

# FOCUS ON MISSIONS

## *MK Care by Susanna Gailer*

### **GOD STILL MOVES**

The year was 1977, the place, Irian Jaya, Indonesia. A concerned missionary mom reached for the last of the Jell-O ... a commodity unavailable on the island and the only thing that their very sick daughter had been able to eat for weeks. Hanging in the balance between life and death, the high fevers from the combination of three serious illnesses, was taking its toll on this precious MK. Small bites of Jell-O and a few ice chips was all that would stay down and the only means of hydration. There was no medical care available, just the determination of the family to keep spoon-feeding and a sovereign plan of God. But the last packet of Jell-O was being used. "Oh, God," the missionary mom prayed again, "help us!" That afternoon, her husband came home with a package in hand. The postmark indicated that it had left Charlotte, NC, in July, 1976. It was a shoebox... full of Jell-O packets! God knew! He had prompted a group of Alliance women to send a gift of Jell-O...to arrive seven months later at the very moment of crisis. In the next several weeks, the family received numerous notes from Alliance women inquiring about their need in those difficult days. Many had been awakened in the night, burdened specifically for that missionary family. God heard their earnest prayers and brought healing to the nine year old daughter.

The year was 2001, the place, Moscow, Russia. A weary missionary family was making many transitions. From the wide open spaces and warm climate of a rural community in south GA, they had moved to the 13<sup>th</sup> floor of a cold apartment complex and no big yard in which to play. From a loving congregation who welcomed each child by name with a warm embrace, to a community where no one seemed to care about their name. From friends, playmates, TV shows, and all that was familiar, the young missionary family had moved into a city where there were no friends, no familiar voices, no understandable words being spoken. While waiting their appointment to a mission field, the mom had chosen to not work outside the home, now she was leaving her small children in the care of a Russian lady while she attended language school full time. Everyday, the missionary family watched desperately as the joy of their precious four year old was ebbing away... the toll of culture shock too great for this little one with no perspective of time and change. There were no more joyful squeals of delight. No more bursts of laughter. There was no excited anticipation of what a new day would bring, only tears and now a refusal to even get out of bed or get dressed. "Oh, God," the family prayed, "help us!" It was Christmas week. Thoughts of celebrations of the previous years with family and friends consumed their minds. Earnest prayers for a happy Christmas celebration in their new home filled their hearts. On December 24th, a package arrived for the four year old. Sending it later than all the "Stateside" family had sent their Christmas packages, but full of everything little Sarah would like, the Alliance women who had adopted this precious MK were faithful! And God knew! As Sarah opened the box full of familiar things, her smile returned. Once again, she was eager to wake up, to get dressed, and play. That box of love had been the catalyst for pulling her out of the depression into which she had slipped. It was a happy Christmas, full of Sarah's laughter! (All the family packages, sent much earlier that fall, arrived in January and February of 2002.)

Alliance women are truly on the forefront of missionary care! Many missionary families have remained on the mission field and enjoyed years of successful ministry because of the faithful prayer support of Alliance Women. Many missionary families have experienced the miracle of healing or an urgent need met because of the faithful prayer support of Alliance women and their obedience to act on God's leading. Many missionary families have known the joy of their child's surprise as a package of love has arrived at just the right time, sent sometimes months before, or even on human standards a little too late, but God has orchestrated the arrival of the package at just the right time to meet the need. As Alliance Women continue to heed the prompting of our Sovereign God, missionary families will continue to work toward that ultimate goal: that the Gospel of Christ will be preached to every nation, and every tongue and tribe will be represented at the throne of God.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR MK CARE**

1. **Communicate with the parents of your MK.** Be specific, be bold (not all missionaries are great communicators). Ask them to email you at specific intervals with news of your MK. Be familiar with the needs and likes/dislikes of the MK. Find out if the mail system is reliable. It may be that the best way for you to “love” your MK is to establish a bank account. Depositing most of the money in an account in the USA, rather than risking the loss or theft in the mail, may be most prudent. A card with a packet of gum and a note of how much has been deposited in their account would be a terrific expression of love. Ask the parent to share with you their concerns so you can join them in praying specifically for the MK. **PRAY.**
2. **Communicate with the MK.** Appoint someone to be the liaison between the AW group and the MK. Even if it is a child from your church who is about the same age. Most MKs are prolific e-mailers...get to know them personally. Ask them to share requests that can be prayed for at your regular meeting. (If your MK attends a boarding school, ask the dorm parent to help remind your MK to respond to your emails.) **PRAY.**
3. **Create an opportunity for your MK to get to know your group.** During their home assignment year, be sure to host a special celebration for your adopted MK. Include the children from your fellowship who are of the same age as the MK. Give them opportunity to put faces with the names they have become familiar with on birthday and Christmas cards. **PRAY.**
4. **Be consistent with your care.** Many MKs look forward to expressions of love from their group. The gift does not have to be large or extravagant. Often it is one of the few if not only gift or remembrance an MK will receive on their special day. Even when on home assignment, the MK looks forward to hearing from “their ladies” especially on their birthday and at Christmas. **PRAY.**
5. **Have a “stateside” contact for your MK.** The phone number and address of a grandparent or family member is a valuable resource. They will have the most current information from the MK’s family. They will have the latest pictures and itinerary of anyone familiar traveling to the city of your MK’s family (a great way to get packages safely to the MK and family). **PRAY.**
6. **Be mindful of the whole family.** A sensitive area for missionary parents is the difference of care of MK’s by groups. When sending a gift to your MK, remember the other siblings in the family. Their group may not be as faithful. If the guideline amount of money to spend yearly on the MK has been met and your group wants to do more, send gifts that can be enjoyed by the whole family...a game, a video, a food item, a gift of money for a family treat. When you send a package, include a small item for the other siblings. **PRAY.**
7. **Do not forget your college age MK.** The greatest time of attrition for missionary families, is the years when MK’s are graduating from high school and entering college. If ever, those are the years they need your prayer and tangible support. Upon their return to the USA, a “reentry” shower of items for college (or setting up life) would be a great encouragement. Sheets, a blanket, towels, a trash can, a hot pot, toiletries, and a warm coat will go a long way to make that first year in a new country tolerable. Occasionally, send a phone card or Wal-mart gift certificate: it will be used immediately upon receipt. A care package of Ramen noodles, popcorn, homemade cookies, and hot chocolate help to ease the sting of long weeks of loneliness. **PRAY!**
8. **Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.** There will be many times that you are prompted by God to send a specific gift at a specific time, to pray a specific way without explanation. Our Sovereign God does powerful things through those who are sensitive and obedient to His leading in their lives on behalf of others. **DO IT!**