

Ukrainian Pastor Proclaims, 'Our Weapon is Love'

Read Time: 3 Minutes 22 Seconds

Recently while flipping through the news, I came across an article written by a psychologist who suggested that Ukrainians have aged 10 years in the last six months. Lack of sleep, sheer terror and deep personal loss have had a profound physical effect on the people of Ukraine since the war began in February.

Our war-torn country has endured more than six months of escalating devastation and displacement. Whether we've aged or not, I don't know, but it's a fact that we're different. War changes a person's philosophy on life, their perspective and attitude toward many things.

There's a reevaluation of what's important and who is trustworthy. Amid the hotbed of war, you realize there are no insurance guarantees, treaties, memorandums, negotiations or signatures of those in power that can protect you.

How will we reflect on and respond to the events taking place in Ukraine? It's tempting to hit the pause button on life and wait helplessly for the war to end. We could allow ourselves to become consumed with hatred, aggression or despair. Or we can ask the Lord to use us to advance His kingdom.

Our Weapon is Love

As the heart wrenching stories from Ukraine continue to be in the news, be encouraged: God is alive and actively working here. There's an army of followers of Jesus Christ that are not pressing the pause button by waiting on the sidelines for the war to end, nor are they allowing anger or hatred to consume them. Rather, they recognize that this is not just a

war between two countries. It's a war between good and evil, a war between light and darkness. Our spiritual weapon is love, which is impossible to defeat. With the love of Christ, evil has no chance.

In every person, there's a part of the divine and a part of the flesh. We were created in the image of God, yet we're human. Which will we allow to take the lead during the significant trials of life? Who will prevail, our flesh or our spirit? God's Word shows us the way. Romans 12:21 instructs, "Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." The Lord also reminds us in Galatians 6:10, "As long as there is time, therefore, let us do good to all, but especially to our own by faith."

At my church in Kyiv, we continue to see how applying these biblical principles allows God to reach the people of Ukraine. Four months ago, as the war continued to intensify, we began to visit a group of 30 refugees who had lost their homes in the Donetsk region. We brought them food and other practical needs, and most importantly, we brought them the hope-filled gospel message. Over the course of four months, we continued to visit and supply needed humanitarian items, while always encouraging them to place their hope and faith in the Lord.

Recently, three of the refugees said they wanted to become Christ followers. Just a few days later, we went to a nearby lake and witnessed each of these new believers joyfully enter the water to die to sin and be born unto God, publicly proclaiming they have chosen to join the body of Christ.

That same day, the church invited residents of our apartment complex to a prayer meeting, and many elderly and displaced people attended. Our fellowship began with a short Bible lesson and followed with prayer. After addressing their spiritual needs, we were able to bless them with much-needed gift cards for the supermarket.

Through the support of our friends at EEM (Eastern European Mission), an organization that has been delivering God's Word to the people of Eastern Europe for more than 60 years, they've been able to give hundreds of thousands of Bibles to people in Ukraine free of charge. This spiritual sword is an essential tool these new believers need as they strive to develop and grow their faith.

The gospel is spreading, and those without hope are finding the eternal hope that comes from knowing Jesus Christ. It is this peace that passes all understanding that we need to sustain us as we persevere through the physical and psychological ravages of war. {eoa}

Bring *Charisma* magazine home with a subscription today!

Oleksandr (Sasha) Prokopchuk is a preacher, missionary and evangelist with the Church of Christ in Kyiv, Ukraine, as well as editor-in-chief of the Christian magazine "Inspiration." He hosts a weekly nationwide television program about topics from the Bible and offers free Bibles and biblical material from EEM for distribution to people who respond to his broadcast. He and his wife Victoria have three children and have remained in Kyiv to serve those in need during this conflict.