



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

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January-February 2018

"The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate." Psalm 34:22

Dear Pastors and Friends,

Praise God for a brand new year to serve Him in the needy and exciting fields of Eastern Europe and surrounding territories. We thank God for you who make this ministry possible through prayer and giving.

In our area of ministry, Christmas has always been celebrated on January 7th. In Ukraine, which has embraced the West, there has been a growing recognition of December 25th as Christmas Day. This last Christmas, December 25th was established as a national holiday for the first time. However, January 7th was not abandoned and is also a national holiday. This unusually long Christmas season has been a plus for evangelistic outreach since Christmas provides an opportunity to schedule all kinds of special church events which draw unchurched people. Having not one but two Christmas Eves and Christmas Days provides more days to organize outreaches. For example in Belarus, BIEM was able to financially support Christmas outreaches from Dec. 24 – January 8. Hundreds attended these holiday services, including unsaved adults and orphans. Some had never attended any church service before. As a result, God was glorified, and some souls repented of sin and accepted the Savior!

January was also when the Winter session of the Kyiv Theological Seminary was held. We praise God for several new students this session. An exciting development took place this session in that a decision was made to expand the seminary by adding a missions department. Currently there are Theology, Christian Education and Music departments. Missions would add a fourth department which is projected to begin perhaps as early as this Fall. Please pray for this exciting new expansion.

We were glad that this January session we had seven students attending from the war zone in the East. Though we do not hear much about this War from our media in America, this troubling situation which has cost several thousand lives continues as a stalemate between the Russian-backed rebels who want to separate from Ukraine and the Ukrainian military. Sometimes we are asked what does Putin want? Does he plan to invade further into Ukraine? Is his end game to absorb Ukraine? It is quite clear that Ukraine does not have the military power to prevent that if Russia launched a full-scale invasion. Our personal opinion is that Putin's goal is simply to de-stabilize and impoverish Ukraine since Ukraine thumbed their nose at Russia and Putin when they embraced the West and ousted their former president who was so closely allied with Russia. Putin simply could not tolerate it if Ukraine prospered by rejecting Russia. He wants to show the world, and especially those in the former Soviet bloc, that it does not pay to stand up to Russia. Putin seems happy with the current stalemate since it certainly weakens and impoverishes Ukraine. While no one can say for sure what is going on in Putin's mind, we know that God is in control and that He moves according to His plan and purpose. A silver lining in all this is that the hearts of people in Ukraine are far more open to the Gospel and spiritual things than they were when there was peace. As a result, our brethren are seeing more people coming to Christ than before all these hostilities began. Nevertheless, please pray for peace to return to Ukraine.

In February we have Vitaly and Olena Yurchenko, one of our Ukrainian church planting couples visiting us. Please pray for God to bless the meetings as we travel with them so that supporting churches have an opportunity to hear directly from them. Thank-you for your part in this ministry and may God bless each of you in your service for Him!

The Slobodians

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