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MAKING ROOM AND GIVING UP

This long interval without a newsletter means that I get to write at least 2 pages, right? The last time I wrote, I had recently moved to a new village, planted tomatoes and was living with my new friend, Nelia. The war in Ukraine had recently begun and everything was chaotic and unknown.

Fast-forward 3 months, and the war has now become a slow, grinding conflict. Many refugees from Ukraine that had initially stopped in Moldova have gone on to Europe or back to Ukraine (if they are not from current conflict zones). Yet some remain here for various reasons. The prices for fuel, food and public transportation have skyrocketed. Although I cannot say that farmers are getting any benefit—there was a temporary ban on the export of wheat and other grains, which depressed prices and farmers that had stored grain from 2021 were being forced to sell it at a loss. Now the export of wheat is allowed (since Moldova only needs 25% of the wheat it produces), but it remains to be seen what real profit will result from the possibility of export.

Although we are not necessarily living in day-to-day suspense regarding the Ukrainian conflict, there is still so much going on that I have been having trouble remaining calm and collected.

- Tomatoes have been selling like hotcakes, since I am the only person growing and selling tomatoes in Maximovca. People call me almost every day and there are not enough tomatoes to go around 😊
- Though living with Nelia was quite a blessing, she has relatives coming this summer and asked me to move. So I did, thankfully God provided a family from church here in the village that could take me!
- My car has been in the shop with continuing “small” problems every week for the past month.
- I hired a part-time assistant to help us develop our strategy with UDG, the existing farmers and some Model Farm ideas. Which requires me to get organized enough to get her started and also help her to integrate into our team (Les, Stas, Aia and I).
- Les is visiting Moldova (yay!) from July 9-24 after a long hiatus because of the Ukraine war.

I have a tendency to become overwhelmed with all these happenings and start flailing around in desperation. But I realized lately that I really have no control (see the next portion of my newsletter, written a few weeks earlier :), and the one thing that I really need to do is to “make room.” I keep thinking about the parable of the sower—there were two good soils that seed fell on, you know. There was one that allowed the Gospel to take root, but then it got choked out—by other “good” things—by the worries and pleasures of life.

God has challenged me to let the Gospel, to let Him, be the center of my life. To make room to let Him and His Gospel grow as a tree in my life—pulling the weeds of anxiety and busyness and whatever else, so that my faith gets the most care and focus. That means that I need to spend time in the Word and with Him in prayer. That

He has to remain my priority and His calling on my life the one path I stick to. Please pray that I can keep calm and follow Jesus!

I have been challenged this year to relinquish control—which I guess one is forced to when war comes, when the success of a crop depends on the weather, and when you live with someone you met only once before you moved in. Or when your friend adopts 4 children and then her husband gets appendicitis and is hospitalized and she doesn't really speak the children's language, and you spend your birthday watching cartoons and baking cookies because you can speak their language better than their (new) mother.

Control doesn't work real well when you thought you were scheduled to give a presentation, then show up and realize Moldovans expect you to call a day or two ahead to verify you are coming....and so you have to have your colleague drive you there again the following day.

Or when you forget to stop the well pump, and your irrigation cistern overflows on the second floor of your in-construction house.

I have felt in over my head more times this year than any other in Moldova. Ag Connect is really starting to take root (haha), and I realized that I needed to grow in my capability, so I am enrolled in leadership training with a PA consulting group. The tomatoes are ripening, so I need to start selling both at the wholesale market and directly to consumers. I am back again at square one with language learning, this time in Russian.

These opportunities for one's inability, weaknesses and mistakes to become plain have been where God is challenging me to trust Him. Will I step out and perhaps make a mistake, or cower and try to control the situation so I don't fail? In other words, will I live in courage and vulnerability, trusting that God will use my weakness and mistakes to grow me and use me for His glory?

Who knows what the days ahead hold? So much is uncertain, with the war, the cost of fuel and goods growing, the refugees here now looking for work and apartments, or returning to Ukraine. But we have a Rock, an Anchor. We can surrender control without fear, because He is in control.

PRAISES!

- War has not come to Moldova
- The tomato plants are making tomatoes.
- New connections and opportunities for Ag Connect.

PRAYER POINTS

- Refugees seeking jobs and more permanent housing.
- Open doors, wisdom and open hearts to follow God as He builds Ag Connect.
- I need to slow down, carefully choose priorities, and build more margin into my life.



Lovely waterfront property for sale, local ducks say that it is a steal of a deal! (Chisinau park)



Baptism in Maximovca



A local pastor wanted to build a dairy barn, so we visited some Swiss friends on their farm in Moldova. Their barn has a better design than the typical Soviet layout.