



MINUTE FOR MISSION

May 15, 2009

A Safe Haven in Moscow

Moscow isn't usually thought of as a place where refugees go to seek shelter. But the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy (MPC) knows better because it provides aid to more than 200 refugee families a month. MPC has been involved in helping to bring the gospel to Moscow since 1962. One such recipient of the aid and good news is Marnia, a mother of five ranging in ages from 6 to 17.

Marnia and her children fled Afghanistan more than 10 years ago and sought refuge in Moscow. The UNHCR provides her family with a stipend of \$120 a month — not nearly enough to live on in the most expensive city in the world. Every day when her children get home from school they sit around the dining room table and make friendship bracelets, anklets and necklaces, sometimes until midnight. The income from sales helps them to make ends meet, but Marnia imagines that there is a better way to live.



Refugees find support at the food pantry of the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy.



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Marnia and her family are Muslim, as are the majority of the refugees that MPC helps. MPC provides not only monthly food bags but also clothing that is donated by a number of embassies. At an MPC center Marnia and her family can find refuge from the frequent racial attacks that they suffer. On the center's seven computers refugees can communicate with family members on high-speed Internet for free. Equally important, the center provides a venue for discussion and Bible study with a pastoral presence. In this place, refugees experience solidarity with those who are passionate for justice and human rights. They see it in the tangible aid that they receive and have it explained in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For Marnia and her family the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are poke holes in the darkness around them. May the light that shines through lead them and all of us to a better understanding of what God's kingdom will truly be like.

Prayer:

Loving God, may we never tire of preaching the good news of Jesus Christ to the poor, the powerless, and the oppressed. Teach us who live in relative ease and prosperity what it truly means to be your disciple in the face of the injustices that we see around us.

The Revs. Robert and Stacy Bronkema
PC(USA) mission co-workers
Moscow, Russia

Do you have a mission story to tell? Would you like to read inspiring stories of Presbyterians in mission? Visit the Witness Season Web site: www.pcusa.org/witness. New minutes for mission are posted on the 1st and 15th of each month.

For more information on the Witness Season mission education emphasis contact Billie Healy, Associate for Mission Education Resources (888) 728-7228, ext. 5689, or Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org.

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