

Update 33, written March 2, 2015

We applaud patience but prefer it to be a virtue that others possess.

N.T. Wright

I smiled when I read that quote because it so pointed its finger at me. These past 12 months has felt like a deliberate pulverization of my impatient nature. I've stormed heaven with my frustrated questions of "What next? How does it look? When will I know?" Only to hear back – "Today is enough for you."

Since last March, "What are your plans now?" is the question I've dreaded most, and the one I've been asked more than any other. It seems I've have had to say, "I don't know." more in the past year than in the course of my entire life. That is the main reason I have not sent out an update...I didn't know what my plans were. And, I still don't. But, looking through the rearview mirror of life I can sincerely thank God for the gifts He gave in these 3 extra months in the states.

November: I finished up reporting to all my supporting churches and, had the situation in Crimea been unchanged, furlough would be done and I would have returned to Ukraine. However, life as it has been is no longer. Skype calls into my local co-workers told me that, at least for now, wait. My friends in Crimea and Ukraine were experiencing rolling black outs (daily loss of electricity for an unknown amounts of time) due to all that was going on. And, winter was coming on which is hardly conducive to travel. In short, they and my CMF team advised that it would be better to wait until spring.

I recognized this extra time in the states was a chance to work towards additional education that had interested me for the last 5 years. Therefore, in late November, I began the course work to be certified as a Foot and Nail care nurse.

December & January: Earlier in the fall, I had been approached by a couple in my church who asked if I could help as a personal nurse? They knew that her time left on earth was coming to an end and wondered that when the time came, would I be willing to help with her care? I considered it an honor to be asked.

So between class work, completing the required practicum, helping with Gwen's care and my brother and sister and their families visiting over the Christmas holidays – my days were busy. Much faster than I expected, the Lord took Gwen home.

Late in January, I heard that Alla had received her visa and was coming to visit Oregon. Alla is the leader of the outreach to the mentally and physically challenged in Crimea. We have worked together for the past 5 years – the ministry God has given me coming alongside the ministry God gave her - to take the Gospel message to those with disabilities and their caregivers.

February: The pastor of my home church extended the invitation for Alla to come and share. In the mean time, I crossed the finish line for my certification when I sat for my final exam and passed.

March: March 1st marked a year. A year ago yesterday I fled Crimea. And, as only God could have arranged it, on the one year 'anniversary' Crimea came to me. Yesterday, Alla shared at Christ Community Lutheran Church giving me a first time opportunity to have a colleague from Crimea personally share with a supporting church. As a translator between the 2 languages, it was hard to tell who was enjoying it more – Alla getting to know them or CCLC getting to meet Alla.

Like I said earlier, in looking back over the past 3 months I see God's hand so so clearly. I had the opportunity to complete additional training in my nursing specialty. I had the privilege of being invited into the life of a special family and in some small way help during a difficult time. And, I had the great joy of hosting one of the many amazing people I get to work with in Crimea. Thank you Lord!

Scout trip: All of the changes that have happened in Crimea and Ukraine this past year have put a huge question mark over my ministry. But I am at the one year mark now and decisions need to be made. And, the right decision usually comes with more information. To get information, I need to go back and see and hear things for myself.

Threaded through the past 3 months was a discovery. A Skype call into Crimea over the winter told me of news I didn't know. I have told everyone that Russia is a closed country to missionaries. Turns out I was wrong. It is not closed, just restricted. My national friends put me in touch with an American couple that have been serving in Russia for over 11 years but were currently in the states. In December, I made a special trip to Seattle to meet with them. After an hour with them, I understood that what I had thought impossible was indeed possible. The odds still seemed against me but never the less, in late January I sent in my application for a Russian tourist visa. In February, I received a 3-year multi entry tourist visa! I had hid nothing from them, so considered that God alone opened this door for me to return.

Monday I leave for a 4-month scout trip. I plan to visit **Crimea for 6 weeks**. The main purpose of this trip is to:

- 1 Hear in more detail how ministry has gone, assess how it is going now and get an understanding of how the local folks predict ministry in the future.
- 2 Explore ministry options.
- 3 Bring in resources for outreaches planned this summer. After this I plan to visit **Ukraine**. The main purpose for this trip is to:

- 1 Hear in more detail how ministry has gone, assess how it is going now and get

an understanding of how the local folks predict ministry in the future. I especially hope to meet with the staff at both clinics and the pastors I work with in Ukraine.

2 Meet with my CMF teammates.

3 Explore ministry options.

Bring in resources needed for outreaches. After this long trip I hope to better understand the situation and God's 'what's next ' for me. After this trip, I hope to be able to answer the, "What are your plans?" question. For security reasons, I will not be sending out another update until after I have left Crimea. But throughout this time your prayers will be most appreciated. Dictionary definition time: SAFE: free from harm or risk : [unhurt](#); secure from threat of danger, harm, or loss; successful at getting to a base in baseball without being put out; affording [safety](#) or security from danger, risk, or difficulty: [healthy](#), [sound](#): not threatening danger : [harmless](#): unlikely to produce controversy or contradiction: not likely to take risks : [cautious](#): [trustworthy](#), [reliable](#) Of course I understand that anywhere along the way, things may go much differently on this trip than I planned. Like I told my family, 'I am not packing my blue tights and Superman cape.' I don't plan to try any heroic stunts. Rather, I intend to be conservative in my decisions of where and when I travel within the country. Yet, obedience to God needs to prevail. Is this trip out right dangerous? For what I plan to do and from everyone who I have talked to there – No. Is this trip safe? No. But, don't stop with those questions. The world would have us focus on getting self to the next base without being put out. God calls us to die to self. A year and one day ago I prayed – "Lord I crave obedience – however that plays out – may You get the glory and the people be blessed." My prayer hasn't changed. June