

How are you, brothers and sisters?

Probably the most discussed event in the world right now is the undeclared war by Russia on the Ukrainian people. For a long time, we didn't believe that something like that can happen in the 21st century but it looks like the Russian Federation is beginning the WWII and threatening the whole world with its nuclear weapons.

On the 24th of February at 4 in the morning the Russian missiles were being fired on multiple military facilities in Ukraine. The Russian Army tried to intimidate us and quickly crossed the border of our country. The first days they were able to rapidly invade deeply into our territory but with each passing day their offensive is slowing down. The entire Ukrainian nation, as one, stood up to defend its homeland. The President, the parliament, the army, volunteers, medics and civilians began to do everything in their power to retain and preserve our country and our nation. In the first phase of the invasion, the Russian military were hitting the strategic objects. However, soon they got frustrated and started to heavily pound the peaceful cities and kill the civilians. It is nothing short of genocide of the civilian population. This is how Satan is raging in full fierce force against the people of Ukraine. As far as the churches of Christ, Ukraine had the strongest presence in Europe. We know that everything is in God's power but the consequence of sins cost thousands of lives.

My brothers in Christ and I started aiding in evacuation of the people from our city of Bila Tserkva. First of all, I am concerned about the safety of my own family and that of the students of the Bear Valley Bible Institute. Then we started to move the members of our congregation and our friends to safer regions of our country. I moved my family to Germany. This is the first time ever we had to say goodbyes for an indefinite time period. Of course, we struggling so much being apart but I feel better knowing that they are safe. The students of the Bible Institute are currently in the city of Chernivtsi. This city has a wonderful congregation of the Church of Christ and this region has not had any airstrikes yet. Currently, it's the western part of Ukraine; close to Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. Presently, we are evacuating children and women. It's a very trying time in the lives of each family; for us liberty and freedom have great significance. No one wants to go back to the realities of the Soviet Union; we want to be able to freely worship and serve our God.

As you understand, there's a lot of panic and multiple traffic jams on the highways. Because of the bottlenecks on the roads what would have taken people merely an hour before the war now takes days to cover, the same distance. The gasoline and food prices have grown considerably. Please, don't be surprised if people from Ukraine would ask you for help with evacuation and/or financial aid. One trip



from Kiev to Lviv can cost a few hundreds of dollars. And then we'd have to come back and pick up the next group of evacuees.

We are attempting to stay in touch with all the Christians in Ukraine, share information about how to safely leave towns and who needs help with food. Most of the Christians who have left devastated cities and villages are safe and more or less secure. Some are unwilling to leave their homes, hoping that the war would end soon.

I don't know when this bloodshed will come to an end. I feel sorry for the soldiers and, especially, their mothers from both sides. We ask you to pray for peace in Ukraine, and God's protection for all of us.

Many thanks to all brothers and sisters in Christ as well as the congregations for their financial and spiritual support of the Ukrainian Christians. This war brought a lot of sorrow on the land of Ukraine. Literally, some people live in hunger, millions lost their jobs, thousands lost their houses. And this is the aftermaths of only two weeks of open warfare. We are looking forward to peace and we are thankful for the love you have shown to us.

Your brother in Christ, Dennis Sopelnik.

