

Dear Friends of The Harbor:

February, 2010

I'm not sure why, but this recent trip to Russia was a particularly intense roller coaster ride of emotions.

Luba and I went to meet with a director of another similar program to see if we could partner somehow and, also, just learn. I was sure my Russian was wanting when in the course of discussing the philosophy of their ministry he turned to me and said, "I will speak to you, psychologist to psychologist. You and I know that this notion of 'Fathers' is just a myth. They are only negative influences in the family." However, Luba later assured me that I had heard him correctly. In a nation already plagued with far too many single mothers and absentee fathers, now, ironically, here's another ministry led by a man, teaching the young orphan boys they are not needed as an integral part of the family. I felt very sad and alone in our ministry efforts.

Soon after this, I had a meeting with our psychologist, Natasha. We talked about our residents, the problems and progress she was seeing. She showed me some of the new techniques she was using to work with our orphans and I was astounded at her wisdom and creativity. One of the things she has discovered to be particularly powerful is videoing and photographing our residents throughout the course of their normal days. Seeing their behavior gives them a much better idea of how others see them and why others respond to them as they do. It is very fertile soil to help them begin to ask themselves, "What is going on inside of me?" Their emptiness and sadness are eerily visible. It shocks even them. Natasha continues this personal documentary on each one and you can physically *see* them changing in their countenance before your eyes. What a blessing and testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit. I was on cloud-nine after this meeting!



*A resident in her 1<sup>st</sup> month at The Harbor. A resident in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year at The Harbor.*

In the days that followed I had many opportunities to interact with both current and past Harbor residents. One night at our VTC, I was asked to fill in and help teach an English class for an orphanage that we have developed a good relationship with. Varying degrees of mental delays were obvious. I spoke with the accompanying caretaker and she told me "Oh, yes, all of these kids have fetal alcohol syndrome. Most are third generation orphans and from third generation alcoholics/drug addicts." After class we just hung out and I was listening to the kids talking. They were telling stories of violence and abuse they had witnessed throughout their lives and were laughing about it all. I thought they were recounting movies they had seen, but I was assured these were personal stories. "Oh Lord, these kids don't have a chance!" was the honest cry of my heart. More stories of all their dabbling in the occult left me feeling very low.

I went to the kitchen to pray, process, and have some tea. As I walked in, I saw this stunning Russian beauty who looked vaguely familiar. She gave me a big smile and a warm hello. It took me a few seconds to realize this was Tanya. Wow! Talk about a transformation! As we caught up I was amazed to find out she was in her fourth year of a five year psychology program. She is studying to be a psychologist and came to get advice from Luba about how to pursue internships and what kind she should secure. I asked her how she liked school and she bluntly replied, "I love it when we are not in session!" I asked how her grades were and she said, "Fair." Upon reflection, I realized these were the most encouraging answers she could have possibly given me. Five years ago Tanya could not think past the moment. She had no goals. She was lazy and not particularly motivated. Now, in spite of not really liking school, she was in her fourth year of a five year program! She had stuck it out. She has goals and is persevering towards those.

I felt like an emotional yo-yo. One minute seeing what the Lord had done and full of faith, and the next minute seeing the reality of what we are up against and completely discouraged! This helped me relate better to my staff and know how to pray for them more effectively! The work is hard. Our enemy is real. But, Jesus has risen and is alive and interceding for us at this moment. The Holy Spirit lives within us. And greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world. I am looking at this season of Lent as an opportunity to reflect on these truths in a more intentional way. I am thankful for your love, encouragement, support, and prayer in this ministry.

Lord I believe. Help my unbelief!



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**Praises:**

1. We met our 2009 budget in the midst of the economic downturn!
2. Five residents came to Christ last year!
3. We are helping residents find good jobs.

**Prayer Requests:**

1. More Russian workers to join our staff
2. Protection of all staff, residents, and facilities from the enemy.
3. The Lord would free the captives and make Himself known to these orphans and heal their wounds.
4. God would provide a way for us to get permanent facilities.
5. Staff would be encouraged and see some fruits from their labor.

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Church Resource Ministries - 1240 N. Lakeview Ave. Suite # 120 - Anaheim, CA 92807-1831**

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