



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

121 Commerce Drive, Suite 50 • Danville, IN 46122 • e-mail: Missions@BaptistInternational.org

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"Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah." Ps. 62:8

Dear Pastors and Friends,

Hello from Ukraine! It is a blessing to meet with our brethren face to face once again. The customary Slavic brotherly embraces were definitely more pronounced than before since many of our folks are living day to day with the real possibility of it being their last day on this earth as Russian bombs and missiles continue to strike in many parts of the country. We are thankful to God that none of our Ukrainian missionaries have been hurt thus far. However, when we arrived, we were sad to hear that Alexander, one of our seminary students, was killed doing volunteer work in Kharkov. He was 21 years old. Please pray for the Shevchenko family.

To get to Ukraine we flew into Krakow, Poland, and then drove across the border into Ukraine. It took 3 ½ hours to drive to the Ukrainian border, 2 hours for the border crossing, then another 3 ½ hours to reach Ternopil, our first stop. There were many checkpoints on the road. In Ukraine we were fortunate to find a gas station along our way so we could get fuel. Gas stations limit you to 20 liters, which is about 5 gallons. Pasha has a special permit that allowed him to fill up because he delivers aid. Pasha also had a permit to cross the border to pick me up. Most of our men cannot do this because Ukraine does not permit men between the ages of 18 and 60 to leave.

From Ternopil we drove to a warehouse where we loaded vehicles from a container full of humanitarian aid donated by a businessman in Indiana. We brought 5 large vans, a big truck, and an army of volunteers. We used every square inch of space to take everything! The 6 vehicles then headed to Kyiv, Desna, Chernihiv, Lviv, Ternopil, and Borschiv. The churches in these places are packed with refugees, including from Bucha and Mariupol. The churches rejoiced to receive this aid.

Next, we traveled to Lviv, where brother Yura and his church are ministering to refugees. The church is packed with them. The auditorium is wall-to-wall mattresses that get piled up before services to make room for chairs. A good number of refugees are from Mariupol, perhaps the most heavily attacked city in Ukraine. They were fortunate to get out alive. We asked one of them to give a testimony, which we have posted on our website under "View Video Updates." Shortly before the nightly evening service the sirens began to sound. This was very concerning since Lviv had recently been hit with several missiles. Brother Yura said that we would go ahead with the service rather than move to a bomb shelter stating, "If God cannot protect us, no bomb shelter can." I must confess I thought it would be better to move the service to a bomb shelter, but this was my first actual experience with such an event while brother Yura and his people seemed "battle hardened," telling us that this was now routine, and they no longer get very alarmed when sirens sound.

From Lviv we traveled to Borschiv then back to Ternopil for an Easter service on April 24 since their calendar has Easter a week later than ours. Last, we made our way to Zdulbuno for their second day of Easter services on Monday, April 25. The Easter services were wonderful. Zdulbuno had not been targeted by Russia until early that morning when two rockets hit about 3/4 of a mile from where we were staying. No one was hurt. They missed the railway and ended up hitting a nearby electric station. There was damage to nearby buildings, and where we were, the windows rattled, mirrors fell off the wall and we lost electricity. Sirens sounded again during the Easter service, but just like in Lviv, the church service proceeded as if nothing unusual was happening!

At every stop, we were inspired by our Ukrainian families and other volunteers, whose sacrifices and dedication are making it possible for BIEM to deliver hundreds of tons of aid and to reach many for Christ. The church in Borschiv was so packed with refugees that pastor Sergei and his wife Victoria spent two weeks sleeping in their car to make more room for refugees! We praise God for your prayers and support!

The Slobodians