

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." – 2 Corinthians 5:20

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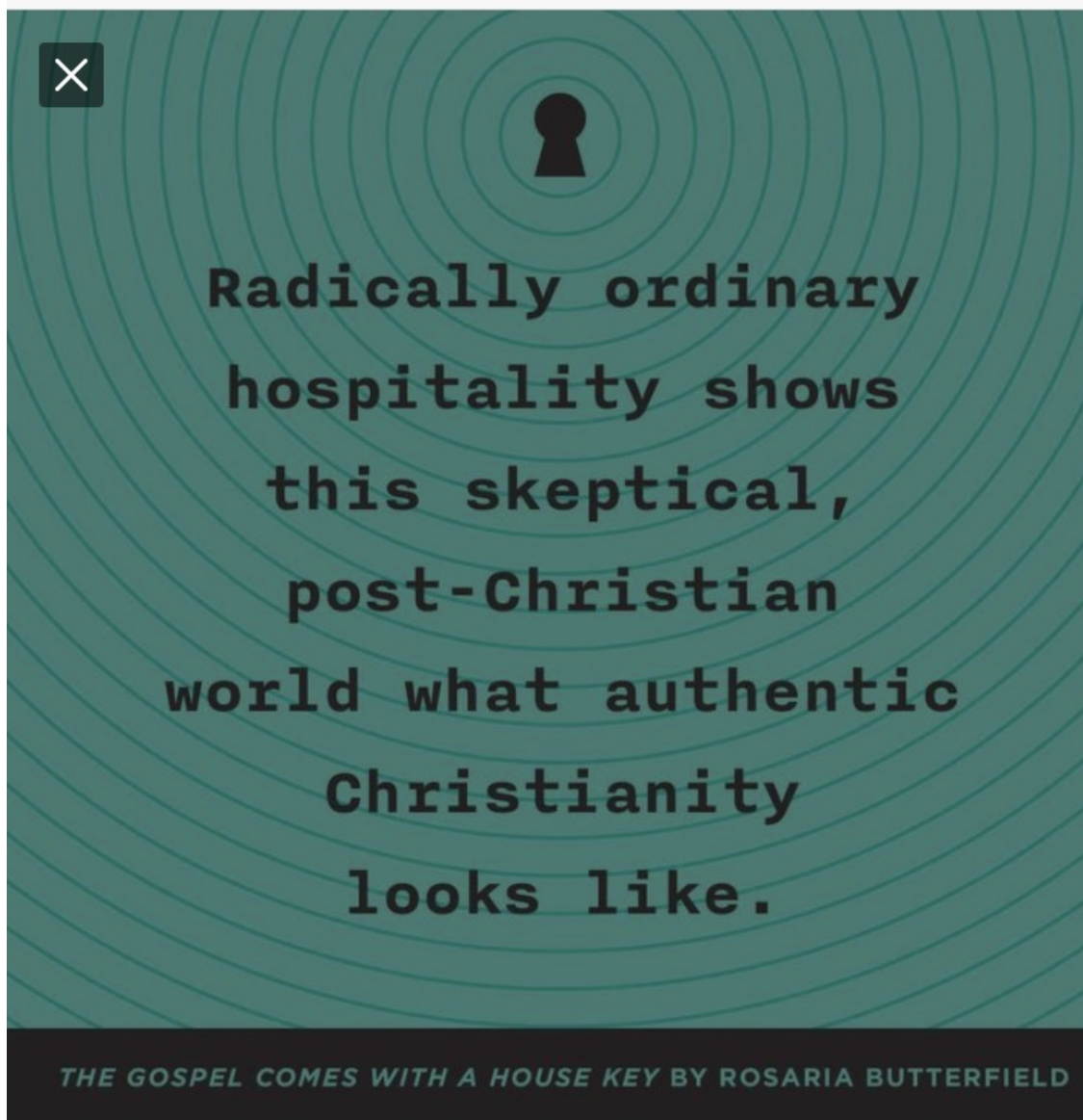
This year, our teammates hosted a Fourth of July party. We all stood around and sang the anthems of the different countries represented: Canada, Ukraine, Romania, and the USA. It was a fun time with the other missionaries, and Elin and I enjoyed making a special cake to share!

Radically Ordinary Hospitality

I have read many missionary biographies in the last decade or so. God used

two specific ones to really speak to my heart and prod me toward doing mission work myself. I would read these biographies and feel my heart quicken, my soul come alive, my desires wage war inside of me as this lifestyle beckoned me. I would simultaneously feel completely incapable of ever actually being a missionary, while also knowing it was somehow exactly what God wanted from me. Becoming a missionary has thrown a spotlight onto my sin, and I continue finding how deeply it runs. But I'm also discovering that for however deeply the tendrils of selfishness go, there goes, too, the love of my gracious Father, and it is with His strength and love that He gives me strength to continue moving out to be a missionary, regardless of my weakness, inabilities, or sin.

