

Polish Pentecostal Leader Reports Miracles of Provision as Believers Minister to Ukrainian Refugees

Images of executed civilians, mass graves and bombed-out hospitals have dominated the news since Vladimir Putin launched his war against Ukraine. However, another story line is emerging from this war, a story of what God is doing through His people as they extend the mercy and compassion of Christ to the refugees.

Some of the most powerful testimonies of divine provision are unfolding in Poland as Pentecostal believers minister to millions of refugees fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine, according to Polish Pentecostal leader Marek Kaminski.

While Poland is a nation of about 38 million people, Polish Evangelicals number less than 60,000. There are fewer than 600 Protestant churches in the country, most of them small and with limited financial resources. The Pentecostal Church of Poland is the largest of these groups, with about 275 churches.

Despite their limited numbers, these believers have provided food, clothes, housing and transportation to thousands of refugees, and none have been turned away.

“When the war started, we immediately started getting requests from the people in Ukraine who wanted to get to Poland because their houses were being bombed,” Kaminski reported.

“It seemed everyone rushed to the border because people were escaping and because the Polish government allowed anyone to enter if they could show a passport and their picture.”

As the refugees began pouring into Poland in the first days of the war, no ministries or non-organizations had arrived on the border. No government agencies were in place.

“We in the churches rushed to the border to help Ukrainians find shelter. We turned our church sanctuaries into dormitories,” Kaminski goes on to state.

“They came to us weak, dehydrated and hungry. They needed immediate help.

“They needed transportation to get to our churches close to the border where they could find food, shelter, clothing and toiletries,” Kaminski reports.

“We drove in our little cars to the cities and villages on the border and filled them with families, most of them mothers with children.

“Many would come for a brief time, then go somewhere else, either in Poland, Germany or another country.”

“We spent a lot of money on fuel and food. We did not have mattresses, sheets, washers and dryers,” Kaminski stated.

Marek Kaminski does not look like a hero. He does not stand out in a crowd. At another place and another time, this soft-spoken, slightly built man of average height may have been a college professor. His doctoral dissertation examined the history of the Pentecostal movement in Poland. But Kaminski's appearance belies his passionate faith in God's ability to provide for His people. It is easier to see him at a blackboard than coordinating the humanitarian response of thousands of Pentecostal believers.

But when Marek Kaminski speaks, he exudes a quiet confidence and gentle determination to care for every person who crosses the border.

“We did not ask what it would cost or call a committee

meeting. There was no time. We gave what we had.”

That’s when the miracles of provision started.

“We had to build showers, kitchens. We didn’t have tools at all, just good hearts. When we started, we did not start with the abundance of resources. We started with the lack of resources, no money.

“We never had lack. We never turned anyone away. We always had food,” Kaminski testified.

Not only did they have no lack, but the volume of contributions from inside Poland and abroad have required the rental of a large warehouse to store food and clothing.

“Initially, there wasn’t much help from the West. We couldn’t wait. We had to start.”

Because of Vladimir Putin’s energy policies, the price of gas went up 53% in a matter of weeks. The price increase would have posed a serious hardship to Poland’s small Pentecostal churches in normal times; but with the massive influx of refugees, the pastors now had to heat churches 24/7.

“We had no money. But no one said, ‘We have no money.’ Every pastor said, ‘We have to provide the housing.’

“Of course, the Lord provided,” Kaminski said with a slight smile.

“How it happened, I have no clue.”

“It was a big thing for our churches to buy old vans. The Ukrainians needed to evacuate people from the war zone. We bought old vans and gave them to Ukrainian believers who drove them back into the country. Many lives were saved,” Kaminski remembers.

Slowly, the money came – first from inside Poland, then, as

God's people gave out of their need, funds came from other sources. "We started getting help from America. No help from the government. From all means. Local churches. It was vast."

Local churches received help from restaurants. "It is not just the case of believers helping. It is the whole country," Kaminski noted.

As the tide of war shifted and the Ukrainian army drove the Russians back from Kyiv, "We switched to sending food and medical supplies to Ukraine," Kaminski said.

The churches also changed their approach to helping the refugees in Poland. "We are now aiming at long-term help. We are no longer putting families in big rooms. They needed single rooms where they have some privacy."

The response of Poland's Pentecostal believers is the story of ordinary people doing extraordinary things, of what happens when God's people dare to believe Him for the impossible. It is a story as old as the Scriptures, as vivid as the little boy with the loaves and fishes and as contemporary as today's news. {eoa}

Gary Kellner is the founder and former executive director of the International Center for Christian Leadership, the first graduate school of leadership studies in the former Soviet Union. He served as the president of Save Ukraine Now, an interdenominational organization supporting the Ukrainian people through advocacy and by providing humanitarian aid during the Russian invasion in 2014.

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