

Churches in Georgia Destroyed, Ministry Continues

Missionary Brian Wolf said there have been no casualties among the churches affiliated with his group since the fighting began.



[] Just 13 days after war broke out between Russia and its southern neighbor Georgia, missions organizations stationed in the area are reporting positive news—no fatalities.

The news contrasts greatly with numerous media outlets reporting thousands of civilians and soldiers killed as a result of the air raids and ground invasions that have marked this conflict.

James G. Graham, the president of International Gospel Outreach (IGO), said that of the 35 church plants his ministry is responsible for in Georgia, a handful of churches were destroyed but no missionaries or nationals working with the missions group were harmed.

“The real miracle that we are seeing is that as far as we can tell none of the believers have been killed or hurt,” said Graham, who only last week had been mistakenly told that a Georgian pastor affiliated with the group was killed.

As NATO and the European Union scramble to resolve the conflict between the

countries, missions groups are trying to help a nation and its people ravaged by war.

“Recently there have been rapes, murder, looting, armed robbery and massive vandalism in Gori and surrounding villages and people have lost everything,” said Brian Wolf, a missionary to the Republic of Georgia with IGO for the last five years. “We have a real opportunity here to win these people in any way that we can.”

Many American missionaries and visitors were evacuated from the country but the remaining missionaries such as Wolf and other nationals—many of whom were not able to leave the country—are bannin together to help the hardest-hit regions.

“The churches in the unaffected areas are gearing up to go in with food, water and tents or whatever they can get to take it to the affected areas,” Graham said. “They’re gearing up to do humanitarian aid.”

But Wolf, 34, has been praying that Americans will see the nation’s plight and help financially, noting that it would be a great witness to those living in this orthodox Christian nation surrounded mostly by Muslim nations.

IGO is collecting money from the U.S. to send to Georgia, as it is difficult to get containers of supplies into the region. Still other mission’s organizations are reaching evacuees.

The Assemblies of God (AG) news service reports that their missionaries were safely evacuated and that some are ministering in Russia to evacuees that fled Georgia's capital, South Ossetia.

"Please pray for a miracle for the people of Georgia," missionary Diane Dorlon told AG news. "I praise God for our safety and have cried for hours and days for our precious Georgians. The second we can go back, we will."

Ministries such as Mission Network News are helping people fleeing from the capital city for North Ossetia. "All of the ... churches in North Ossetia are sending people to visit the suffering and injured in the area hospitals," the missions group reported. "They are trying to help the refugees with food and clothing. And you can be sure that they are seizing every opportunity to share the gospel with them."

Wolf is asking that Christians pray for the war to cease and for the people of Georgia to find a real relationship with Christ amidst the suffering.

"Pray that the believers in Georgia and South Ossetia will be light bearers and hope bringers," he said in an e-mail. "Pray that they will act as healers and peacemakers bringing the peace and healing of Jesus. [Pray] that we will not only wail in despair but we will bear up in our hope and our love for Jesus Christ and the desperate people of Georgia will see that and come to know Jesus as Savior, God and friend." **-Felicia Mann**

