



Dear Friends of The Harbor:

Thanksgiving /Christmas 2009

Dignity - “The state of being worthy, a legal title of honor or nobility” (Websters)

This is a very interesting time in my life and ministry. I seem to be learning the same thing from many different angles. Our church is in a series on understanding the heart of God for the poor. Our pastor is helping us see that ultimately poverty is not about a lack of money or things. When we incorrectly diagnose the situation as such, then we apply the wrong solution of just giving more money and things. If this was really the essence of world poverty, it would already be solved. In my studies on attachment disorder (which is the fundamental issue all of our participants struggle with) I am learning there is new brain research which verifies and expands on what most of us would consider “common sense”. A lack of physical and emotional closeness with a primary caretaker in the first year of life has long term effects on brain development, brain chemistry, and hormonal/emotional development. Studying the Constitution and The Declaration of Independence with my son has given me a brand new appreciation for why they are touted as some of the most profound and amazing documents ever written in the history of man.

What do poverty, attachment disorders, and our founding documents have in common, and what do they have to do with The Harbor? Having been created in the image of God we have been given dignity and the “unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. When we are neglected, abused, or oppressed our dignity and humanity are profoundly affected. We act and respond more like animals than humans. Instinct takes over instead of self control, violence instead of love, and survival in the moment instead of living with an eternal perspective. Fueling this dehumanizing process is a very real enemy whose job it is to keep us in the dark about our nature as the image bearers of the living God and to keep us focused on fighting each other instead of him.

The forces that land people in poverty or orphanages are very similar. They are both spiritual and natural. People have made bad choices that affect others, and they have been subject to various degrees of abuse and neglect. Our forefathers understood the profoundness of the dignity given to them and all men by their Creator. They refused to live without this and instead demanded to be treated as God intended with liberty, justice, and the securing of the common good for all. For the first time in history a group of oppressed people stood up to their oppressors and said, “This isn’t right and we aren’t going to take it anymore!” This is an incredible spiritual legacy.

The foundation for the “cure” of poverty and attachment disorder is the same. It is an understanding of one’s humanity and the dignity given to them by God. Then come skill development and the giving of opportunities. Without an understanding of their dignity, most of our orphans do not have the umpf, hutzpah, motivation, internal fortitude, or whatever you call it to actually change their lives. It is much the same for those caught in poverty. The method of applying the “cure” is relationship. Without relationships our bodies literally do not develop or work the way they were designed to. At The Harbor we are redoubling our efforts to teach our participants about their dignity and to do this in the context of relationships. We are also committed to increasing our prayer protection against our enemy who loves to keep us all in bondage.


As we enter the Thanksgiving and Christmas season let us ponder again the profoundness of our dignity as image bearers, give thanks for the legacy of our forefathers, commit to treating all people everywhere with this dignity, and kneel in worship at the manger of the One who gave it to us in the first place.

New Initiatives

1. **Internships:** I am working with Bethel University to develop some internships for students studying marketing, international business, missions, or non-profit leadership. We would provide a practicum, they would help us raise funds.
2. **Business Development:** I am trying to find college seniors interested in starting up businesses for The Harbor through our Vocational Training Center. There are some possibilities on the horizon.
3. **Bed & Breakfast:** Alex, Luba, and I decided we are going to give this a try. We will rent an apartment for the 4 months Alex will be in Russia (May-Aug.) that we can use as a B&B to host groups. We think this could be an excellent business for us and provide many different employment opportunities for Harbor graduates. Let us know if you want to book a room!
4. **Dacha purchase:** I am pursuing the idea of purchasing a dacha or summer home for The Harbor. (These range from metal shacks to mansions. We would be looking for a very modest log cabin-type.) Dacha's are a critical part of Russian life for many reasons. For us we want to utilize it to help teach our participants subsistence farming.

I will be working on all of these as well as training of staff in my upcoming trip to The Harbor in January.

Thank you for partnering with me to make these efforts possible.



Executive Director, The Harbor
www.theharborspb.org



Masha growing in dignity

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