Khrakov

One of the exciting things happening around here are the preparations for the Euro2012. It is the European football championship played every four years. This time around it is being hosted by Poland and Ukraine and Kharkov was given the opportunity to have a few games played here. Over the last year we have seen major efforts to clean up and beautify the city, but especially our neighborhood (which is located near the stadium). There are a lot of arguments as to whether EuroCup will be good for Ukraine. It is costing the country a lot of money to host these games, but hopefully Ukraine will look more favorable in the eyes of the world through this. Only time will tell.

On the flip side of all the improvements being made around the city, you can’t help but notice the other areas that are being ignored. Not all of the city is getting a face-lift, the majority of it is still left untouched and ugly, as well as the majority of the country. Though people are trying to be more open towards foreigners and excited about their coming, there is also a great display of greediness as people try to milk these visitors for as much money as they can. You may have read how hotel and apartment prices have increased to 10 times the normal amount.

And though the government is attempting to welcome foreigners to these games, many of the locals are taking this opportunity to be more vocal about their prejudice towards foreigners, especially non-white. They will be using these games to vocally and physically push these views. Sadly, Kharkov was recently highlighted for this racist attitude, and sadly for the city it is true.

Our prayers are that the attention given to Ukraine and what it reveals about the country and it’s people will give people a clearer perception of the moral decay of their country. We pray that through a closer examination of themselves, Ukrainians may see their need of change. We also pray the changes they seek will be the changes that only God can make. Greed, hatred, pride: these are all things that God can forgive and heal. So we pray people will allow Him to.

Bible Studies

The main reason we came to Kharkov was to share the Word of God with people so that they might believe and obey it. For those that do, we aim to nurture their growth and transformation. The most direct way we do this is through Bible Studies, one-on-one or in small groups. Olivia and I have several studies going on at the moment that we would love for you to keep in your prayers.

Recently our family finished up our Seekers Study with the Price family, and have now started a small group Bible study with the Hindman family. Our hope is that this small group will be useful in building up the Christians who come to it, but also that it can be used to share God’s Word with those that are interested to know more, but are not yet Christians. Though it is still at the beginning stages, we expect to have around five non-missionaries to attend this.

In follow-up with LST readers from the Spring, David is reading the Bible with two ladies. Their names are Victoria and Lora. Neither one is a Christian, though they have a background in the Orthodox church. They read together from the Gospel in Russian, and also in English. Please pray that they may see the teachings of Jesus and desire to put them into practice.

David has also started studying with Misha, who was recently baptized. They are reading Ephesians together one chapter at a time. David asked if they could read together in Russian, and if Misha could quiz him on what they are reading. This gives Misha the “upper hand” in the study, while encouraging him to internalize everything and question David. In turn David will be able to improve his Russian, and Misha will better understand what they are reading. Pray that this encourages Misha’s new faith, and that through it they can grow closer together.
We are all doing well. Caleb is healthy and growing. Unfortunately he has learned the word “no” and uses it too frequently. Olivia is healthy, and the morning sickness seems to have eased up recently. David is busy as always, but is doing well. God has given us many blessings in this life, and we are ever grateful to him.

This last week we were blessed to be able to feel the baby start moving. Sunday night Olivia started feeling the baby kick, and later on I was able to feel the kicks as well. After all of the scares we had earlier in the pregnancy it is such a feeling of relief and assurance to see signs of development and health in the baby now. As most of you know, we plan on delivering the baby in the States, but just in case Olivia needs medical help here in regards to the pregnancy, we need to go through the process and paperwork as if we would give birth here. Unfortunately the head doctor was replaced at the hospital we used last time, and the new doctor has refused to help us. This is due to our registration being in Donetsk and not Kharkov. Thankfully, this isn’t our only option, but it was the easiest. This is the life of a missionary.

We thank God for you all. We think of you all often. We get a number of e-mail, updates, bulletins, facebook messages, and this constantly reminds us of you all. We are so thankful to be able to share with you the work God does here through your support, and we are thankful for all the reports we hear concerning you. We thank God for your faithfulness and example.

Thank you for loving, encouraging, and praying for us!
God bless you all!

David, Olivia, Caleb, and the small baby bump