

JOHN & CATHY O'BRIEN
UKRAINE UPDATE 2022

Disclaimer: This prayer letter update has been greatly hindered due to circumstances beyond our physical control.

- 1) There is a full-scale war here in Ukraine, centered in the east where our ministry is, for over 190 days.
- 2) Due to the intense shelling of Kharkov, we were forced to evacuate leaving everything behind for safety in western Ukraine where Cathy stays safely in a rented apartment.
- 3) Our computer is at the church in Kharkov, presently barricaded with 2 tons of sand bags in preparation for the 2nd invasion attempt by Russia to capture our city.
- 4) Our laptop is broken, leaving us with only our phones to travel.
- 5) John's travels and work in the east as chaplain on various bases keeps him offline most of the time.
- 6) Therefore we strongly recommend all those wishing to keep in direct contact with us, please download the free phone app Viber where we have a secure private group for Ukraine Updates. Please download it and add us as a contact: +380638536323

In our secure Viber thread you'll receive daily updates & pictures of our ongoing ministries in the midst of war.

We thank you for your continued support, fervent prayers and patient, compassionate understanding.

SUMMER 2022

The war continues to rage in the east. Kharkov is bombed no less than 50 rockets daily by Russia, plus the hundreds of Grad rockets lobbed randomly at our city. The civilian death toll is catastrophic as is the infrastructure damage. The battle front is over 1200km, the single largest front since WWII, with more conventional bombs & artillery being used than any war since WWII. Yet by God's mercy, our city stands along with our church. We evacuated all of our church family to west/central Ukraine to a rented hostel, with the exception of 4 members, 2 deaf who refuse to leave. The monthly expense burden for their room/board is being covered by our ministry expenses, as our church family are refugees with zero income.

Initially our church basement became a huge bomb shelter where we housed nearly 40 women and children 24hrs/day. The strain on providing food and hygiene products for this number of people while there was an active war dropping missiles all around was an overwhelming challenge. Glory be to God that we saw refugees in our basement saved and we even baptized a group of them in June. Those early days of February/March were nightmarish as air raid sirens wailed constantly and the building shook from nearby incoming artillery or rockets or cruise missiles. April the armed forces were able to push Russia back away from our city slightly, which enabled us by May 1st have most refugees evacuated and relocated either in far western Ukraine or in Europe, leaving about a dozen souls living fulltime at the church.

Cathy continues to translate for all our services online for our deaf. Almost all of our deaf have relocated to Europe, mainly in France. We have 2 deaf families remaining in Ukraine, one of which is still in Kharkov. Cathy remains tremendously safe in the far western Ukrainian city of L'Vov near the Polish

border. We thank God for a safe, quiet apartment to rent there for her where she daily walks 10-15min to the various kiosks and small stores, passing out tracts with our church online information. She helps transport humanitarian supplies when needed and continues a daily ministry to our church ladies.

Both John and John-Steven have become official chaplains, John with the Ukrainian Armed Services and Steven with the National Police. Little did we know, but in God's foreknowledge, how invaluable this would be for our ministries. Firstly, even under strict martial law, we are allowed to travel unhindered, enabling us to deliver food, humanitarian supplies and Gospel literature as needed. Secondly, the massive fuel shortage due to Russia having bombed all fuel depots and refineries driving gas/diesel prices to \$8/gallon, we still have access to fuel because of John's chaplain credentials. Thirdly, John now carries food/medical supplies to various bases outside of Kharkov, giving him access to untold hundreds of soldiers which he would never have access to as a regular missionary. To date, we have distributed over 2,000 NT with our church contact info, and over 5,000 tracts with our church info to soldiers and medical staff who are engaged in live fire battles around our city Kharkov.

John continues to daily gather food supplies and medicines, package them up with Gospel literature and deliver them to various bomb shelters, but mainly to invalids and shut-ins who are physically unable to go out and find a store that's not been bombed or closed down and get food. We've reached literally hundreds upon hundreds of souls with food supplies and gospel literature.

The subway closest to our church has nearly 300 refugees hiding in its dark damp tunnels. There are a few dozen parentless children there as well, giving us opportunities to give out children's bibles and John/Romans all with our church info, as well as cases of toilet paper and hygiene products to the hundreds of moms sheltering there as well.

This war is not ending soon. Many thousands more souls will perish. Innumerable homes destroyed and lives forever changed. Our city has shrunk from 2+ million to barely 700k and the govt presently is trying to evacuate an additional 350k. We don't know the future, but we will continue to share and show the Gospel till we're forced to evacuate further. This coming winter will be a humanitarian crisis of biblical proportion, with food shortages and abject poverty unseen since the 1930s. Therefore we ask all of our supporting churches and friends to please consider sending special offerings to further enable us in our ministries to the souls of our people.

All our support needs to go to:

All Points Baptist Mission

PO Box 977

New Philadelphia, OH 44663

Please clearly designate: JOHN OBRIEN UKRAINE

They have another O'Brien (not related, in Canada), and they also handle support for our daughter Brittaini's family who are safe in far western Ukraine.

Here are specific needs which your church, men's group or Sunday School might want to sponsor:

1) IFAK and tourniquets. We need non-chinese made CAT tourniquets and quality IFAK pouches. We provide these amongst combat medics with whom John ministers to. No limit. IFAK bags need to be

small but good quality. They need to include: Israeli compression bandages. We want to continue to do all we can to help save the lives of the brave men & women protecting our city.

2) Gospel food bags: for \$10 each, you can sponsor a bag full of staple food with Gospel literature. We'd love to get a picture of your Sunday school class or group holding up a sign "50" for example, because you raised up \$500 for these bags to provide for 50 shut-ins .

3) Rent/Living expenses. Having to rent 2 separate apartments, burn thru \$8/gallon fuel and now house/feed our church family is really burdening our finances. Would you like to sponsor a month for our church folks housing/food? A one-time designated gift of \$400 will do just that. Designate "church housing" and we will use it immediately for our precious saints.

