



## BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

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**March-April 2021**

*"And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." Duet.28:2*

### **Dear Pastors and Friends,**

Warm greetings in Christ! We have finally been able to resume our travel overseas and were glad to visit personally with many of our brethren in the month of April. Getting into other countries is definitely more complicated these days since a Covid PCR test taken not more than 72 hours ahead of arrival is required as well as proof of insurance that covers Covid treatment. Nevertheless, at least it is now possible. Personal contact is much better than Facetime, Skype and Zoom though it is certainly a blessing to have these tools available when borders were closed.

We just experienced some of the current complexities in foreign travel these days when we booked tickets for two of our Ukrainian church planters (Vitaly Bilyak and Igor Fomichov) to visit the US. The plan was to have them fly to Minnesota through Amsterdam where their meetings began. This was on Delta/KLM and was very convenient because it had only one stop which was in Amsterdam. From Amsterdam they had a direct flight to Minneapolis. However, when they checked in for their flights from Kyiv they were advised not to go since Amsterdam had just started to deny entrance to Ukrainians even for those that were only transiting through Amsterdam. They were sending all the Ukrainians back to Kyiv who arrived in Amsterdam. In a short time, we were able to get them on Turkish Air flights from Istanbul to Minneapolis through Chicago. This was not that convenient since there were two stops in addition to the 12-hour flight from Istanbul to Chicago. Since we purchased the tickets just a couple hours before departure this created security concerns that took some doing to solve so that they could board the flight. Nevertheless, we counted ourselves very much blessed that we were able to do this since any other option would involve retaking the Covid PCR test, causing a 2-day delay that would result in missing their first meeting. So, they arrived in Minneapolis about 10 hours later than planned. They were exhausted. Igor said, "that was a really long Monday". Praise God, they made it in time and God blessed their meeting in a wonderful way. During May and June, they have meetings in Illinois, Indiana, and Texas. Please pray that God will bless their time in the US and that we can get them back to Ukraine with less trouble than it took to get them here.

The United States is doing much better as far as the corona virus than many of the countries where we are planting churches. For example, Ukraine has had some severe lockdowns as the spread of the disease continues and very few in Ukraine have been able to be vaccinated. Nevertheless, ministry continues and, in some cases, even flourishes as folks are more open to the Gospel during difficult times. A common phrase often heard is, "Praise God the Gospel and the Word of God cannot be locked down!"

In Ukraine we conducted our Spring Seminary session in April despite the fact that Ukraine was then in a severe lockdown. This meant the closure of all public transportation which made it impossible for many of our students to attend the classes. Furthermore, a good number of our students could not attend because the border between Belarus was closed and folks from Eastern Ukraine could not travel to Kyiv. Despite all this we did have 25 students in attendance, and we were able to have our Spring graduation even though 6 of the 18 graduates could not come. It was a blessed time for those that were able to attend and just being able to conduct this session was an answer to prayer.

Other prayer needs are to pray for our summer camps. We have a long way to go to collect the \$40,000 we typically need to cover the cost of these camps. Also pray for the new church plant in the country of Belarus on the outskirts of the large city of Brest. A place to meet is urgently needed. Please pray that property for this new church could be purchased soon.

### ***The Slobodians***