

“God is not a God of the emotions
but the God of truth.”

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

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www.iccdabroad.org

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST!

We trust this letter finds you well and enjoying the daily richness of life which is ours through the grace of Christ. Through this letter, we hope to provide you with an update. It is our hope and prayer that we can, through God's grace alone, serve the people of these Eastern European communities in both Hungary and Ukraine, and bring glory to God, serving Him to further His kingdom.

It was wonderful for us to be in North Carolina during the autumn months among family and friends. We were blessed and encouraged by the fellowship of believers at our home church. We are thankful to all who provided us with work and housing during our stateside stay. Both Stacey and I were blessed to have jobs; I was again able to work in agriculture, helping with the autumn

Eric's family and our church family in McBain, Michigan. The LORD has blessed us richly with the prayers and encouragement of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

As many of you have heard, we were in Hungary for all of one day when we received some unexpected news. I had some moles removed at the dermatologist while in Michigan. We received the surprise call after we had returned to Hungary that one of the moles taken off of my head was not a mole, but instead was a growth that pathology reported was cancerous. I was told that I should come back to see an oncologist right away. Stacey stayed in Hungary by friends for a couple of weeks, but I returned to Michigan for a series of tests: CAT/PET scans, bone marrow biopsy, blood work, etc. I was diagnosed in February with non-Hodgkin B-cell Lymphoma Cancer. Stacey returned to Michigan about three weeks after me. The tests have shown that the Lymphoma has not spread to anywhere else in my body, and following confirmation from a second opinion sent to Mayo Clinic, I began radiation treatment. The Radiologist scheduled me for treatment, five times a week, a total of 15 treatments. As I write, I am just over half way. The doctor is very optimistic, and tells us that this type of Lymphoma has a high success rate with treatment. He told us that we can return to Ukraine in the end of March. The only downside with this type of cancer is that in the majority of people, the lymphoma will return, so it is something to watch closely. Normally it is not detected until it has spread to other parts of the

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SPEECH BUT WITH ACTIONS AND IN
TRUTH. **1 JOHN 3:17-18**

harvest. Stacey worked as a waitress in a small local café. Following Christmas in Dixie we headed north to Michigan to spend a couple of weeks with

body and the person is symptomatic. Neither of which was true for me, so maybe I will be an exception to the rule. We are confident that God will use this for His glory and our faith will be strengthened.

We have written in the past about my heart condition and yearly appointments. This winter my cardiologist shared with us new research suggesting that a cauterizing intervention could fix my irregular heartbeat which may then improve my cardiomyopathy. The most recent tests have shown that my heart has improved function significantly since two years ago, which is great news that we are very thankful for. It still shows that I have frequent PVCs and an irregular heartbeat. The cardiologist recommends the operation, but says it is optional because it is not a life threatening condition. So we have to think and pray about it and see in the coming years if it is something to consider. The cardiologist is in no hurry and wants to wait until the cancer is past us.

Eric's radiation treatments will end in the latter part of March. We are scheduled to return to Hungary on March 27. We are thankful for the treatment that Eric has received. We are also thankful for the support, encouragement, and prayers that we have received from so many of you during this time. Despite the circumstances of our return to Michigan, we have enjoyed spending extra time with family and our brothers and sisters in Christ here in Michigan. We are very excited to get back to Ukraine and to begin working in Transcarpathia, Ukraine. We are looking forward to continuing to serve God in Ukraine and excited for what He has in store for us in the future.

While in Michigan we have been able to continue working on summer plans and the organization of our summer English camps. Our English camps

take place in both Ukraine and Hungary and our camp season officially goes from June 7- July 7, although we may be involved with some other English camps in Ukraine in the middle of July. We find these English camps to be an exceptional way to meet students and develop relationships with them. They are a wonderful opportunity to share the Gospel with many people. We have had a good start to finding volunteers but we are still in need of more. If anyone is interested or knows of anyone interested please feel free to refer them to us.

Upon returning, our first item of business will be to spend a few days in Hungary in order to purchase a new van. Our last Volkswagen van, twenty five years in age, died last summer after its engine quit. We will be looking for another older tough Volkswagen van to survive the challenges that roads in Ukraine offer.

We have closely been following the current situation in Ukraine. In some ways it has been hard to be here during this time. Transcarpathia is a home for us and it has been difficult to be away during these trying and historic times. Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, and site of many protests and violence in the past months is around 500 miles west of our village of Peterfalva. Crimea, the utmost southern region of the country, is currently being occupied by Russian troops and is around 800 miles from us. Ukraine is a large country and most of these events have occurred a long ways from Transcarpathia, Ukraine. Daily life in Transcarpathia has not changed significantly. There has been no unrest or violence. We are thankful for that. While it has remained peaceful, there have been other signs for concern. The Ukrainian Hryvnia, the country's currency, has been falling and inflation has been rising. The Ukraine economy seems to be on the brink of disaster. Having Russian troops on Ukraine soil

and rumors of war have left many worried about the future. There has been talk of a military call up for all men in between 18-45 years of age. These are very uncertain times for Ukraine and despite the unrest being limited to a couple of regions, worry and tension persist. Please see the blog section of our website www.iccdabroad.org for a more detailed take on events in Ukraine.

Once again, we would like to thank you for your encouragement, support, and prayers especially

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during these trying times with health. We have been reminded of how frail we can be and that good health is something to never be taken for granted. We thank God for treatment and healing. We take comfort that not a hair can fall from our head without the will of our Heavenly Father. We place our confidence in Him, and that all things happen according to His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

We are very humbled to serve the LORD in Transcarpathia, Ukraine and we are excited to get back there. Please keep us in your prayers as Eric finishes radiation treatments and we travel back to Ukraine in the coming weeks. Please also keep Ukraine and its people in your prayers as they go through a very trying situation. We serve a faithful God who is sovereign over all things. His grace is enough to forbear in these times. Neither Russia, nor the European Union, nor the U.S., can offer the peace that a nation can find by falling on its knees before God. It is our hope and prayer that Ukraine can see its need for salvation through Christ alone, and that the people of Ukraine will see that government systems and institutions of man will only crumble and fall. **Romans 8:28** “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” May the LORD be with you as you live for Him!

Eric and Stacey Hoeksema

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM QUESTION AND ANSWER 1

Q: WHAT IS YOUR ONLY COMFORT IN LIFE AND DEATH?

A: THAT I AM NOT MY OWN,
BUT BELONG--
BODY AND SOUL,
IN LIFE AND IN DEATH--
TO MY FAITHFUL SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

HE HAS FULLY PAID FOR ALL MY SINS WITH HIS PRECIOUS BLOOD,
AND HAS SET ME FREE FROM THE TYRANNY OF THE DEVIL.
HE ALSO WATCHES OVER ME IN SUCH A WAY
THAT NOT A HAIR CAN FALL FROM MY HEAD
WITHOUT THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN:
IN FACT, ALL THINGS MUST WORK TOGETHER FOR MY SALVATION.

BECAUSE I BELONG TO HIM,
CHRIST, BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT,
ASSURES ME OF ETERNAL LIFE
AND MAKES ME WHOLEHEARTEDLY WILLING AND READY
FROM NOW ON TO LIVE FOR HIM