



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

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September-October 2023

“Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;” Psalm 55:17

Dear Pastors and Friends,

Greetings from the Slobodians! We are grateful for all who join with us in proclaiming the Gospel to fields full of people who are without hope and purpose in life. Thank you for your prayers!

During the month of September, we had Vitaly Bilyak with us who continues his trips to the war front bringing aid and sharing the Gospel with civilians and soldiers along the war front in Eastern Ukraine. The civilians who remain in these areas have been warned many times by government officials and the military to leave these areas which are frequently targeted in Russia’s continuing attacks on civilian areas. Though most have left there remain large numbers of civilians who refuse to leave their homes. These people are usually without electricity and the gas that had been their main source of heat and fueled their cooking stoves. Therefore, in these areas outside their homes you often see makeshift cooking grills and piles of wood they scrounge around for which they use for heat and cooking. Food and medicine are scarce, so providing food and medicine is a large part of Vitaly’s efforts in these areas.

In doing this Vitaly works with local pastors who know where the needs are the greatest and the location of people who due to mobility issues cannot leave their homes to go to the designated area where these war relief distributions are made. Vitaly arrives with a SUV and trailer packed with goods to meet these needs. After all is distributed, Vitaly and those working with him shuttle back and forth from the war front and nearby cities, where there are stores and pharmacies still operating in which they can purchase more supplies and medicine. These distributions, which also include Bibles and Gospel literature, provide many opportunities to preach the Gospel to hearts which are open and ears which are ready to hear. Praise God for the souls who are being saved and for the pastors in these areas who have decided to stay. These churches are filled with newly saved people eager to hear God’s word preached as it provides them with hope and strength to continue.

Besides helping civilians on these trips Vitaly also brings supplies to soldiers. This is possible since the men connected with Vitaly’s church can arrange special access to their locations. One of these men is the 2nd in command of a large number of soldiers and has been able to arrange for Vitaly to meet with these soldiers in their underground bunkers. Vitaly has many opportunities to share the Gospel and even eat together with these soldiers and bring them needed supplies. As Vitaly reported on these efforts to churches in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, which involves showing videos distributing war relief where you can clearly hear nearby artillery firing away, someone asked him this interesting question, “Was there any particular time you felt your life was in danger?” So Vitaly related a story of when after a distribution the local pastor recruited Vitaly and the man with him to help him retrieve gas cans being stored in their church building. When they arrived, Vitaly noticed that the church had been well shot up by shrapnel. As they began to load up the gas cans a Ukrainian tank quickly pulled up right in front of the church and began rapidly shooting at a nearby Russian position then quickly turned around and left. Realizing that the reason the tank quickly left was to avoid the soon coming return fire, Vitaly and those with him decided they had retrieved enough gas and quickly left.

In October we were thrilled with the attendance of 32 students for the Fall session of the Seminary. We thank God for such a turnout during this time of war in Ukraine since our students from Donetsk, Lugansk, and other occupied regions cannot come. Thank-you for your partnership with us!

The Slobodians

Church Planting • Evangelism • Bibles & Literature • Training Nationals

“...Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.” Mark 16:15