

## Our April 2016 Prayer Letter

Dear Brethren,

Thank you so much for the prayers concerning our return to Ukraine. We received our religious visas a couple of weeks ago. We were able to get them on the same day we applied, which was very unexpected...it was thrilling to see it all come together! We are thankful for the Lord's mercy and for the prayers regarding our visa situation. We faced a little opposition at the airport when the ticket lady said I bought tickets "without baggage" (and were standing there with four suitcases!), and when we were detained at customs due to registration issues, but the Lord was our "present help". When the employees turned to their authorities for help, it seemed as if both were reprimanded, and they let us continue, and we flew into Kiev as the sun rose.

We've been traveling ever since last June, when we left our church in Donetsk because of unsuccessful attempts with the reregistration between the new Donetsk government ("rebels") and the current Ukrainian government. We plan to register this month, after the Easter holiday season ends. We ask that you might pray about this. As far as I know, the registration can be as short as six months and as long as five years, but it's usually done for a year's time. There is another variant that includes an immediate temporary residency permit, which would allow us to legally do mission work anywhere in Ukraine. 'Full access' to Ukraine sounds great, but it comes at a hefty price of four thousand per adult and then half the price for each year following, which would be two thousand per adult. The registration we can get now allows us legal residency only in Kiev. If we chose the other route, however, then we would have to sacrifice the van purchase which we are still saving for. We went out witnessing with the church, yesterday, at one of the parks...everyone was out on "Ishtar Sunday", so we made use of it. Transportation was difficult being that we were crammed into the cars like sardines. There are some older folks that want to come and witness, too, but have health problems that make it too hard to use public transportation in some areas of town, or for too long of a distance. I think we'll focus on purchasing the van as soon as we can (which would be a help to the local ministry) and get the regular registration for now. Maybe we can try for the other residency permit in the not-so-distant future, but not now. It is probably best for us to stay in one spot for at least a year.

Lastly, I would like to ask prayer for Andre. He has made decisions of late that have caused us to have to break fellowship with him. He has been away from us and our leadership for about six months. He was a good brother who helped me a lot when we first got to Donetsk and had remarkable zeal not seen in a lot of the nationals here. However, with little of our influence while we were in the States (and being away from the Lord), he has become backslidden, hasty, and divisive in manner. After we forgave him the money for the van last November (a few thousand dollars), he turned around and did almost exactly as the wicked servant at the end of Matthew 18. He even went so far as to have hired some thugs to take the car of another brother (whom we know) for payment. The other brother was trying to pay him and asked for his patience with a debt much smaller than the one we forgave Andre of. The local head bandit (in Berezovka) refused to allow it upon hearing Andre's reasoning. I hope Andre will repent of his actions and get right...until then he will not be associated with our mission work.

Gratefully Yours in Christ,

Rick, Joanna, Silas and Paul