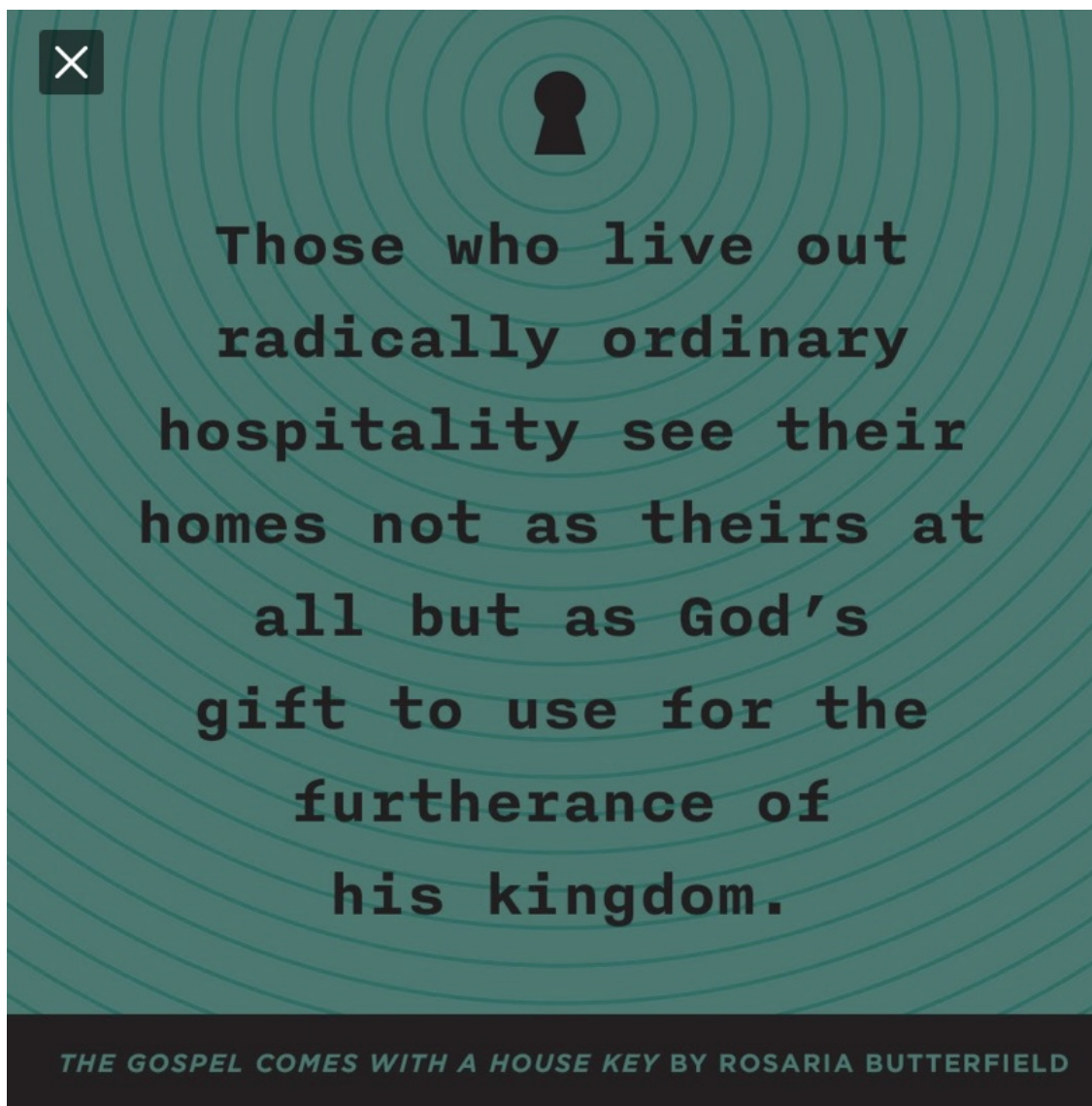
He is continuing to use books in my life, but they're not as often about me *leaving* my home for the sake of the Gospel; instead, they're more about how to bring others *into* my home for the sake of the Gospel. Recently, one such book was Rosario Butterfield's [The Gospel Comes with a House Key](#). The extent to which she practices what she calls "radically ordinary hospitality" is something I have not obtained. But just like reading those missionary biographies, I simultaneously feel completely incapable of ever being as hospitable as she is, while also knowing deep inside my heart that the Lord is calling us to walk with Him toward this kind of deep, abiding community that invites people into our lives in some of the most difficult and intimate ways. Because it is one thing to do ministry *out there*. But it is an entirely different challenge for our family to consistently invite people in to see how we truly live and to invade that comfortable sense of security and retreat in our home. Practicing more and more hospitality has further shown me my own idols and sin, and yet God continues to choose to use our family in this way. (quote pictures from the book with a link to her interview about the book)



Butterfield writes a lot about hosting your literal, immediate neighbors. And ever since I read her book back in January, we have talked about wanting to get to know our neighbors more. We were already developing a friendship with the two young ladies in the apartment above us, which has been a sweet, special relationship. And of course, being the only family in this complex with kids, everyone at least knew who the loud Americans were. But despite our plans, we had many personal struggles over the last few months that have sapped us, plus of course the war in Ukraine breaking out has turned everyone on their heads from any plans that had been previously made.

