johnston Chapel, my sending church, was given a duplex, and they have created a beautiful missionary apartment, which has already become my haven. Praise the Lord for such a sending church!

What is happening in Ukraine? A new president was elected May 25 in a relatively peaceful process, and he promises to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine and establish good relations with the European Union. There continues to be bloodshed in the eastern regions of Ukraine with support from Russia. There has not been any further violence in Odessa, though the tension persists. We still do not know what will happen from day to day. Please continue to pray for peace in Ukraine, and for people to find their hope in Jesus Christ.

May 8-21, I was in **Central Asia**, marveling at the doors of opportunity God opened. Carolyn Rice met me in Kiev and we flew together to the challenge of a new culture. We landed at 4am Friday and taught our first seminar at 3pm! About 25 ladies gathered from different churches to hear the Biblical perspective on the beginning of life and the emotional trauma wrought by abortion. We stayed more than an hour afterwards answering many questions. The next day I caught a cold and lost my voice! That made the non-stop schedule and **daily teaching** difficult. God provided His sufficient grace. Saturday we spoke to a group of Christian health care professionals about these issues, and I also shared about village clinic ministry in Ukraine. The following week was the **intensive 5-day course "Forgiven and Set Free"**. Carolyn led a group of 3 post-abortion women. I focused on one woman who had lost 4 babies through miscarriage or pre-term labor. She survived childhood abuse and two abusive husbands, then came to know Christ as Savior at age 45. **The Lord did a glorious work in these women to free them from shame, guilt, depression, and broken relationships.** They are determined to give many other women the same healing they received. Carolyn and I plan to go back in November to train FSF leaders. "To God be the glory, great things He has done!"

Holly is carrying on in Odessa, running the village clinics and continuing the training of volunteers for the pregnancy care center. If the political situation remains stable, she plans to do a limited opening of the PCC to clients, just posting a sign on our office door and handing out flyers locally. We will plan a full public opening in August when I return. The Lord has provided a **Ukrainian director for the post-abortion ministry!** Ira is an experienced, respected pastor's wife and participated in the first leadership seminar in Odessa in March 2012. She has become an excellent small group leader. She will be serving as my assistant for the next year, then she should be ready to assume the leadership herself. What a wonderful answer to prayer!

Lonya, Anatoliy, Volodya and Styopa are all carrying on their pastoral responsibilities despite the uncertainty of the political climate. They have taught me much about faithfulness under fire, perseverance, and trust. What a blessing to have such godly partners. My patients have been very worried about the continuity of medical care. So far, we have not missed any clinics because of the political situation. May the Lord draw them to Himself, teaching them to value eternal life more than temporary physical well-being.

Prayer Requests:

- my presentation on Ukraine to the ABWE Medical Missions Interface June 6-8. May God call more health care professionals to this part of the world!
- God's direction for the best use of my time during this "mini-furlough" in the US. One month will focus on R&R and catching up with continuing medical education requirements for my board certification as a family physician.
- Holly Friesen, nurse practitioner, as she directs the pregnancy care center in Odessa and runs the village clinics
- stabilization of Ukraine, cessation of war, revival of spiritual interest as a result of this turmoil
- pastors in Ukraine as they respond to the additional stress in their flocks and share the Gospel
- plans for my next ministry trip to Central Asia
- Ukraine Crisis Fund: ABWE account # 0717401. Enable our churches to respond to the needs of refugees and others happening because of the political crisis and war. You can give online at abwe.org or send a check to ABWE P.O. Box 8585 Harrisburg, PA 17105-8585.

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Thank you so much for your intercession before our Father's Throne of grace and mercy during these troubled times. Your prayers make a difference!

*Clinging to The Rock,
Miriam*