

Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine

"For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do— to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him— then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you".

(Deuteronomy 11:22-23)

September 6, 2014

Dear Prayer Partners:

Greetings from Odessa! What joy to be back in the country to which God has called me. This week Moses' final charge to the Israelites as they prepared to enter the Promised Land has caught my attention. Our God is the King of kings and Lord of lords, who has authority over all the nations of the earth! The Almighty God wants us to love Him, to walk like Him and to **hold fast to Him**. Hang on tightly like a drowning swimmer clings to the lifeguard. Hold fast to the immovable Rock Who never changes and whose strength is immeasurable. Many of my Ukrainian friends are saying to each other in Russian "Derzhityes"! **Hang on!** Hold fast! In the uncertainty of a war-torn Ukraine, we know that only our great God is worthy of our trust.

My heart is broken for the people of Ukraine who have lost everything to bombs and artillery fire. Pastor Lonya's nephew Danik has lived in Donetsk for more than 15 years, attending Donetsk Christian University then working on staff there. His primary income for his wife and 4 children came from a greenhouse of flowers. When the war came towards the city of Donetsk a few months ago, he sent his family back to Odessa, but he stayed to harvest as many flowers as possible and to help his church. One Sunday evening, three masked men armed with automatic weapons burst into their church, demanding to know where the American spies were. "We know Baptists are spies for America!" They searched every room, breaking down doors, scaring to death the young people in a meeting. Thankfully, they left satisfied, without kidnapping anyone as has happened in other churches in the war zone. Danik finally left Donetsk when he could hear the bombs and artillery from his house. They could only take what they could carry. Since they left, their greenhouse—their livelihood—has been destroyed. Their church building was damaged, but the pastor is staying to help as many people as he can. Church members are inviting their unsaved neighbors to find shelter in the church basement. The Christian University campus has been commandeered by the rebels.

Thanks to some of you giving generously, our ABWE team has been able to partner with local pastors to help families like Danik's who have fled for their lives to the safety of Odessa. We have bought groceries, children's shoes, and school supplies, and paid for housing of refugees at a church's dorm. Five hundred orphans have been displaced from their orphanages in the provinces overtaken by war. They are pouring into various children's homes around the Odessa province, and we are trying to buy clothes and school supplies for them, as they lost everything. Next week we are sending funds to a church in the Lugansk province where they escaped the war with minimal damage, so refugees are flooding into this town by the hundreds. This small church of 30 members is housing and feeding 600 displaced people! Lonya called the pastor to ask how things are going, and he responded, "Praise the Lord! We are alive!" We will also be sending funds to Danik's church in Donetsk, right in the middle of the war. Many needs are clamoring for our attention. I could have spent \$10,000 just this week, in response to the letters received! But I didn't have that much money, so people are going hungry, facing the winter without warm clothes and no fuel for heating.

Will YOU help? Enable the hands and feet of God's family here in Ukraine to serve the hurting in Jesus' Name. **Pray** for wisdom for us and our Ukrainian pastors to know how to respond to urgent requests. Pray that people will be saved. **Give** to the ABWE Ukraine Crisis Fund, ABWE account # 0717401. You can give online at abwe.org or send a check to ABWE P.O. Box 8585 Harrisburg, PA 17105-8585.

*Holding fast to The Rock!
 Miriam*