

DAVE & ANNETTE DRYDEN

MISSIONARIES TO UKRAINE

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YELLOW AND BLUE: THOUGHTS ABOUT CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Last summer we took some training at Mission Training International in Colorado before coming to Ukraine. One day we were talking about how we would adapt to living in our new cultures. The visual aid for that lecture was blue and yellow Playdoh. Each person got a small ball of each color. We were instructed to take the two balls of Playdoh and roll them together into one big ball. We ended up with one ball with yellow and blue striations. Some people, who worked a little harder on their balls, had touches of green where the blue and yellow had mixed. How does this relate to culture? The comparison was this: picture the yellow as representing your "home" culture and the blue as your "new" culture. You will hold on to some parts of your home culture (the yellow) and add some thing from the new culture (blue) into your life to make a mixture or blend of cultures. We discussed how if we made a ball to represent our childrens' combinations as they grow up in a foreign country, they would have far more green than their parents and it would be harder to distinguish the yellow from the blue.



We celebrated David's 3rd birthday on May 16th.

This Playdoh illustration has really stuck with me and helped me visualize what we've been living out this past year. What has happened in our lives? Let

me give you some mealtime examples so you can see how our "yellow and blue" has been mixing. One "yellow" thing we can't seem to give up is our desire to drink more than just hot tea and juice. We like to drink water, even with our meals. In Ukraine, a meal is typically eaten and then hot tea is served afterward. Of course, when we are guests in someone's home we do as they do, but the tradition of drinking only hot tea after a meal has not become a part of our life at home. Also, even though we have lived here for almost a year, our bodies still cannot seem to adjust to the typical Ukrainian lunchtime of 1 or 2 p.m. Our stomachs still growl at us at noon, if not earlier! Something "blue" in our lives is the type of food we typically eat. We eat a

lot more soup, "salad" (according the Russian definition of salad), and rice here than we did in America. Why? One reason is because I have found it easier to make national-style meals with the food I can buy here than try and replicate American meals. Another reason is that if friends eat with us, they will recognize what we're eating and like it.

The longer you live in a foreign country, the better you understand why people do things the way they do. Notice I used the word "better." We are still at the beginning in our understanding of the culture here on the Crimean Peninsula, but some things make more sense to us now than they did last August. For about a month last fall I wondered why the stairwell in our new apartment building was wet every day. I thought to myself, "What do they try to do -- mop the concrete stairs?" Eventually I saw an older woman cleaning, and she was not mopping, but sweeping the stairs with a broom made of sticks. I still didn't get it. Why use water? What's the point? Then in June, when we moved to Nizhnegorlsiy, I was asked by a neighbor in our stairwell to clean the stairs going from our floor down to the first floor. When I tried to sweep the stairwell of our old Soviet apartment building with just a regular broom and dust pan I quickly realized it doesn't really work! I felt like I was just making a big cloud of dust and no progress. When I was almost finished, it finally made sense to me why they use water and brooms made of sticks, and I decided that the next time I would, too!

One last example to share with you: what do you do when you have been "gifted" with a large amount of fresh fruit, way more than your family can eat?

You make "compote" with it. Compote is like juice. You make it by boiling fresh fruit with sugar. I had never been shown how to make compote, but earlier this summer I decided I needed to learn after we were given many, many cherries. (Another good option here is that you can



Sign for the Nizhnegorskiy region

make jam with your abundance of fresh fruit, but I decided I would wait and try making jam next summer.)

OUR BIG PROJECT

Since we moved to Nizhnegorskiy on June 1 we have been busy getting adjusted to living in a new city and making new friends. The biggest thing that has consumed our time over the past two months has been refurbishing our house. We are planning to return to a finished house this fall after our time in the U.S. Dave has been at our house almost every day, working on



Our house

planning and coordinating the work there. It has been a new thing for us to do, but in the end it will have big rewards. We will have a house in a Ukrainian village where we feel at

home. It will be a place where we can rest and a place where we can invite neighbors, acquaintances, and friends, and will help our overall ability to minister. We are excited about what the house will become and praise God for the blessing it will be.

COMING HOME

I am writing from Ukraine, but as you are reading this newsletter we may already be home! On July 25 we are flying home to Cincinnati for a short time to deliver our baby. The baby is due in mid-September. We estimate that we will be in America until at least the end of October, and possibly as late as mid-November, depending on when the baby is born and how long it

takes to get the baby's passport and documents to come back to Ukraine. We hope to see many of you while we're around, as our time and opportunity allows. We look forward to catching up in person and sharing our experiences with each other of how God has worked in our lives in the past year.



We have had opportunities to begin relationships with many people and look forward to seeing how God will work through them.


PRAYER REQUESTS

- *Pray for a healthy delivery of our baby.*
- *Pray for our time in the U.S. to go well.*
- *Pray that our housing documents and remodeling are complete by our return.*
- *Pray for us as we think through our ministry strategy in the coming months.*
- *Pray for relationships that we have in Ukraine.*

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