



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

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"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11

November-December 2023

Dear Pastor's and Friends,

Warm Christmas greetings from the Slobodian's. We trust that you are enjoying the special blessings that come with this time of the year. Right now, with all the trouble and turmoil in the world around us we can rejoice that "The Prince of Peace" will soon appear. Praise God! What a glorious day that will be!

We are grateful that Ukraine's policy of allowing pastors to leave Ukraine for religious purposes even though they are between the ages of 18 and 60 continues. There is a formal application process and there are bureaucratic hoops to go through but so far, we have not had any of our pastor's denied. In November we had three church planters with us, Eugene Buyko from the Kyiv area, Igor Fomichov from the military city of Desna and Pavlo Usach from Zdolbuniv which is in Western Ukraine. This was Pavlo's first time visiting with us here in America. All three of these men are heavily involved in our war relief distribution efforts and had much to share with the churches we were able to visit.

Right now, in December, we have Vitaly and Olena Yurchenko with us along with their 20-year-old son Nikita. We were all surprised that Nikita being 20 years old, was allowed to leave Ukraine. Nikita says that when they arrived in the United States, he was afraid to go to sleep lest he wake up and find out that it was only a dream! The Yurchenko's are from Kyiv where Vitaly is the director of our Seminary. He has planted a church in Chervona Sloboda which is about one-half hour from the city just a couple miles from the areas of Hostomel and Bucha that were occupied by Russian forces who committed horrific atrocities that reported world-wide. Due to the location of their church, they were able to help hundreds of refugees fleeing their homes which were under severe attack. After the Russians gave up their attack on Kyiv this church hosted a group of electricians who asked to live in the church for 2 weeks while they restored electric to the nearby formerly occupied areas. So great was the damage that the two weeks turned out to be 3 months. You may recall reading in our weekly war relief updates that this is also the church that was contacted by the Ukrainian military who asked them to house 20 soldiers for at least three weeks who were on leave while their battalion was being rebuilt. Their battalion has been fighting in Bakmut where the fighting had been horrific. In fact, these 20 soldiers were one half of the 40 who survived from their battalion of 200. It was a wonderful opportunity to share the Gospel. With the Yurchenko's here, the congregations were able to hear about such events firsthand.

Recently, we were approached by a dear friend of BIEM deeply burdened for the plight of Ukrainian soldiers facing the rigors of a bitterly cold winter in frozen trenches. Some soldiers are brothers in Christ. Countless others are unsaved. We share the same concern for these freezing soldiers. After much prayer and contemplation, for this winter we have developed a specific plan to glorify God while using our War Relief Fund to evangelize and meet the physical needs of such men in the military. We propose to channel \$100,000 toward helping 1,000 soldiers with warm winter clothing such as boots, coats, gloves, thermal underwear, and socks. (To boost this project, the friend mentioned above has already committed the first \$26,000!) Providing clothing for soldiers in battle is a challenge. However, after consulting with people on the ground, we have developed a unique plan that involves distribution by partnering churches in Ukraine that have personal contact with specific soldiers who are friends or relatives. This plan also takes advantage of free shipping currently available for soldiers in battle. If you would like to help, please designate your gift "War Relief." Each \$100 gift will make one Ukrainian soldier's winter warmer this year. Of course, as God's people provide, we also continue providing relief and God's Word to needy civilians caught in the tragic circumstances of war. May God bless you!

The Slobodians

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