

Continued from Winter 2006 issue



*Miracle
(O) at
Eisenach*

God spares the lives of NBBC science instructor Arthur Raske and his family.

Hans Raske had gone back behind the Iron Curtain of East Germany to get his family out of the Communist-controlled nation. Moving from freedom into complete restriction was wrought with danger, but Hans longed to reunite with his family after five years of separation. Knowing each difficulty, the Raske family knew that the Lord would have to work several miracles not only to get them across the border but also to provide for them once they had made it. The Lord proved Himself faithful and moved Hans and his family into freedom. But many difficulties still lay ahead for them. Young Arthur was eager to see how God was going to provide.

Ten-year-old Arthur Raske helped his father, Hans, unload their family's belongings onto the platform of the one-room customs building. Stamping his feet in the cold, he waited for inspection. The soldiers were notorious for confiscating goods for their own families and friends back in Russia. Would his family lose everything they owned?

"These soldiers looked at inspection the way we look at Christmas presents," Art

says. "Being a customs official was known as 'the Russian get-rich-quick scheme.'"

It was 1947, and his family had reached the border crossing of Eisenach, East Germany, five days late and without an exit permit or the other required papers—an act that could have been caused them to be sent to a concentration camp or executed. But a miraculous announcement over the loudspeaker had allowed people to board the train without having their papers inspected.

Now, halfway across the Iron Curtain, a canal flanked by a high, barbed-wire-topped fence and guarded towers, Art marveled at God's gracious hand in sparing their lives. But the family feared the soldiers would take their possessions.

Too Cold for "Christmas Presents"

Acclimated to harsh Russian winters, the soldiers had built a fire in the customs building and reclined in easy chairs, sipping tea. Several soldiers stepped into the cold, pressed hands to their numb faces, and waved the train on. Apparently



The Raske Family

(back row) Mr. Hans Raske, Gerhard Raske, Mrs. Katie Raske, (front row) Arthur Raske, Eleanor Raske

the weather was too cold for even seasoned Russian soldiers to open “Christmas presents.”

“We had expected to lose all, but—praise God!—we kept all,” Art says. “It was as if God were saying, ‘Dear mother, yes, you may even keep your precious sewing machine.’ God does indeed have a tender heart for His own. Now we understood why God had sent the extreme cold.”

The train dropped the Raskes off at the “free” side of the Iron Curtain. Beyond the platform, Art saw a myriad of train tracks but beyond that . . . nothing. A freight train was ready to leave for Frankfurt, where Hans had lived before being reunited with his family; but it was only a freight. Where would they go now? Though free, they would perish in the cold without shelter.

Seeing a lone cattle car, Hans asked an official if he could rent it. The cost was \$80, but Hans had only \$10. He exercised his faith and asked the official to hold the car; he would return with the money. Visiting other refugees huddled along the railroad tracks, he found seven groups who would pitch in the bargain price of \$10 to share the car. He gathered \$80 just in time. The family, grateful for loans of jackets and blankets, huddled among their luggage as the train eased forward.

Another Act of Faith

Reaching Frankfurt around 2 pm, the Raskes had no food, no place to sleep, no furniture, and no money. Would God meet their needs before nightfall?

Hans told his family to wait while he rode a streetcar back to the military barracks where he had lived before being reunited with his family in East Germany. He wanted to retrieve two boxes of belongings and to visit the American Army base in search of another job.

The barracks manager mentioned that he had a vacant apartment available for a married couple. Miraculously no one was on the waiting list, which was usually long. “Dad took the apartment immediately but had no money to pay the rent in advance,” Art says. “This was another act of faith.”

When Hans later visited his former boss at the Army base, he discovered that he had failed to collect two weeks of vacation pay. God provided rent money and more! Furthermore, Hans heard that the purchasing officer needed someone who

was fluent in both English and German to purchase supplies for the base; so he went looking for him. He found the purchasing officer yelling into a phone.

“The Army had dumped a load of furniture on him and expected him to find storage space for it,” Art says. “Sheepishly dad volunteered to ‘store’ some of the furniture. The officer not only consented but ordered two U.S. soldiers to load the furniture onto a truck and place the items in our newly acquired apartment.” The officer also hired Hans on the spot.

“Praise the Lord!” Art says. “Now Dad had a job, and we had furniture.”

A Knock on the Door

Hans returned to his family with the good news and accompanied them to their new home. “It was 5 pm and God had provided for all our needs in three hours,” Art says. “We gathered around the table for a time of glad thanksgiving for the miraculous care God had lavished upon us.”

As they sat around the table, someone knocked on the door. “Immediately silence descended,” Art says, “until we remembered we had nothing to fear.”

At the door was the apartment manager who informed Hans that two care packages had arrived from the United States during his absence. “We had not eaten all day,” Art says, “and in all the excitement and anxious moments had forgotten about food.”

Though the children were overeager, Hans made them open the boxes slowly with dignity. “There were K-rations, canned meat (we had been without meat for years), powdered milk (we hadn’t seen milk in years), crackers, canned cheese, and loads of other treasures—even chocolate,” Art says. “We had heard of chocolate—that it was the best food created by God—but we siblings could not remember seeing this ‘brown gold.’ Did we ever enjoy our food that evening as we danced around the table! No king ever enjoyed his dainties as much as we relished the food God had provided for us. Each of us received a little piece of chocolate at bedtime. Surely Heaven could not be much better.”

A Parting of the Waters

Looking back, Art marvels at God’s protection and enjoys reviewing the specific miracles God performed for his family. God kept Hans safe despite his overextended

visitor’s visa and his illegal presence in East Germany. God provided transportation to the border crossing and caused delays so the Raskes would arrive at Eisenach at exactly the appointed time. God spared the family members’ lives by orchestrating a directive from Moscow; the family was able to board the train and to cross the border though they lacked the required exit permit and other necessary papers. God sent cold weather to discourage the soldiers from confiscating the family’s possessions. Then God provided money for transportation to Frankfurt, a place to live, rent money, furniture, a job for Hans, and food—even chocolate.

Though God’s blessings on Art and his family have been numerous, Art especially thanks God for the miracle at Eisenach. “I understand how Moses must have felt at the crossing of the Red Sea,” he says. “For him the waters parted, and all walked through the midst of the sea, unhindered by the water that would ordinarily have snuffed out their lives. We saw the soldiers part to either side; and we walked through the midst of them, unmolested by those who would have taken our lives. We did not have to flee or run, nor did we have to dodge bullets or escape pursuing dogs. We crossed the Iron Curtain not in haste, but also not in arrogance. We crossed it illegally, yet we had broken no laws. Surely God makes no mistakes.”

About the Author

Adam Blumer, a contributing author, serves as contract editor and freelance writer for several ministries, including www.sharperiron.org (<http://www.sharperiron.org>), Shalom Ministries (Brooklyn, NY), and Kids4Truth (Lee’s Summit, MO). Recently, his first novel was accepted for publication. He lives with his wife and daughters in Iron Mountain, Michigan. You can reach Adam by sending e-mail to adam@blumer.org.