



# **A Certain God in Uncertain Times**

In one of his prayers, the prophet Isaiah proclaims to God that "*the steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You*" (Isaiah 26:3). I think we can all relate right now to the need for the Father's "perfect peace" in our lives. Personally, it seems almost surreal that four weeks ago Eleanor and I were frantically packing our bags to try to head back to the States from Tyumen, Russia following a declaration by the US President that European flights to the US were soon to be curtailed. But as we take a moment now to pause and reflect on our (shorter than anticipated) time in Russia, we are blown away by the evidence of God intervening in the weeks leading up to and during our stay there - specifically by His power working, provision for, and protection during those days spent ministering to our Russian brothers and sisters in Christ. Read on below to see how God moved in and through your gifts and prayers to strengthen and bless the Russian Church!



### ***The Honest Ones***

Before we ever set foot on Russian soil this winter, God worked powerfully through your prayers to secure us a 3 year, multi-entrance religious teachers visa which would enable us to preach and teach at seminaries and churches across Russia. Repeatedly we were told by other mission organizations that this "simply wasn't done" because these types of visa's were never granted. Yet GCI remains committed to the principle of honesty and openness in ministry - that we will not deceive any individual or government nor will we pay bribes in order to participate in ministry activities. If God desires our service in a place, then He will open the necessary doors.

As a result, the churches to whom we minister in Russia have become known as the "honest ones" who do not sneak people or resources underhandedly into their congregations. What a testimony to other believers and their communities at large! We

count ourselves privileged to join in the ranks of our church forefathers in that "*when [we] had arrived and gathered the church together, [we] began to report all things that God had done with [us] and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles*" (Acts 14:27).



### ***The Meaning of Grace***

One of the key ministries of GCI is providing Bibles and Bible study aids to pastors, lay leaders, and their wives at no cost to these faithful servants of the Lord. However, such gifts made possible by your generosity are not haphazardly handed out. Rather, recipients are asked to exhibit a faithfulness to the Lord and His Word through Scripture memory, daily quiet time worksheets, and service to the church body. Although our trip was shorter than originally intended, we praise God that we were able to distribute approximately 300 Bibles and Bible study resources among church members in St. Petersburg and Tyumen,

Russia.

Over the last five years, one woman in a church with whom we partner received first a Bible and then several doctrinal books as a result of this ministry. This past year her non-believing husband began attending the church, being intrigued by a group of people who would give so sacrificially to his wife. Because of your generosity, he has begun to understand the meaning of grace. What a beautiful illustration of the words of the prophet Jeremiah concerning the Scriptures in Jeremiah 15:16 - "*Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.*"



***The World is on Fire***

On March 12th, we received a call from the US Embassy in Moscow urging us to leave Russia immediately while the borders were still open. We flew that evening to St. Petersburg, Russia only to discover that all European flights were cancelled except for a KLM flight leaving out of Moscow later that day. So we flew on to Moscow where we learned that the first two flights to Amsterdam were now cancelled but there was a third plane with spots available for us. After boarding the plane, a flight attendant told me that we had gotten seats on the last flight out of Russia. Then she said, "The world is on fire."

As you faithfully prayed Psalm 121:7 for us - that God would protect us from all evil and protect our souls - His hands continued to cover us in safety and open doors for our eventual return home to the US. Upon our arrival in Amsterdam, we were informed that all flights back to the US were cancelled save one final flight to Detroit. After clearing health and security screenings in Detroit, we caught one last plane home to Texas where once more the waiting began as we entered a 14 day quarantine period. By God's grace and your prayers, neither Eleanor nor myself ever developed symptoms of covid-19, and we praise Him for His kindness in protecting our health and travels!





**Join us in praying for the Russian Church!**



**For boldness in sharing the Gospel**

"and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel," (Ephesians 6:19)



**For hearts firmly rooted in a study of the Scriptures**

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment," (Philippians 1:9)



**For lives to reflect a living faith in Christ**

"To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power," (2 Thessalonians 1:11)



**For the continued ability to worship freely**

"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity." (1 Timothy 2:1-2)



**For God to continue to provide for GCI so that we might bless others**  
"Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure - pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return." (Luke 6:38)

### ***Fellow Workers***

In this season of global uncertainty, may the reality of God's certain power, provision, and protection comfort all of our hearts. Eleanor and I most assuredly look back on our time in Russia with grateful hearts as we see His fingerprints all over our time in ministry there. We know that each trip is a gift from the Lord, and we are so thankful to have been able to spend time in both St. Petersburg and Tyumen before international borders closed.

As many of us continue to live under stay at home orders, we wanted to highlight our giving option via PayPal. Simply click on the donate tab below, and you will be able to contribute to the ministry of GCI electronically. Alternatively, you can still send a check to the address at the bottom of this dispatch. And as always, you can keep current with our ministry by following us on [Facebook](#) (@gciweb) as well as listen to sermons from our trips on our [Sermonaudio](#) [webpage](#) [here](#).

In closing, we thank the Lord for you, our faithful prayer and financial supporters, knowing that without your generosity, none of this ministry would be possible. Truly you

are our "fellow workers in the truth" (3 John 1:8). May the Lord grant us all courage to live uprightly before Him in all seasons of life!

Thanking God for you,

Rev. John S. Mahon

2 Corinthians 4:1