

Update 6 – written August 20, 2011

“Almighty God, just because He is almighty, needs no support. The picture of a nervous, ingratiating God fawning over men to win their favor is not a pleasant one; yet if we look at the popular conception of God that is precisely what we see. Twentieth-century Christianity has put God on charity. So lofty is our opinion of ourselves that we find it quite easy, not to say enjoyable, to believe that we are necessary to God...”

Probably the hardest thought of all for our natural egotism to entertain is that God does not need our help. We commonly represent Him as a busy, eager somewhat frustrated Father hurrying about seeking help to carry out His benevolent plan to bring peace and salvation to the world...

Too many missionary appeals are base upon this fancied frustration of Almighty God. An effective speaker can easily excite pity in his hearers, not only for the heathen but for the God who has tried so hard and so long to save them and has failed for want of support. I fear that thousands of younger persons enter Christian service from no higher motive than to help deliver God from the embarrassing situation His love has gotten Him into and His limited abilities seem unable to get Him out of.”

A.W. Tozer

No, God doesn't need us. It's a fact that what He wants to accomplish can be done without us. Yet, the humbling truth is that God desires to work through us. Being a tool in the hand of God is something that can't be adequately described – to begin to understand it you must experience it.

Vacation Bible Schools– By late spring, both Batalnia & Cmistoka had contacted me and asked that I participate in their camps. At Batalnia I was camp nurse and camp cook. Handing out bandaids, pulling slivers, giving out an occasional Tylenol, mixing Kool-Aid, counting cookies and making sandwiches is something anybody could do but it is something I have gotten to do in Batalnia for 12 years.

On Monday we had 16 kids but by Wednesday onward we had 27 - 30. My favorite thing all week was seeing how God chooses to use the Body of Christ. God, through you, gave 80% of the cost to hold camp (funds for lunches & transportation) and also provided the craft and sports supplies. God, through the Batalnia Church, provide the remaining 10% of the funds. The program came through Child Evangelism Fellowship and the leaders came from the Batalnia & Feodosia Churches. To watch it all come together was a cool illustration of how He uses many parts to weave, make a whole and reach a goal. We got to be a part of getting the gospel to the kids.

The pastor of the Cimisetka camp planned the VBS around my schedule so as to be sure I was there. Yet, besides camp nurse, I was given no job. Floating around Monday with nothing to do drove me nuts, so by Tuesday I had found myself work. Lena had eleven 4 – 6 year olds by herself so I became her helper the rest of the week. It helped that my language has improved so I could keep up better and that the kids knew me from previous years. But, it took a real shift of gears inside. I am often in leadership roles and with that usually comes a narrow focus and fast pace. Yet, that was not being asked of me this week. It took two days for me to understand that God was asking me just to be...to hand a crayon, help string a bead, sing along, sit beside, play with, encourage and hug.

The last VBS that we were a part of (helped with funding/supplies) wrapped up Friday in Zaporoshja. Zoya called me this morning to say- "We had 40 to 42 kids every day. Praise God! None of the parents of these children have a personal relationship with Christ but many parents & grandparents came to the closing program on Friday. Praise God! Camp went very well. God blessed us with great leaders. Please tell everyone who gave for our camp thank you! May God give them back 100 times! Please pray with us that the children would continue to come to church as we have invited them to Sunday School which begins tomorrow."

Zaporshja- It was a short trip but I had to travel to the Zaposhja Church clinic between camps and clinic days. I haven't visited this church clinic since before I left for furlough last September. Since then a lot of changes have happened and we had much to catch up on. Besides the business side, I also saw patients and organized their ostomy supplies.

I just kinda sat there stumped after hearing how God is choosing to work through us. You & I have been chosen to play no small role in the evangelistic outreach to medical students throughout Ukraine. Yes, I had prayed for the \$3,000 to help support the 3rd annual conference. Yes, God had provided the funds. No, I had not been able to attend the May conference myself but now I was sitting with the program in my hands and hearing firsthand about how it went. I was pleased, very pleased...pleased with their vision, the program, that 300+ had attended, with the follow up and their plans for the future. God could do this without us but He chooses not to. If you want to read more, attached to this email is a summary letter written by the conference director.

