

News From GHT



By Nita Hanson

What Would Jesus Do?

"...and you shall be **witnesses** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
(Acts 2:8b)

The demonstrations in Kiev had already begun when I returned to the States the end of last year. I watched in horror as demonstrations turned into riots, and then to all-out rebellion against the current political regime. People went from defiance to throwing rocks to Molotov cocktails. And then people began to die - on both sides.

Finally the current President, Yanokovich, fled to Russia and everyone rejoiced in their "triumph" over the government. But, as we all know, this "victory" quickly turned into disaster as people in the East of Ukraine and the Crimea began their own "revolution,"



The enemy of our souls is always quick to use division and violence for his own purposes. Russia's President Putin used the deep divisions and old hatreds in Ukraine to seize the Crimea and begin his campaign to "destabilize" the country. The threat of all-out war has loomed on the horizon constantly since his seizure of the Crimea.

What do we, as God's people, do in such times as these? After all, there had been great injustice done by Yanokovich's regime. He literally stole billions of dollars and betrayed his country. Wasn't it the people's right to rebel against him and take the law into their own hands? Wasn't it their right to use violence against the government when it was used against them?

These are difficult questions to answer. But I have learned over my years as a follower of Jesus that what "seems" right by the world's standards is not necessarily what Jesus would have us do. And so I began to ask my people in Ukraine if they could ever envision Jesus throwing a Molotov cocktail - no matter what the circumstances.

I was told that I didn't understand the situation - that this was different - that even the churches were finally uniting to help the people fight. So I began to ask them to look at Jesus' life and the times He lived in. Didn't He live in a country occupied by one of the cruelest governments in history? Wasn't great injustice done to the people? Wasn't it the worst of times as people were routinely crucified at the merest whim of the occupiers?

I challenged them to find me one word in Scripture where Jesus spoke against the Roman regime. And, of course, they couldn't find any. I asked them if there were any people or groups which Jesus did speak against? Yes, there were - the "religious" of their day who looked perfect from the outside, but whose hearts for God were cold. He spoke against the "religious" ones whose arrogance and lust for power blinded them to the fact that the long-awaited Savior was right there among them.

What would Jesus do in this situation? What would he have us do?

I believe He called us to love the unlovely - more specifically, He called us to love our enemies and even to pray for them. You see, there was to be an election in Ukraine a few months down the road. Perhaps the injustices could have been dealt with peacefully.

Don't get me wrong, I grieve over the things being done in Ukraine. I want "justice" for the people of Ukraine whom I have come to love so very much. But I can't get past the question, "what would Jesus do?" Do we, in our passion for what we perceive as right, invite the enemy into our situation?



Devastation from the riots

Do we, when we are faced with conflict, seek Jesus to find out what He would do? Or do we jump into the fray, holding onto our "rights" and take sides? The enemy feeds on division. God does great things when we come together "in one accord." That is how the church began - in a room where they were all together in one accord.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" **Philippines 4:13**

What a week! I made my first trip to a Ukrainian hospital. We went to visit two people who had requested wheelchairs. One was a diabetic who had his leg amputated. The other man had both legs amputated. First off, I will tell you it is heartbreaking. It is a long wait for an elevator to get up to your floor - there is only one elevator for a 14-story building and another for staff. It took nearly 30 minutes to get up to the floor the patients were on. I pray there is never a fire or any reason to have to evacuate this place.



We got to the room and it was a tad bigger than an American hospital room for two people. but there were five patients in the room. I began talking to our first patient, whose name is Volodimir. He has been in the hospital for six months. At first there was hope that they would not need to amputate, then things took a bad turn. From what I could understand through my interpreter, they first amputated his toes and when that didn't solve the problem, they amputated his feet, and then eventually his legs from the knee down.



I could not imagine being in that room for six months with all those people. Just in the time we were there, there were probably 12 people in the room between the patients, nurses, visitors and us. We spoke to him for 30 minutes asking him about his family, hobbies and other questions. We fitted him for the wheelchair. I helped carry him off the bed to get him in the chair. and he was so thankful for it. He asked if we would pray for his health. I prayed for him and his wife. We talked to him about our picnic in the park and invited him to come in the summer.

A Week in the life of Pastor Scott, continued

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The second man we visited was staying in the same room. We did the same procedure for him. After talking for 30 minutes or so we brought the wheelchair up and fitted it for him. He was very quiet and his wife was doing all the talking. I asked if I could pray for him before we left and he said yes. After I finished praying he broke down in tears and was just thanking us over and over. I want to thank all of you for supporting God's Hidden Treasures and our ministry here in Ukraine. It is amazing how God is able to bring hope to people in some pretty awful situations .

Thursday I joined with our mobile medical clinic. We drove out to the village with Dr. Tamara and Nurse Olya where they would give free medical exams to people in the village and Pastor Kostya, Tonya, Lillia would ask people if they wanted us to pray for them when they finished. We visited with some really neat ladies from the village, and prayed for a lot of needs. One woman had a severe knee problem, a daughter with cancer, and a husband who passed away a few years back. She had a lot of hurt in her life and we spent a lot of time speaking with her and praying for her. We had a man come in very interested in learning about the Bible and God. We talked for a long while.

Friday was another amazing day of ministry. I had a chance to visit the Boy's orphanage for the mentally challenged. It was so great to see these kids again and their faces lit up. I spent a week with them back in August so it was big reunion. I spent an hour with the older kids at the orphanage singing songs, teaching the Bible and doing crafts. Thank you, Shanda and Jamie, we're still using the left over craft supplies from camp with the kids.