So back in June, when we had the summer equinox approaching, Derek was the one to take the reigns and said "Let's have an apartment party." We kind of kicked around the idea, but again, being pretty busy we didn't make definite plans until the night before. We printed out small invitations, including two that were Google-translated into Ukrainian for our two Ukrainian neighbors, and

taped them to every apartment door the morning of our planned gathering. We simply offered snacks and drinks in the courtyard and invited everyone to join us. Super simple! Super last minute! And all day long, our kids were so excited about the "party" at the end of the day! They continually asked us how many people were coming, to which I would respond, "Honestly, I'll be kind of surprised if anyone shows up." But at the end of the day, after I set out a small table of snacks, we had tenants from half of the apartment meet us outside, bring their own snacks and drinks to share, and play and talk together for about three hours. What's more is that they all thanked us for putting this together, and the Ukrainian girls used their broken English to say how excited they had been to see the invitation in their own language, and then our Romanian neighbors spearheaded a WhatsApp group for people at the apartments to plan another get together later on. It was a wonderful night and just another encouragement for how we feel God leading us more and more in ministry direction - radically ordinary hospitality.



I am in the process of learning to be a better hostess in the practical sense. First, I am not a naturally tidy person; I struggle to be a good housekeeper. Add in four tiny tornadoes who need to be trained just as much as I do, and it can become quite a struggle. But with the help of a few YouTube channels I frequent, a few books I go to, and the friends I am constantly trying to model, I am improving little by little. Secondly, I really enjoy cooking! But reading Butterfield's book helped give me tips for how to cook so that our food is stretched more, and we're more prepared for guests we weren't necessarily expecting. We usually feed about 20 extra portions each week when we host women's Bible Study, weekly prayer meeting, and try to invite people over as a way to build community. Thirdly, I'm learning how laid back hospitality can be. I've started simply texting my neighbors before I go to the grocery store to see if I can grab anything for them. I've invited people over to just "be present" in the midst of whatever we're doing, or I invite people to run errands with me as a simple way to be together while also doing something that needs doing. I even once told our upstairs neighbors "Come over anytime! I can promise we will always have two things - a mess and coffee!"

But more than learning to cook for a crowd or vacuum more regularly, the Lord is teaching me. Teaching me that He loves me even when I don't have it all together. That I don't have to have a perfect house or meal to be used for His Kingdom. That I can be humble enough to accept the help when houseguests offer it. That He is gentle in His chiseling work, as He molds me and polishes out my sin and idolatry. I may not be laying my hands on people for healing or casting out demons, but this work of radically ordinary hospitality requires, for me, just as much reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Requests

- Please continue to pray for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters. They are all having to settle into a new "normal," without husbands/brothers/fathers. The MTW Odessa Team is doing well and we continue to support them as best we can, but they have become quite independent in their work here with the Ukrainians. Pray for them to have constant wisdom and stamina, as well as praying for them to find a better location for worship.
- Please continue to pray for our children. We check in with them regularly to see how they're feeling about having people in our home frequently, as well. They all really enjoy having guests, but we also recognize that they are still transitioning and grieving. And we are trying to find the right balance between informing them in an age-appropriate manner and praying for Ukraine and Russia, while also not burdening them with more knowledge than they are able

to handle. Plus, one of our children is beginning online counseling, and we pray that this will be fruitful.

- We have an intern who will be joining us in August! Among other things, one of her daily responsibilities will be to help with Denton and Jemma while I homeschool Elin and Atticus. I'm so grateful for this help we're being gifted! Please pray for Kim's transition here.
- Please continue praying for a Romanian worship leader and pastor and for the ministry to Romanians. We are planning an English camp for 12 years+ at the end of August, which will launch us into a year-long team plan for English lessons using the Bible, hopefully culminating in an English-immersive camp next summer. We are excited for this new project and pray that the Lord will use it to reach others and grow His Kingdom.





TOP: Catalina's parents were able to come visit us in May for two weeks, and it was such a special time to be together! Derek's parents are coming in October, and we're all counting down the days.

This summer has been full of hiking trips with our church community, which has been really wonderful!

MIDDLE: Elin turned 8 years old in June, and she had her first recital for rhythmic gymnastics! She's recently made a few friends, which is a HUGE praise! Atticus got in a fight with a horse a few weeks ago that landed us in the hospital for two nights. Thank the Lord, he's ok! If you missed it, you've got to check out the crazy story [here!](#)

BOTTOM: Derek continues to organize Saturday morning frisbee with the Ukrainian youth. Some of them are putting together a team to participate in the tournaments, too! And Derek gets to play with his own team every other Saturday evening and really enjoys the awesome Christian community among the frisbee players. They plan to start up the children frisbee team again this fall, and our boys are excited!



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