

Melissa Carlson

Reaching Sweden for Christ

March 27, 2007

Hej all!

I thought I would let you know how things have been going for me this past month. A lot has been going on in my life - lots of exciting things! It's great to see things happening – great to get started!

*I started out deputation with a cancellation! Blizzards and ice kept me from being able to attend my first meeting down in Altona, IL. That's ok, though. God's way is the best way, and, Lord willing, I will be down there this coming Sunday night (April 1).

I also have a meeting in Galesburg, IL during the morning service that same day.

*I was able to attend candidate school with my mission board down in Pigeon Forge, TN for a few days at the beginning of this month. I had a wonderful time! It was great meeting the other missionaries as well as those who work with WWNTBM. I enjoyed the sessions a great deal – very helpful and encouraging! The weather was great, too! It was kinda hard coming back to Milwaukee's 17 degrees and snow on the ground!

I did have some trouble with my flights, both coming and going! Seems there was always a broken plane in Charlotte, NC! I praise the Lord for safety as well as a chance to meet new people in the airport.

One neat story: I was waiting for my connection flight from Charlotte to Milwaukee on the way home from the conference. It was delayed by an hour or so, so I was making phone calls to pastors. In between calls, the man sitting next to me starting asking me about what I was doing, and it turned out he was a Christian from a good independent Baptist church in PA! He gave me his phone number, his churches information as well as the names of 2 or 3 other churches he thought I should try to contact. Who would have ever thought that would happen! God certainly works in amazing ways! If my flight had been on time I might never had had the opportunity to meet this individual. God is good!

*I went to my first 2 churches of deputation on Sunday March 11th - in Appleton, WI in the morning and Pound, WI in the evening. Both services went well and it was a blessing being able to participate in them! Karen, my roommate, was able to go along and we had an enjoyable day. Also encouraging to add – we didn't get lost and my car didn't give me any trouble! Praise the Lord for the little blessings of life!

*I have been spending a lot of time on the phone this last month! Lots of answering machines, secretaries, and voicemail boxes! And it's amazing all the places I have scheduled meetings from – school buses, teacher workrooms, kitchen stock rooms, hallways, cars, airports – life sure isn't dull to say the least! Praise the Lord, though, I have been able to get a few meetings on my calendar and I am excited about each opportunity! Please pray that God would continue to allow me to get some more things scheduled – particularly for the fall. I know God will provide the right churches and at the right times. In the meantime, I shall keep calling!

*Concerning my job: My last official day at Kiddie Kampus is June 1st. It's exciting to look forward to going full time deputation, but at the same time it is a little scary. I know God will continue to provide and I am excited to be able to jump out in faith and see God's hand at work!

Well, I think that about covers things for now! Thanks so much again for all of your prayers and support! I can't tell you how encouraging you all have been to me! I will continue to keep you updated as things progress.

I trust you'll have a wonderful day!

For Christ Alone,

Melissa Carlson
Jer. 32:27

PS - Below is a copy of the Peterson's monthly newsletter. Please pray for them!

Greetings!

This has been a very interesting and trying week. Hopefully, I learned the lessons God was trying to teach me. I believe I have, or at least I am making progress. Let me share my most recent experiences.

Last week I took my vehicle in for an oil change. (By the way, this shop has proven itself to be very honorable.) A few minutes later the service rep informed me that I had a leak in the front axle that needed to be repaired. I agreed to the repairs. About an hour later, he told me that they noticed a leak in one of the engine gaskets. He recommended getting this fixed immediately or I might have some serious engine trouble. Again I agreed, but this oil change was getting quite expensive. I was given a replacement vehicle for the weekend, as they did not have the necessary parts. On Monday evening I drove home only to notice that I had a steady stream of coolant flowing from the car. I returned to the shop the next day and learned that the water pump had gone out. This brought the total repair bill to nearly \$2,000. On Friday evening, after driving the vehicle for a couple of days, we smelled gas and still noticed some coolant drips. I knew I needed to return to the shop again, but feared there would be additional bills.

That evening Cindy and I received post cards informing us that there was a delivery for us from the Consulate General of Sweden at the Post Office. I was both excited and nervous. Had our visas been approved or rejected? If approved, things would get very busy as we got ready to move to Stockholm. If rejected, what would we do?

The thoughts about our visas, the condition of our vehicle, and the expensive repairs caused my mind to race. Let's be honest and direct. I was worrying. As I lay in bed that night, God brought a verse to my attention. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God (Philippians 4:6).

God directed my thoughts to three important truths: 1) don't worry, 2) pray, and 3) thank God in advance. This helped me to focus my attention on my sovereign God and trust Him to work all things out for His good purpose. It doesn't matter what my desires and wants are—God is in control. And with assurance in that great truth, I don't need to worry.

The next morning I got up early and went to the post office. The letter was not the approval that I desired, nor was it the rejection that I dreaded. Instead, we were notified that the immigration department in Sweden had not received the particular form they had requested from our sponsor on December 1. And unless that were received within three weeks our visa applications would be rejected and the file closed.

Initially, I was stunned. But after talking with our coworkers I realized that God was actually giving us an opportunity to resolve the delays we had been experiencing. We now had the name, telephone number, and email address of the individual handling our case, and we had been instructed to contact her. Until now, we just had to wait and be patient with the process. Now we can communicate directly with this government office.

Please be in earnest prayer over the next several weeks for this situation. Pray for the government workers to look favorably on our application and grant the visas. Pray for our sponsor that his concerns and reluctance to complete the necessary form would be removed. Pray for our coworkers as they try to help us by speaking to these people personally. Above all, pray that God's will in this matter be accomplished.

Back to our wounded vehicle. I drove from the post office to the shop and had them look at the car again. They discovered that the gas smell was from a faulty fuel filter that they had installed, and the coolant was dripping from a pan underneath the radiator. The fuel filter was replaced and everything under the hood was steam cleaned. There was no cost for this visit.

Praise God for His answers to prayer. It is a wonderful privilege that we can trust (rest) in our loving, all-knowing, sovereign God rather than fret and worry about problems that arise in our lives.

To the glory of God alone,

Phillip & Cindy Peterson and family