Friday afternoon our staff, along with Pastor Kostya (the pastor who plays Father Frost for us at Christmas) met to talk about how we can reach people in the villages. We have people in the villages pleading for someone to come and teach the Bible. Our plan is for Kostya, Tonya and me to drive out to two villages in close proximity where we drop off one of us and then proceed to the other; and we would teach the Bible and visit shut-ins in that area. (The first one is scheduled for December 4th.)

Saturday I met with some of the youth from camp. They came over to my apartment and we watched Harry Potter. It has been great getting to reconnect with everyone. Here I am at my first Ukrainian Thanksgiving.



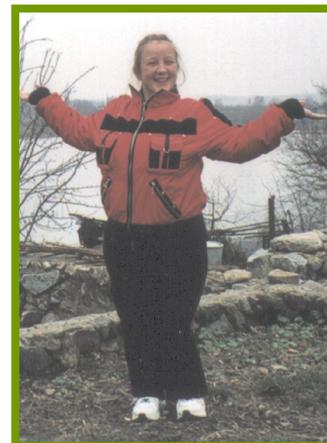


Another one of our "boys" (the boys we took from the Boy's House Orphanage) got married. Ruslan and Olya got married last June and he is still beaming! Olya was also an orphan, but she was fortunate to have been adopted.

And Yura and his wife, Oxsana, who got married last year had a beautiful baby girl, Anya, who is the apple of his eye. If you ask him how she is, be prepared to spend the next 30 minutes seeing pictures and video!



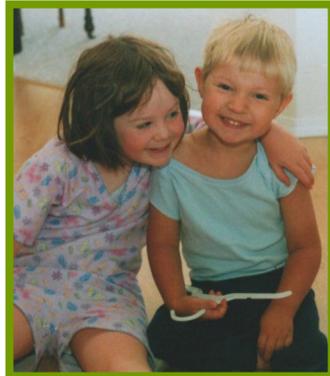
Svetlana, whose legs were deformed due to rickets came to the U.S. through GHT for surgery at Shriners' Hospital. She is now married and has a baby! The one who thought she had no future is now a wife, and mother -- works as an interpreter of English and who knows what else is in the future!



Did You Know, continued

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Our "little" Dima is now about 6' 4". He got a driver's license last year and is "growing up" so fast. He and his father, Barry, are praying about coming to Ukraine next summer so Dima can see his birth land.



Dima w/his sister, Molly



Dima doing homework

Two of our kids who were adopted went on short-term mission trips this last year. Lucia went to Mexico and Eli went to Bolivia. It is such a joy to see these children who were cast away grow up to be wonderful, responsible adults who love the Lord!



Eli and Dad in Bolivia



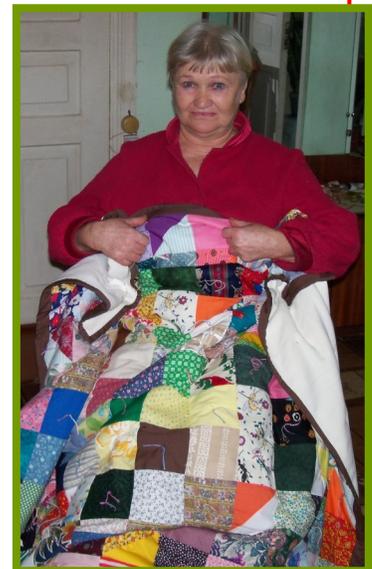
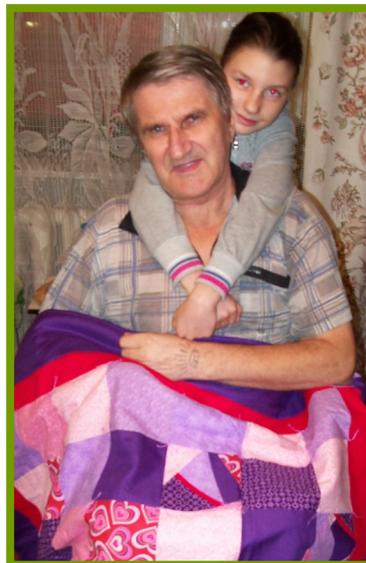
Several of our kids from our annual summer camps for the disabled children are now helping GHT with various parts of the ministry. Serghei, who I first met at our camp when he was 11, worked as a volunteer at this year's camp and even taught one of the Bible studies! Serghei is also studying English and hopes to be an interpreter in the future.

And Volva ,who I also first met at one of the summer camps as a young teenager, is now working with our Pastor Scott as his interpreter at the Boy's House.



Can you believe that we have given out over 4,000 wheelchairs throughout Ukraine - taken personally to people's homes! And we've delivered over 2,800 just in our region of Bila Tserkva. And each person has become one of "God's hidden treasures" as we've gotten to know them. Our lives have been enriched through theirs.

These beautiful blankets, donated to GHT from Emmanuel Presbyterian and Ascension Lutheran, were given at the time the people received their wheelchairs from us. How wonderful to see tears break into smiles and hopelessness turn into hope as God's love is shared.





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God's Hidden Treasures is a ministry that serves the needs of the poor, the disabled and the orphaned of Ukraine and brings God's love through personal relationships in the name of Jesus Christ.