*"God does not involve us in his grand, global purpose because he needs us.
He involves us in his grand, global purpose because he loves us."*

David Platt

Clinic days- Officially, the Premorski Church Clinic remains closed until mid-September. However, between road trips this summer I've continued clinic days for my wound patients. Wednesday I had 7 people scheduled and 5 walk-ins (3 wounds & 2 for medication refills. I'm clueless as to how they found out I was there). It's been a long while since I've had such a diverse day. Medically they would be labeled as: ongoing rehab for a broken wrist; 2 venous stasis wounds now healed; 2 venous stasis still healing; 1 infected arterial wound; 2 with infected legs, 1 non healing wound – possible cancer and 1 non healing wound - possible bone infection.

But there is something wrong with these labels. They are too neat and tidy because they tell only a fraction of the story. Who also sat in my exam chair was pride, rebellion, depression, fear and one so desperate to fill the empty place in her heart she walked in with a police history, drug cuts and positive for AIDS. More every year, I see the connection between the wounds of the body and the wounds of the heart. But, seeing this would be horribly discouraging if I did not also see how, through these wounds, God is reaching out to each person.

God didn't need to use me but He chose to. I got to be the tool to remove maggots, give antibiotics, debride and bandage. I was also used as a tool to warn, teach, encourage, invite and love. God used me to help them. And, God used them to remind me that He wants all of us to be labeled – "Mine."

Boxes- By the grace of God, a long time ago, I was able to stop worrying about if there would be enough. Trying to calculate how many patients were still to come and what they would need was turning me into a hording nervous wreck. Remembering that God had started and built the clinic, it was mine to trust Him to supply for it. Since that day, I give each patient enough of what they need until their next visit and I do not worry about if I will have enough for the next patient.

"Mine is to trust"....so so easy to say when the shelves are full. But now the supplies that came in mid-July were basically gone and on Wednesday I admit that I headed out to clinic wondering how I would supply the 7 patients I'd see today (still unaware of the 3 others who would show up). By 4pm I had given out my last 4x4 gauze and ABD pad. But at 2pm on Thursday I was sorting through 17 boxes that had just arrived! Thank you Lord!

Ebenezer

– Thus far has the Lord helped us.

Texas- Perhaps you remember my writing about Victor's death in Update 2. Victor, sailor-drinker-wife abuser- mafia member and church persecutor, was chased by the Hound of Heaven. After trusting his heart and life to God, besides renewing a marriage and making him a daddy for the 4th time, God would choose to use the next 13 years of Victor's life to spread the Good News and build His church in a huge way.

Everyone I know here misses Victor. He loved everyone and we loved him back. If it has been sad for us though, how much more difficult has it been for his family and church? But, 'for such a time as this,' God sent Texas. This was a hard trip for Oak Street Baptist Church. Like all of us have, they half expected that any minute Victor would come striding around the corner with his big 'ol grin and booming voice making everyone smile just because he had come. But, he never did.

I so saw God's timing in their outreach. With love they wept & held the family. With respect they encouraged the church and reminded them that God was in control. But staying true to

what God would desire, most of their week's time was spent sharing about Christ's sacrificial love with others. Thank you Lord for the gift you gave us in Texas. We are still gonna miss him but we will be together in a little while. Paka (see you later) Victor paka!

Coming up:

All Crimea Youth Camp – August 22- 26th: I leave Monday to travel north-east into the mountainous region of Crimea to one of my favorite places – the Christian camp ground at Bakchesserye. I've been invited to be the camp medic for the week. I anticipate getting little sleep and no showers but still it was an honor to be asked. The focus will be faith building and I respect those who are putting the program together so I'm looking forward to it.

Gospra – September 5 – 10, I will be helping out again at the Christian Camp for the mentally & physically challenged. After returning home the last time, I shared my experience with 2 of my colleagues. Dr. Ludmilla (who I work with at the Premorski Church) and her husband will take me to camp and stay overnight so as to get a favor for what is happening. Our hope is that next year it will work out for her to serve all week. Era, my co-worker from the Berdansk Church clinic, will also be coming. With her specialty as in rehabilitation and massage, she is a perfect person to have on the camp team. Gospra will wrap up summer camps for me and I'll be ready for September's slower pace.

June