



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

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

September ~ November 2022

"Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident." Psalm 27:3

Dear Pastors and Friends,

Greetings in the name of our wonderful Lord! In our last prayer letter, we shared an answered prayer that Vitaly Yurchenko received special permission to leave Ukraine for a few weeks. And he was not our only Ukrainian church planter to receive this special provision from the Ukrainian government! Shortly after, Vitaly Bilyak came with his family, followed by Eugene Buyko and his family, and most recently Igor Fomichov. In the case of the Yurchenkos and the Buykos, their 19-year-old sons had to stay behind since the travel exception applied only to pastors. This exception is granted through the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Ukraine. So far, they have granted this permission for each of our applicants! From the Ukrainian perspective, it is beneficial for pastors to receive traveling privileges to the United States because their speaking to American congregations publicizes the situation Ukraine is in—especially since the war seems to be getting less and less coverage on our media. However, even with the official document of traveling exemptions, the Ukrainian Customs has overriding power to deny exit from Ukraine. Therefore, we all continue to pray for each opportunity even after official permission is granted.

To say that these Ukrainian missionaries have been warmly received is a huge understatement. As they have shared their stories of what they have seen and experienced, hearts have been profoundly touched. After absorbing the extent of these Ukrainian national missionaries' sacrifice, how they risk their lives sharing the Gospel and distributing aid, American congregations realize that they are meeting face-to-face with real heroes of the faith! It is highly encouraging for American believers to hear directly how God is using these awful circumstances to open hearts to the Gospel and save countless souls.

Since our Ukrainian guests like to wear clothing that identifies them as Ukrainian, they are often approached in public places and encouraged by Americans who show their support for them, sometimes with a warm hug! These pastors also receive many questions, the most popular being, "Are you going back?" Even through difficult circumstances, like when Russian efforts to attack Ukraine's power grid produced casualties and power outages all over Ukraine, these pastors reply, "Of course, that is where I am needed." One of these pastors stated that when they distribute aid to refugees, pray with them, and share the Gospel, the people are thankful. They do thank them for the help they receive, but first and foremost they thank them just for being there, that they have stayed in Ukraine despite the risk to their personal safety. Click "View Video Updates" on our website see their videos.

Americans do know from media coverage how devastating and horrific the attacks are all over Ukraine as so many thousands are killed and so much property has been destroyed. But when they see the images and hear the stories these brethren share, they are amazed that despite all this, ministry continues and even flourishes during war! Truly, there is a harvest of souls taking place in Ukraine. For example, earlier this year there was a time when we were discussing with our team of church planters and pastors whether to have summer camps under these circumstances, while the war was raging on. Praise God, the decision was made to go ahead with camps. Though some adjustments had to be made, now that we have completed collecting and translating all the reports, the results are in. We rejoice that 3,373 children, teens, and young adults attended our camps this summer in Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, and some restricted nations as well. The majority of these camps took place in Ukraine, where we conducted over 30 different camps. To receive an encouraging report on these camps please contact our office with the information in this letter's heading. This report contains much more information and pictures that would truly bless your heart. May God bless each of you!

The Slobodians