



Life in the Holler has been quite eventful since our last update. We've had three graduations: Marina* from high school, Priscilla got her RN and Isaac* finished his Masters... after which he and wife Val welcomed little **Vivienne*** into the world! (See pics on page 2!) Now we await the arrival of Zeke and Bekah's **twin boys!**

We had a supporting church group here on a real-live [mission trip](#).*

Jim* spent a couple weeks with bronchitis and a couple weeks on crutches. And we had a 100-foot tall tree* fall down onto The Mill... and survived!

We've had lots of family visit from faraway places.

We've been energized by some fresh conversations with representatives of supporting churches about our heart for mission... and we've lost count of get-togethers with multiple local families, sharing our vision for mission (and seeing it connect with theirs).

We've been looking forward to our **Europe Conference** - not just for the gathering with all our Europe staff families... but also because worship will be led by the team from [Grace EFC](#)... and we're also gaining the benefit of another family's participation: the Portnoys, as they launch their own missional endeavor, [The Good Story](#). We feel that God is honoring our prayers to be able to help missionaries in the field "connect the dots" that will help them see opportunities for Gospel impact... and we are blessed to see The Mill develop as a place where those dots **GET**

As ReachGlobal's Europe Division Leadership Team met in Cyprus this spring, Jim had the opportunity to present the Catalyst Team's perception of critical opportunity areas in Europe. We were challenged to think "out of the box" and "in the Spirit," particularly in the spheres of ministry among the Roma and people with disabilities. We agree with colleague [Melody Wachsmuth](#) that "reconciliation and unity between Roma and non-Roma is the heart of God's mission in Eastern Europe." Ministry with Roma carries not only European but *global* significance as God seems to be placing a burden for the Roma on the hearts of many [people throughout the world](#). We are blessed to be at the connecting point of a truly global movement to bring the good news of Jesus to the margins, and bring unity to the Church.

We continue to develop our ability to catalyze disability ministry, as we welcome Oksana Elsinger to our team. She was part of our church planting team in Kyiv (way back when) and has, in recent years, developed a network of churches, professionals, care-givers and families to reach out to those affected by autism in Ukraine.

We are looking forward to building upon these networks (and a growing relationship with partners like [Joni and Friends](#)) to see many lives, families and communities throughout Europe touched and transformed by the good news.



The theme of this year's Europe Conference has a familiar ring to it...

We're asking prayer for a BIG month! The three of us will be leaving this week for Ukraine... we haven't all been back there together since before the war began.

Please pray for stamina and wisdom as we try to make the most of a very important time: For Marina, it will be a time to tie diverse life-threads together as she visits the city where she was raised, where her faith began to become her own, as she prepares to head off for nursing studies at Eastern Mennonite University, in many ways a much different person than she was when she left Kyiv Christian Academy!

For all of us, we will be spending time with the people into whom we've invested years of our lives... at a time when they are going through the most critical time of their lives, if not their nation's history. As we have been saying for more than a year, this is [not primarily a military or political battle](#)... it's a [spiritual one](#).

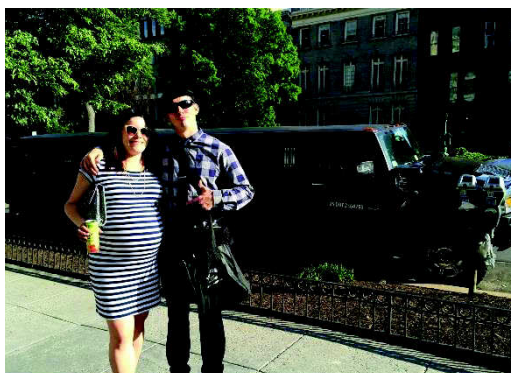
It is important that we stand with those who are living out the gospel in times that are far more trying and dispiriting than we can imagine. We will be visiting our dear friend and colleague at Logos Center, bringing requested donations of food, medicine, and even dolls(!) from people who have been moved by the story of what God is continuing to accomplish there. And we hope to build toward the future, continuing to develop one of the things that we have found are most needed in mission today: effective and empowering missional networks that are built on empowering, authentic relationships. As we face issues like disability, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, poverty, reconciliation, we know that the power for change comes from ordinary people coming together trusting an extraordinary God.

From Ukraine we will head west to meet up with several hundred of the coolest folks ever: the families of ReachGlobal Europe, along with our friends on the worship team from down the road in Lynchburg.

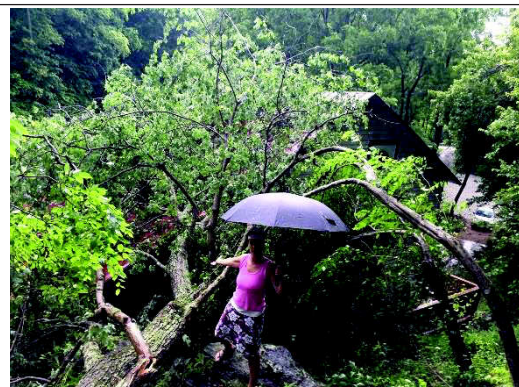
This conference is an important time for the Catalyst Team as we will have the opportunity to get extended face-to-face time and in-depth conversation with our teams... we want to learn from them, share from them what we've been learning, and dream and plan together about seeing Gospel's transformative power impact our communities in ways that go both deep and broad.

This is an important time of refreshment, as well as development, for our staff – it's hard to exaggerate the positive effect a conference like this can have on the spirit of a mission team. We are praying that our efforts for the Kingdom will be more relevant and sustainable because of this investment in our workers.

And we are also praying that connecting with dozens of missionary families with diverse ministries, contexts, and personalities will make an impact on our friends in Grace's worship team... and that momentum will build in the hearts and lives of this local community – and others we touch – to see God glorified when his children live lives of truth and grace in redemptive relationship with the world into which Jesus is leading us.



Left to right - Top: Paoli Presbyterian Church mission team to The Mill; Isaac and Val before Isaac's final reading at Johns Hopkins; Priscilla and Marina celebrate their respective graduations; Bottom: Jim gets cranky at the hospital; Jim and Liz hold Vivienne (aka The Biscuit); Liz surveying that which we feared and hoped would never happen... but which didn't hurt us when it did.



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By His grace,

Jim and Liz Baker