

Franklin Graham: Evangelical Churches Shining Amid Ukraine Crisis

You've seen the headlines about the mass protests in Ukraine, the political upheaval that followed and the turmoil still playing out. In the midst of it all, something has been occurring outside the headlines that you may not have heard about.

Evangelical churches represent just a small minority of Ukraine's population, but they have stepped out courageously during this period of national uncertainty, ministering to people affected by the unrest and openly sharing the hope found only in Jesus Christ. Churches have set up prayer tents and crisis counseling centers in busy public places, sent Christians into the streets day and night to talk and pray with anxious people, and distributed as many as 5,000 New Testaments a day. Across the nation they're finding hearts hungry for God's Word, and they are running out of Ukrainian New Testaments and Bibles to give away. They have asked us to help them get more copies, and we want to do that quickly. You can give to help meet this need and get God's Word into more hands.

We have been active alongside Ukraine's churches for years. Although atheism made broad gains during the decades that the country was dominated by communism, people of faith endured. Then in 1988, the year before the Iron Curtain began to collapse, churches in the capital city of Kiev boldly invited my father to come and preach the gospel. Enthusiastic crowds overflowed at each place he spoke.

Since then, we have partnered with Ukrainian Christians to hold nationwide conferences on evangelism, and the churches

are now sending missionaries to other nations. In 2007, many of you prayed for me when I was invited to lead a crusade in the Olympic stadium in Kiev. The meetings were transmitted live to 114 other sites across the country—tens of thousands heard the gospel. Our longtime associate evangelist, Viktor Hamm, who was born in Russia and serves today as BGEA's vice president for crusade ministry, has also led 16 large crusade events in the country.

Pray for Ukraine

When the protests were at their height a few weeks ago and the political crisis dramatically escalated, the nation's president fled the country, and Parliament turned to its speaker, an evangelical believer, to lead the country. Observers say Oleksandr Turchynov was chosen as interim president because, in a nation plagued by corruption and self-serving politicians, he stood out as a man of conviction and principle with a reputation for integrity. He is a man of godly character and a committed follower of Jesus Christ.

Recently I asked Viktor Hamm to fly to Kiev to meet with and encourage the evangelical believers. While he was there, he also met privately with the interim president, prayed with him and assured him that many others were praying. President Turchynov specifically requested that we pray for peace in his country. He has a daunting task, and he needs God's wisdom. During the time since he stepped into the nation's top leadership role, Russia sent troops into the Ukrainian province of Crimea and then annexed it. As I write, no one knows what is next for this country.

Before this crisis erupted, we had received invitations to preach the gospel in several Ukrainian cities, so pray for us now as we seek God's guidance on how best to support the churches and evangelism in Ukraine in coming months and years. We have accepted invitations for me to come in June and preach crusades in Tbilisi, Georgia, and Warsaw, Poland, both located

in the same part of the world as Ukraine. Pray for hearts to be open to receive the gospel message.

Read the original story at .