

Update 31, written Sept.4, 2014

"...our attitude as we wait is often the best indicator of what our true motivation is."

Gary Thomas

Before Ukraine I didn't tolerate long lines - not drive through lines, postal lines or grocery store lines. I would rather do without than waste my time. Then came Ukraine and it's everyday year round lessons in patience. There was the frustrating wait for translation; waiting for help or waiting because of a miscommunication. When those eased up over the years and I became more independent, new 'waits' awaited me. Waiting for the bus - in the summer the wait could be 30 min. to 1 1/2 hrs; waiting 40 minutes in line at the post office or an hour at the bank was the norm; it could be several hours to several days wait for the internet service to restart. My gritted teeth, glaring stare and boiling heart advertised my bad attitude. Waiting...it seems so passive, so non-productive, so unAmerican. But the reality is - waiting is a part of life and *how* I wait says a lot about me.

"Impatience is a far more deadly enemy of spirituality than most of us realize. It disguises itself as zeal when, in reality, it is nothing more than a Trojan horse for pride."

Gary Thomas

The winds of trial uncover truth. For me, the quote above rang true. The trial of the personal unknown these past 6 months has re-asked foundational questions that stared at me and demanded an answer. Who are you? Where is your identity? When it is all said and done - what really counts? God has been gentle but relentless with me since March (when I fled Crimea) - re-teaching me who I am in Him and, no matter what comes, that my character is to become ever increasingly like His own is the most important. It would seem that after all these years in a personal relationship with God that one wouldn't need to revisit this lesson but here I am. So until the work is done, let the winds keep blowing.

Furlough Retreat & Team Meeting:

As I said, God has been gentle with me, providing loving people, helpful books, caring churches and supportive sending organization. A special event for me happened in July when I got to see my team. Except for emails, a few phone calls and one Skype call, we had not connected with each other since over a period of several weeks we had all left Ukraine. Besides myself, the CMF Ukraine team is made up of 3 families and they are awesome! To me they are no less family than my own relatives and to be able to see, hug, talk and even play with them again was a huge gift from God.

Christian Missionary Fellowship puts on a retreat each summer for those missionaries who are back in the states on furlough. This happened to be my first time attending as I had never taken furlough during the summer months. Well with the whole Ukraine team in the states, plus several from other countries, the furlough retreat offered a great platform to hear & be heard. I needed both. Just like when I visited Ukraine for 19 days in June, it was the same for this week in Indiana. I arrived one person but left another - somehow a bit more healed and calmer inside.

One family (Dryden's) will begin working with the Mslm background people groups here in the US as well as helping American congregations reach out better to their Mslm neighbor. One family (Mullenix's) returned to Ukraine this week. Their ministry is based in the Western (near the Poland border) region and things are quiet there. The third family (Powell's) was set to return when the pastor they work with asked them to wait. For now they remain stateside as the fighting (along the Eastern/Russian) border has come up to the outlying villages they work in and very close to the town where they live. Thank you for your continued prayers.

As for me, right now my focus is on furlough and taking this time to show churches how God has worked through them these past 3 years. A lot has happened and I am jazzed to share about it! After that, assuming the fighting has ended, I hope to make a 'scout trip' during the first half of next year. I'd like to visit both Ukraine and Crimea. Between now and then, with the help of God, I am going

to chose to trust the wisdom of God's timing and the goodness of His guidance.

Summer - Besides attending the retreat, summer has held other fun stuff as well. Salmon fishing on the ocean, spending time with family, seeing a few more friends and attending my 30th high school class reunion. A hernia that I had developed 3 years ago (shortly after arriving in Ukraine for this past term) was causing me increasing frustration, so surgery was added to my itinerary. God blessed me with a wonderful surgeon and the repair was done during the first part of August. While everything went smoothly, the actual operation was extensive thus requiring a longer re-coup time than I expected. It was a blessing to have all of August unscheduled and I am thoroughly enjoying the 'fruit' of a successful surgery. Thank you Lord!

Days ahead - I personally invite you to come to any of the following churches. On the Sunday's listed below, I will be sharing about our ministry together in Ukraine:

Sept. 7 Trent Church of Christ, Dexter, OR 38029 Wheeler Rd. 97431 The main worship service begins at 10:30 am.

Sept. 14 Shasta Way Christian Church, Klamath Falls, OR 5835 Shasta Way 97603

Sept 21 Imbler Christian Church, Imbler, OR 440 Ruckman Ave 97841

Oct. 5 Brookings Harbor Christian Church, Brookings, OR 777 5th Ave 97415

Oct. 12 Noti Church of Christ, Noti, OR 22424 Noti Loop Rd 97461

Oct. 19 Cannon Beach Community Church, Cannon Beach, OR 132 E. Washington 97110

Oct. 26 Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Mountlake Terrace, WA 21428 44th Ave. West 98043

Nov. 9 Twin Oaks Christian Church, Eugene, OR - located

at Bailey Hill Rd and Lorane Hwy

Nov. 23 Turner Christian Church, Turner, OR 7871
Marion Rd. SE 97392

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