



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

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

January-February 2015

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength..." Isaiah 12:2
Dear Pastors and Friends,

Please pray for Ukraine! With the nation of Ukraine being in the news much these days we are often asked how the Russian invasion is affecting ministry and churches there. Being in Ukraine for the January sessions of our seminary in Kiev we could see and feel how the war that has enveloped Eastern Ukraine is impacting our brethren and churches as they are intensely seeking God's face in prayer.

While none of our church planting projects or children's ministries are in the war zone, that is not the case for many of the Brotherhood of Independent Baptist Churches of Ukraine whom we partner with in the Kiev seminary. It is the Donetsk and Lugansk Oblasts (similar to states) that are trying to break away from Ukraine with assistance from Russia. Out of the Brotherhoods 130 churches, 34 are in the Donetsk and Lugansk Oblasts. Eighteen of those churches are in the war zone controlled by the Separatists. Two of those churches have been destroyed by military operations and some church members have been killed or wounded by military fire. While 60% of the members have evacuated to other parts of Ukraine most of the pastors remain. Some that remain are without electric and basic services.

This situation affects all of Ukraine since many have friends and relatives in the war zone and the Ukrainian soldiers that are being killed in this conflict come from all parts of Ukraine. Furthermore, many cities throughout Ukraine are receiving large numbers of refugees from the war zone. The Ukrainian economy is being devastated. One picture of the hardship this brings upon the people is that the Ukrainian currency, the Hyrivna, has been devalued from 8 per US Dollar to around 30 per US Dollar.

Our January seminary session was down 50% and an annual youth conference of Brotherhood youth in Kiev that usually draws 1,000 youth had only 500. However, in the midst of great trouble we see God's hand at work. When the invitation was given dozens and dozens of young people continued to come forward for salvation and other decisions that resulted in a much greater response than they have ever had! Pastors everywhere are sharing that attendance is up and people are far more open to hear the Gospel and make decisions than they have seen in many years. Praise God!

Brotherhood churches are gathering food and supplies for their brethren in the war zone, which volunteers drive up to the border separating the two armies. There, church members within the war zone are permitted to come and receive these goods. These believers are sharing this aid and feeding those in their community and sharing the Gospel at the same time. Neighbors are begging remaining church members not to leave saying they need them to survive and there have been occasions where neighbors have successfully convinced Separatist authorities not to confiscate church buildings saying the community needed them for bomb shelters and for food. Pastors are allowed to travel out of the war zone and back again bringing in donated funds to purchase food and supplies, which are available at war zone markets. If you would like to have a part in this effort please designate your donation to BIEM, "Aid for Ukraine".

We are thankful for each of you who keep us in your prayers as we keep you informed of our ministry through these prayer letters, our monthly prayer and praise sheets entitled *"BIEM's of Light"* and our quarterly newsletter entitled *"The Challenger."* In February we began e-mailing a short video clip related to our ministry on a monthly basis. If you did not receive our February video update it is because we do not have you on the list or it may be in your promotions, social tab, or spam tab of your e-mail. Please send us your e-mail address if you would like to receive these monthly video updates. May God bless each and every one of you!

The Slobodians