



important news from Ukraine

... Bruce & Natalie Tuttle

September 3, 2009

Psalm 138 expresses, from the heart of David, that which flows out of my own meditations as well:

"I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth . . . in the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul . . . though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly . . . though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me . . . thy right hand shall save me . . . the LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands".

Thank you so very much for your prayers! Over the entire course of our lives, Natalie and I have been discovering the wonderful compassions, majesties, mercies and might of our God. And His lessons for us continue, apparently becoming more frequent, more potent, more moving! Here are just 3 of the recent blessings and concerns, in the midst of which God is showing Himself to be as faithful as ever:

1 -- PLEASE FORGIVE ME for delaying this news and this urgent request for your prayers; I haven't known what to say nor how to begin.

On July 27th, Natalie had an ultrasound to discover the source of pains she has experienced periodically over the past year or so. We expected the test to reveal kidney stones. Instead, the doctors were alarmed to discover a multitude of tumors. These "carcoid tumors" – which are too many to count -- are a rare form of cancer. The doctors insist these tumors have been growing within her for years. At one and the same time, her doctors are expressing alarm at the extensiveness of this cancer and astonishment on account of Natalie's health; they say that she should be very, very sick . . . but she's not!



That ultrasound took place in the States, at a time when I was hurrying to get to Istanbul. A series of other tests followed, and on August 25th I returned to the States to be with Natalie for a consultation with a surgeon and a medical oncologist. For now, they recommend that we avoid surgery or any radical chemotherapy, in an effort to sustain the health she now enjoys. Instead, she is likely to begin monthly injections of a medication which should slow the spread and growth of these tumors, without (hopefully) giving her any severe side effects. Another significant test is scheduled for September 9th, after which the doctors should know the location of every malignancy. Cancer very rarely begins in the liver, so they expect to find that this cancer has spread to her liver from its origin in another organ.

Please pray! This form of cancer cannot be cured by medical science, but our God is not limited by medical science. We experience some very fearful (and tearful) moments when seized by the magnitude of the danger and the uncertainty of the future. But we are trusting Him! As the doctors are already astonished at her present health, we're asking God to give them another "jolt" and to stop or eradicate a disease over which they have no real power. Know that we are so very, very grateful for your friendship and your concern, love, and prayers!

2 – NOW LET'S TALK TURKEY! From August 1-11, I was in Istanbul, to help in the training of 5 Central Asian couples. Three of the couples were from Turkmenistan and 2 couples were from Uzbekistan. These are leaders who were brought to Istanbul by another BIEM laborer (names won't be used, in an effort to protect those involved). The group included "River", "Hope", "Eagle" and his wife. It was an extra special blessing to be with them again. For one week, Dr. Michael Petersen taught a course on the Pentateuch and I taught a course on marriage. It was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life, teaching and fellowshiping with these dear saints! During the week they shared the marvelous ways in which Christ had drawn them to Himself and told of the souls God has been delivering out of bondage in the midst of severe persecution. My heart was moved and enriched to overflowing! They expressed their relief and joy to be able to spend even that one week without fear of arrest, imprisonment, torture, or even death.

Please, please pray daily for these dear brothers and sisters – for their safety, and the fruitfulness of the work God is doing in those Muslim countries. Pray, too, that God would enable the believers there to overcome the fears with which they struggle every day. And pray that God will provide the way and the resources by which they may

continue to receive desperately needed training in the service of their Lord.

3 – MEANWHILE, BACK IN B.T. (that's "Bila Tserkva") . . .

Do you remember the anxious concern expressed in our last newsletter . . . that we had just graduated 2 men, with 2 new students enrolled for the fall, and with almost no time to spend recruiting any more students? Do you remember our request that you pray God to send us at least 2 or 3 additional new students? He has done precisely that! As a matter of fact, we turned away (for various reasons) 4 other men who wanted to apply and enroll for the start of our fall classes. What's more, one of the new students is a brother from Belarus; this is a development for which I've prayed over the course of the last 3 years! With 5 new students, we've jumped from last year's enrollment of 5 men to 8! God is so good!!

Classes began on Tuesday of this week (September 1st), and should conclude on December 18th. Our friend and fellow-laborer from Istanbul "happened" to be in Bila Tserkva at the time in which I was hurriedly preparing to depart for the States, and he offered to help. So, while I am here in America he is there, directing the start of the semester and teaching a class on church planting, a subject which he is uniquely suited to teach. We are ecstatically thankful for such a friend, and for God's incredible timing of events!

Natalie and I have planned that I should remain until the medical test scheduled for her on the 9th. It is unlikely that the doctors will begin any treatment before the end of the month. So I plan to return to Ukraine alone, probably on the 13th, so as to be able to resume the ministry there. There are so many questions which remain unanswered and possibilities which are as yet unexplored . . . but it's likely that I will be in Ukraine for 4-6 weeks and then fly back to be with Natalie again for a brief time. It is our hope and prayer that she can begin treatments, tolerate them well and without significant side-effects, and that we can find a way to transfer those treatments to Ukraine. Humanly, that may be too much to expect, but we believe God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. We are praying for wisdom to labor for Christ ever more effectively and fruitfully, at such an exciting time in our ministry!

Some of you have learned of Natalie's condition through BIEM or through "the grapevine", and you have graciously asked how you may help us. Obviously, we desperately need your intercessions with God. But you might also help if there is a way in which you could transfer any excess and unneeded frequent flyer miles, so as to help defray the additional cost of travel I expect to incur in the next few months. If this is a possibility and/or you have information which might help us in that regard, please contact us.

As ever, we are delighted to be your fellow-laborers in God's vineyard,



Bruce & Natalie



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