

Churches in Eastern Europe Become Safe Haven, Beacon of Hope for Ukrainian Refugees

Destruction and uncertainty have been constant since the first explosions in Ukraine on Feb. 24. The media—secular and Christian—has posted daily coverage of heart-breaking scenes of the over 2.6 million people who have become refugees since then.

It is a harsh winter in eastern Europe. Talking with those on the ground, ICM, the global church developer, continues to receive updates from Paul Hagelgans, field director for Bible Mission Global, a ministry partner with ICM, regarding the ongoing needs of the Ukraine people. He says:

“I am here in Ukraine and I am seeing many trucks coming in with tons of food and clothing. Churches from Germany, Russia, Moldova and Romania are all open for refugees and offering not only food, blankets and warm clothes but also the Word of God, the message of hope.”

Trucks are still coming into the southern border of Ukraine, loaded with necessities, but the peril of delivering these supplies in a war zone is still very real.

“We are thankful for the help provided so far.” Hagelgans says. Yet, there is still much uncertainty in the region.

Keith Townsend, ICM’s Director for Russia and former Soviet republics, says: “Our current schedule is to send five trucks every week; two in from Germany, two in through Romania and one into Moldova. They have two warehouses in western Ukraine, one in Southern Ukraine and one in Moldova to receive the truck shipments. The local churches and Hope Centers are sending their smaller trucks to pick up supplies for their

specific locations. We are sending supplies as far as Kiev and the Donbas region.”

These churches in Ukraine, along with many built by ICM in the surrounding countries, are making tremendous sacrifices by opening their churches’ doors and homes for refugees and giving generously of their resources.

“Since this crisis began, local churches have come together to help with a church camp that ICM helped build in Moldova that is now overflowing with refugees,” Hagelgans says. “We are thankful for how quickly the churches and Hope Centers were organized to provide much-needed help.” Still, the need is great.

The church in the West can help by praying daily for the brothers and sisters in Ukraine. As they face food and clothing shortages, not just in Ukraine but in these other countries, the church in the West can donate to help provide the needed food. Currently the cost for a 40-ton truck is \$30,000. Donations are coming in from people all over the world., but more trucks with humanitarian aid are still needed.

Prayer Guide for Ukraine

CEO and President Janice Allen Rosser of ICM prays, *“Our hearts are heavy as we hear the news of the tragedies. We fall on our knees and ask, ‘What is happening?’ It is hard to make sense. You, God, are sovereign, and You are in control. We see through a glass dimly. You use all things to bring glory to Yourself. Open our hearts and minds to hear what we need to hear from You to know how to pray and to support.”*

Request from Hagelgans, field director for Bible Mission Europe:

– Pray that God will continue to use the church to bring the message of hope in the hopeless time.

- Pray that the Gospel will be received.
- God calls us to be peacemakers. Pray for peace. Guide all the political leaders to find a way to make an agreement.
- Pray God will provide the resources.
- Please pray for safety.
- Pray that God will protect all the resources and those who risk their lives delivering them.
- Pray for the Russian army who are conscripted and drafted. There are believers who don't get to be conscientious objectors, who don't want to be there. There are Ukrainian believers who don't want to kill Russians. This is difficult; please pray for them.

Townsend adds this prayer: *"Father God, we do not know where to look, but our eyes are on You. Your words shine on this time of darkness of evil in the world. Your people are standing during deprivation and terror. We do not understand in the midst of the evil how and why, but we trust you to overcome, and Your will be done. Many will come to faith in Jesus for eternity. Lord, strengthen Your people. May the things that are planned for evil be used for good even for millions of people in a skeptical and watching world."* {eoa}

For three decades, **ICM** has partnered with ministries in developing countries to build churches and Hope Centers, train pastors and disciple believers. This pioneering organization empowers local churches to be the catalyst for community transformation. ICM also provides Bible study materials that equip pastors and nurture, sustain and help new believers grow in their faith. Since the ministry started, over 44,000 churches have been planted and built in 100 nations. The Bible teaching in 59 languages (and growing) is available in a variety of delivery formats. It equips local pastors and lay leaders to share the Word of God in a simple and heartfelt

way. Almost 2 million believers have been trained using this Bible teaching

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