

Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine

"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings,... I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me".

Philippians 3:8-14

April 1, 2014

Dear Prayer Partners:

God has impressed the 3rd and 4th chapters of Philippians on my heart the last couple of days. In troubles and trials, or any time in life, my goal is to know Christ, to become more like Him. He has already "laid hold of me", in that He saved me and called me to serve Him as His ambassador in Odessa, Ukraine. Now I must "press on" to fulfill His purpose for which He called me. That may include turmoil and uncertainty, but my **God never changes and He has a plan for every situation.** He is a Rock Who never moves, all-powerful and dependable. He is also a gentle Shepherd Who guides and encourages His hurting lambs.

The crisis in Ukraine is mind-boggling. President Yanukovich was ousted by freedom-loving Ukrainians who wanted to get rid of corruption in government. Russia seized Crimea and all of Ukraine's military bases and ships there. For the last few weeks, Russian military forces have been multiplying on Ukraine's borders. Ukraine is scrambling to train additional soldiers. Will Putin invade Ukraine and take the Russian-speaking territories east and south that includes Odessa? Will diplomatic compromises prevail? The Ukrainian currency ("griven") has fallen about 40%, and prices are already rising. My Ukrainian friends are feeling the stress of constant uncertainty, turmoil, threat of war and economic collapse. No one knows what the result will be or when the crisis might resolve. Election of a new president is scheduled for May 25, which will be another flash point for Russia to grab power in some way.

However, this week, it seems that some of the Russian forces have pulled back from the Ukrainian border, and Russia is engaging in diplomatic talks with the EU and the USA. **ABWE believes that we have a window of opportunity to return to Ukraine** for at least the next few weeks before the elections. Several of our missionaries started their furloughs early. **Only Holly Friesen and I are returning to Odessa** now. We are flying in Wednesday, **April 2.** I believe the village clinics are a wonderful way to show our solidarity with our Ukrainian friends and an open door to share the gospel of peace and hope through our Savior Jesus Christ.

PLEASE PRAY!

- for God's purpose to be accomplished in Ukraine
- for people in turmoil to turn to Christ, especially our clinic patients
- for the Lord to give us wisdom about how long to stay in Ukraine, when to evacuate again, what priorities to accomplish
- for God's direction for the pregnancy care center, as we continue to train our volunteers. Should we delay our opening until after the elections?
- for my preparation for teaching in the restricted access country (RAC) in May, for God to raise up potential leaders there for the post-abortion ministry.
- How long should I stay in the RAC? My plan was to be there May 8-21, but should I stay until after Ukraine's May 25 elections? Does God want me to participate in other ministries there?

You can see how desperately we need your prayers in this ongoing crisis. Thank you for interceding for me and for Ukraine. Our God delights to hear and answer prayer!

Pressing on while clinging to The Rock,

Miriam