

Mahon: Russia Dispatch #3 -01.23.08 Hitting the ground running

Pictures:

01_ Packing Party - One of the highlights for El and me in terms of our mission trips is the Packing Party. We spend several days collecting Bibles, Bible study aids, medical and educational supplies as well as much needed items for home and family for the missionaries and national pastors with whom we will be ministering.

02_ Departing for Russia - The airport run is crucial and Rick Hughes, long time friend and take time off from work for each and every mission trip to get us loaded up, to the airport and safely checked in. (He and his wife Laura also have made every single packing party since we started to take have them.)

03_ Arriving - Checked in, through transit in London, loaded, unloaded in St. Petersburg, through customs, loaded back up and now being unloaded safely where we will be staying in St. Petersburg - all as a result of your intercessory prayers.

04_ Four Stories and the Elevators Out - Seven 60 - 70lbs suitcases of supplies; Twelve 30lbs boxes of books; Four flights of stairs and the elevators out. One of my most treasured titles is "God's Mule" and like Balaam's donkey I get to speak as well!! (Are these boxes getting heavier or am I getting older?)

05_ Distributing God's Word in Church - This is what it is all about!! If you could only see the expressions of disbelief mingled with joy; if you could only hear the squeals of delight!

06_Application: Early Morning Men's Bible Study - Everywhere I go I am told men will not get up early in the morning to study the Bible and everywhere I go I find men who will get up early in the morning to study the Bible. Here the leaders of the St. Petersburg church put to use their new Bibles in an early morning study with Pastor Blake and myself.

In this dispatch...

- I. Hitting The Ground Running
- II. Labor while it is day, night comes...
- III. An exciting report on the ministry thus far
- IV. Our reliance upon you our prayer warriors
- V. Prayer Requests:

First Prayer Over Paul's request which follows his teaching on the ministry of intercession. Ask God to empower our lives and character that we might bring glory to God and honor to His calling through our faith, conduct and message. Please claim...

2 Corinthians 1:12 "For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you."

Please Claim Isaiah 55: that God's Word would work mightily in the lives of those who hear ***Isaiah 55:11 "So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."***

Next, and I am sure with his blessing, I steal a verse from my son Sam. Please pray for our stamina. I attempted this dispatch twice before but each time fell asleep in the middle of it. By God's Holy Spirit and by your empowering prayers we will be able to faithfully acquit ourselves here in Russia. Please claim Isaiah 40:28-31

"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary."

Lastly claim Philippians 4:19 & 20 as we seek to minister here in Russia we ask the Lord for nothing for ourselves but only for those resources which will allow us to serve, bless and build up His work and His ministers who labor so selflessly and so sacrificially in this dark and cold land.

"And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen"

Dear Prayer Warriors,

As I write this prayer dispatch it is dark and snowing - as it has been every day since we arrived. We are in Russia and we have hit the ground running. As you look about you in terms of world events, now is not the time to be sitting on your hands if you want to join Jesus in the harvest fields of the world.

There was a time when I would plan our winter/spring Eurasian mission tour and not think twice about entering Belarus - now it is closed. There was a time when I would discuss plans with Dr. Mukolwe concerning taking teams to Kenya and not think twice about the prospects of cancellation or rescheduling, yet now that is not the case. Just this week in St. Petersburg a British government aid center was closed, the director arrested, the workers detained. The press is full of discussions of "foreigners" and missionaries are hearing rumblings of visas not being renewed. I have often said and I repeat it now, these are not the days for hesitation and timidity when it comes to the work of God in the harvest fields of the world. It is for this reason that we hit the ground running and count every day that the Lord honors us with the privilege of the service of Him on foreign fields a supreme blessing.

We thank God for you also who labor with us through your prayers. II Corinthians 1:11 could not be more clear, ***"you also joining in helping us through your prayers, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed upon us through the prayers of many."***

- ✠ You join us on the mission field - through your prayers
- ✠ You help us on the mission field - through your prayers
- ✠ You cause those to whom we minister to be blessed - through your prayers
- ✠ You bestow upon us favor which we would not otherwise not experience - through your prayers

Our ministry has been, is and always will be centered around the eternal, inerrant, infallible, holy, written Word of God.

Our ministry has been, is and always will be empowered by the grace of God and your faithful and earnest intercessions.

This has been a glorious beginning to our mission. God's Word and supplies safely here for distribution. At church Sunday and at the seminary this week I was able to distribute copies of John MacArthur's study Bible in Russian to all adults in church and all students in my classes. (This was made possible by Bill Roberson of Dallas, Texas. His home group from his church took on the project of raising money for Bibles for Ravil's church. We were able not only to give Bibles to Ravil's church but the St. Petersburg church, the Pushkin church and the seminary students. In addition a complete set of McArthur Commentaries is now on the shelves of the seminary - all in Russian!)

In addition to the distribution of God's Word, much needed medical supplies and aid has gone to missionaries, national pastors, seminary students and lay leaders.

God's Word has been preached as well. I preached on "Witnessing" this past Sunday morning in St. Petersburg; I have the privilege of teaching from 10 a.m. till 5 p.m. each day at the seminary and then will preach again Sunday in Pushkin. Today we buy our tickets for Siberia and make arrangements for shipping the Bibles and Commentaries on ahead to Ravil's church by rails so they will be there when we arrive in two weeks time.

Now this is exciting!

God is at work!

We are at work!

And we praise God that you are at work as well, alongside us, faithfully sustaining us through your labors of intercession.

Paul had a great confidence in the ministry because of his confidence in the faithfulness of his intercessors. We feel this same confidence because of your faithfulness in standing side by side with us in your prayers. We close then with Paul's expression of confidence to the Corinthians which we share with you. Not confidence in ourselves to accomplish this but in the Lord and in your prayers. By the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit Paul follows his teaching in verse eleven on the ministry of intercession with this telling statement...

2 Corinthians 1:12 *"For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you."*

As always we minister by

The grace of God

And

The faithful and effectual prayers of you our intercessors.

By His mercy,

II Corinthians 4:1

Rev. John S. Mahon

St. Petersburg, Russia - Laboring while it is day...



Picture One



Picture Two



Picture Three



Picture Four



Picture Five



Picture Six