

Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine

*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide
under the shadow of the Almighty.*

I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Psalm 91:1-2

March 27, 2017

Dear Prayer Partners:

Thank you for praying for my medical team as we took care of refugee patients in eastern Ukraine last week. Holly and I saw about 230 patients, two clinic assistants from Odessa did labs and pharmacy, Pastor Lonya counselled with patients. It was grueling work, emotionally, spiritually and physically. Praise the Lord that at least two patients accepted Christ as Savior! One of these refugees was a man who had already suffered a head injury from a car accident causing him to lose his job. That led to his wife leaving him. Then the war began, and he had to evacuate his home as well. He was at the end of his rope when he met Pastor Igor in Dobropolye. He started attending church, but couldn't grapple with all his pain and loss to accept God's gift of salvation. As Lonya listened to his story, showed compassion, and tenderly shared a Suffering Savior, this man finally understood the magnitude of God's love and forgiveness, and asked Jesus to save him!

These clinic days followed a helpful seminar by Colonel William Barko on PTSD with about 50 participants. Many of these are trying to minister to refugees and soldiers, while dealing with their own emotional trauma from the war. Pray that the principles we learned will enhance our counseling with internally displaced persons. Pray for me as I get many requests for help, medical and financial, from many different people and need to prioritize my time and energy for the tasks God has given me.

The first week of February, my friend Libby, translator Luba, Pastor Lonya and I traveled from the Crisis Fund meetings in Kremenchug to Druzhkovka for a few days of refugee ministry, as I described in my last prayer letter. We spent the night with friends from Gospel Light Church in Balakleya, a town about 50 miles south of the city of Kharkov and 70 miles north of Druzhkovka. We got to see their recent renovations of the church auditorium and hear about their multifaceted ministry. Last Thursday night (March 23), the day I returned to Odessa from my most recent trip to Druzhkova, Ukraine's largest ammunition arsenal, located in Balakleya, exploded! More than 20,000 people were evacuated, over 200 buildings were severely damaged, nearly every window in the town was broken. Only one person was killed, as far as I know. Two rockets hit Gospel Light Church, though only one ignited, destroying the auditorium. By Saturday, the government allowed people to return after clearing all live ordinance. Despite the damage suffered, Pastor Aleksandr raised a team from his church to provide a hot lunch Saturday for 100 people! They invited everyone to a prayer meeting Sunday on their property and fed another 700. The entire city is without natural gas, which nearly everyone uses for cooking. Many are still without electricity and water. The church plans to continue the hot meals until gas is restored, and they will help people rebuild their lives even as they rebuild the church building. Our ABWE-Ukraine Crisis Fund responded immediately, sending a large gift for feeding people and rebuilding. Thank you to those who have given to the Crisis Fund to make such intervention possible! May God be glorified, and many people drawn to Jesus as Savior, as they deal with their emotional trauma following this unexpected disaster in the ongoing war in Ukraine. Pray for the church in Balakleya to truly be a Light of the Gospel.

Pray for regular village clinics, pregnancy care center, ongoing "Forgiven and Set Free" Bible studies, plans for evangelistic outreaches around Easter, and visitors coming to Odessa in next few months. Thank you for your prayers and support that make this ministry possible!

Holding fast to The Rock, Miriam Wheeler, MD