

Despite Mortal Danger, YWAM Missionaries Remain True to Calling in Ukraine

When the war started and Russian bombs began falling on Kyiv, Ukraine, missionaries Marie and Japhin John had to decide whether to leave the capital.

“We had our bags packed because, it’s just like you are in rush, and there’s a new situation; all of a sudden, you wake up in the morning, you hear the sound of bombs, so you’re in a rush, and you’re like ‘Wow! What is happening here?’” Marie said.

“It was not an easy decision until we prayed. But once we prayed, it was a very easy decision,” Japhin added.

Japhin is from India. His wife, Marie, is German. Both are missionaries to Ukraine with the nonprofit Youth With a Mission.

“Growing up in India, and also doing ministry in India, this was not my first time being in a dangerous situation, in fact, this is the third time,” Japhin said.

They decided to stay because of a commitment to serve the Ukrainian people, despite the very real danger to their lives.

“We are also, like the commitment in marriage, saying, ‘in good and in bad times,’ we are not only here trying to make an impact when times are favorable. And when everyone is leaving, this is the time when we actually need to stay,” Marie told CBN News.

The heart of Kyiv is now a fortress of concrete slabs, sandbags and metal structures aimed at stopping Russian tanks. Today half the city has already evacuated. The staff of YWAM

Kyiv is focused on ministering to those who are still in the city.

Thirty minutes south, Japhin and Marie sprang into action, turning the sprawling YWAM campus into a humanitarian aid hub.

A ministry worker named Natalia and her two sons work in the kitchen making meals for folks in the neighborhood.

“It depends on the day, sometimes there are days when we cook for a thousand people, sometimes 500 or 600,” Natalia said.

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