

Dave Donaldson: Where Evil Abounds in Ukraine, the Church Is the Best Remedy

Standing outside the train station right at the border of Poland and Ukraine, our leadership team decided to gather for prayer.

As we united to pray, I heard a panicked scream so loud that it emanated through the stream of Ukrainian refugees rushing past us. Quickly slipping through the stampede, I discovered a woman crying out in desperation—an anguish I have rarely witnessed in my travels to disaster areas and impoverished regions around the globe.

Fearing our interpreter's response, I asked him, "What is she saying?"

His choked-up reply should break even the most calloused of hearts: "She is saying, 'Where's my child? Where's my daughter?'" He explained, "While there is so much good happening here, there is also much darkness that this war has unleashed. Human traffickers are everywhere on the Ukrainian borders stealing young women." For young women, this train station has become a haunted house. In just the week we were there we learned that the police arrested 50 suspected traffickers.

I witnessed the Polish police respond to the screaming mother's pleas for help. However, their body language was loud and clear—any attempt to find her daughter would be futile.

As I write this, my keypad is splattered with teardrops ... I clearly remember the terror on that mother's face. The only way to describe my emotions in that moment is a cauldron of anger and a sense of helplessness.

Prior to writing this story, I questioned whether I should share what I witnessed, and wondered, “What good will it do if it will only make people sad and fearful of experiencing the same fate as this mother?”

Yet this story underscores, in the most graphic way, the importance of supporting local churches along the Ukrainian border.

It is imperative to realize that at this moment when most Ukrainians are fleeing for their lives, the local church may be their only safe place from the horrors of war and evil predators. One young woman shared with us that evildoers are using social media to lure Ukrainians into their homes in order to “murder us and sell our body parts.” No one should have this kind of fear while fleeing for their lives, with the hope to survive.

Churches around the world have already faithfully answered the call to help those in harm’s way. Thankfully, many realize that the church is one of the most generous, efficient and compassionate responders when an emergency occurs anywhere around the world.

If you haven’t already, please consider partnering with your local church to get help to Ukraine quickly. At CityServe International, we’re doing just that. We’re connecting local churches in the U.S. with local churches in Ukraine, Poland and Romania to expand their capacity to rescue and care for Ukrainian refugees by providing them with the funds and much-needed supplies to keep refugees safe. It’s the church helping the church. And it’s working.

The war drags on, and that can cause us to grow numb to this news cycle. But please don’t. We can’t accept this as the new normal. We can make a Ukrainian’s life better, one generous gift at a time. {eoa}

Dave Donaldson *is the co-founder and chairman of CityServe*

International, an organization that exists to train, equip and mobilize the local church to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ in its community through compassion.