

On the Front Lines in Ukraine With Pastor Bill Wilson

With war waging in Ukraine, many ministries and humanitarian organizations are helping refugees flee Ukraine and to relocate them in neighboring countries. Dr. Bill Wilson, founder and senior pastor of the largest Sunday school in the world, Metro World Child (Metro) is among those who felt the tug of God to help provide humanitarian relief to those whose lives have been devastated by the deadly conflict with Russia.

Wilson flew from New York City last week and drove through Slovakia to Ukraine with a few team members with supplies to help children and refugees in dire need of compassion.

Pastor Bill, as most people know him, went to Ukraine without hesitation. At 73, Wilson has no fear venturing into a war zone because he knows God is always with him.

"The need is the call," Wilson says. "If you can see the need, that's God's call for you today. At this painful time in world history, the children certainly need our help. They need it urgently. Many orphans have been abandoned, [are] running out of food, water and medical supplies. As Christians, we need to take action to help and we need to take action right now!"

As he crossed the border to the city of Uzhhorod in western Ukraine, Wilson met with the director of The Nehemiah Project, Tetiana Machabeli. Soon the power of partnership was brought to bear to cause a difference. Metro World Child's theme for this year is "Nehemiahs for the Nations."

The two organizations have the same vision to rebuild the nation and are working together to bring needed supplies and the love of Christ to the children and women who left their homes with nothing but a suitcase in their hands. Women and children have been sent across the border on buses to be

relocated to other countries, not knowing where they will end up.

“It just breaks your heart.” Wilson says.

Wilson got a call from a Ukrainian pastor who heard him speak years ago and now runs an orphanage for crippled children 30 miles north of Mariupol. They had to stay in the basement without food, water and medicine. With the help of Metro World Child, they were able to evacuate 14 children safely and relocate them to Moldova. Unfortunately, three of those children died because they ran out of food before the rescue team arrived.

“This is not a game!” Wilson reiterates, tears on his face. “This is life and death, and it’s urgent! This is why I am determined to be on the ground seeing to the needs, hearing the stories, meeting the people and bringing the help.”

The team went on to another city, Ternopil, 80 miles east of the second-largest city of Lviv in Ukraine, to a church that now serves as a children and family refugee camp. Wilson got the last seat in a van going to Kyiv through his military connection. Because of the challenges in communication, he was not picked up as planned. Two days later, he saw on the news that an American journalist was killed by a Russian sniper at the checkpoint before the convoy rolled into Kyiv. Wilson was supposed to be in that convoy.

“I was shot by [a] Russian sniper in Syria several years ago when I was there to help the children. I know the danger and the reality in the situation like this,” Wilson says. “I’ve been wearing my bulletproof vest in Ukraine that saved my life in Syria. I am ready to do whatever it takes to save lives again.”

Still in Ukraine at this moment, Wilson urges Christians around the world to help now.

“Not everyone needs to come to Ukraine personally with supplies like us, but we need basic resources to continue to be sent to keep these children alive,” he says. “The babies don’t even have powdered milk and diapers. You know the urgency. I hope many of you will help now!”

If you would like to give through Metro World Child, go to {eoa}

Metro World Child is a global, faith-based humanitarian organization dedicated to serving children throughout New York City, various urban centers and rural communities around the world. Metro World Child was founded in 1980 in Brooklyn, New York, by Reverend Dr. Bill Wilson. His original passion when he moved to New York was to reach at-risk, inner-city children exposed to violence, crime, drugs, gangs, neglect and poverty. Now, 42 years later, Metro World Child is still headquartered in the heart of Brooklyn, reaching thousands of inner-city children and their families through fun and engaging Sunday School services, personal visitation and mentorship programs in the five boroughs of New York City.

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