

Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine and beyond

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second... You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

Mark 12:30-31

September 28, 2019

Dear Prayer Partners:

Greetings from Harrisburg PA! Can you believe 3 months have zoomed by since my last prayer letter to you? The Lord has carried me through this painful transition of leaving Ukraine and beginning a new ministry focus of caring for all of ABWE's missionaries around the world. I have been involved in lots of ABWE IHQ meetings, as the mission seeks to create more pathways for believers of all ages, from all walks of life, to serve the King of Kings in dark places desperate for His light and hope. **God could use YOU to fulfill His Great Commission!** Check it out at abwe.org. Drop me an email.

This morning the Lord gripped my heart with the passage above—am I really loving the Lord with every facet of my being? How am I showing His love to my neighbors? Not just the people next door, but others in need who cross my path. Pray that I might be a **shining light of Jesus** right here in Pennsylvania! I had a great opportunity to share with the lady who cut my hair a few weeks ago, a lady in pain and in great need of Jesus' hope.

It was wonderful to visit with supporters and family in Greenville SC a couple of weeks ago. I was challenged by the Medical Missions Leadership Summit in Charlotte NC to care for the emotional needs of our missionaries as well as the physical and spiritual. Another way to fulfill Jesus' great commandments! I am creating an **interface between my ABWE Missionary Healthcare Department and our Member Care department** for that exact purpose. Missionaries around the world face incredible stress and need loving support to help them draw their strength from God's inexhaustible supply.

I met recently with my colleagues in Ukraine by Skype —Holly Friesen and Ira Lupanova, to catch up on the ministry of "Choose Life!". It was wonderful to hear about their work, to pray with them, and to engage with them in planning and decision making. **I am still very much a missionary to Ukraine!** Holly reports one of the fastest growing ministries at the Women's Center (our crisis pregnancy center) is our **prenatal classes**. The teacher Regina is an American who grew up as an MK in Odessa, went to medical school there focusing on obstetrics, and married a Ukrainian evangelist. She is active in both our pro-life and village clinic ministries. She does weekly classes with pregnant women for 5 weeks, then encourages them to get involved in our moms' club after they deliver their baby. The majority of those coming to these classes are **not believers**. Holly and I discussed ways to turn this into an evangelistic outreach. **Pray for Holly and Regina as they seek to pour Jesus' love into the lives of these women and their families.** Holly requested prayer for wisdom for Women's Center Director Luba Abramova as they decide about **further advertising for the Center to draw in more abortion-minded clients**. Our Center has a great location near a huge market between two major roads. Our new counselors need more experience in dealing with clients who are in crisis—pregnant and contemplating abortion. Four women have received Christ as Savior since the opening of the Center 2014; pray for their spiritual growth. Several are studying "The Story of Hope" now with their counselors; **pray for their salvation**. Holly requests prayer for God to give us a **Ukrainian leader of the abstinence ministry** Holly is developing for church youth groups and public schools.

Ira is the director of our small group Bible studies with post-abortion women: **"Forgiven and Set Free"** (FSF). She is excited that we now have the **equivalent Bible study of FSF for men** translated into Russian: "Healing a Father's Heart". **Pray that God will call a Ukrainian brother to invest in this ministry.** Men also experience great emotional and spiritual pain after the abortion of their children and need Jesus' healing of their own pain and of their relationship with their wives and living children. Ira has stayed in touch with the ladies from **eastern Ukraine** who came to our FSF course last year. They want to start the FSF ministry there and need training and help. Please pray for God to make this possible. Ira and Holly trained 4 ladies in May to lead FSF small groups. They are **apprentices this fall in FSF groups** with our experienced leaders. About 130 women have gone through FSF in Odessa, since we began in 2011! Five of them were saved through the Bible study.

One of the new FSF apprentices has a miraculous testimony of God's grace in her life. As a young woman from a non-Christian family, Tanya married an abusive **drug addict** who often beat her. **She delivered one child from this marriage but aborted all the others** as she too became a drug addict. She was homeless for several years, living like a bum on the streets. She was involved with many men but did not respect them or herself. She married another man who committed suicide. **She counts at least 16 abortions** but doesn't really remember how many she had. When she reached the end of herself, she somehow ended up at a **rehab center, where God miraculously saved her 20 years ago!** As a new believer, it was still very hard to trust any man, even pastors and deacons. She married a man from the rehab center, but he later went back into drugs. She lives alone now. God led her to a church in Odessa, where she began growing spiritually. She got involved in a **prison ministry** through that church. She heard about our Women's Center and went to volunteers' training in January of this year. It is required of any Choose Life volunteer who has had an abortion to go through FSF. **She went through the FSF course this spring, and wept through the closing service,** amazed by the preaching of Pastor Lonya that a man could understand these women's pain. She immediately wanted to become an FSF leader and attended the training in May! **Now she is an apprentice to an FSF group leader.** Pray for Tanya, as she continues to work through her own pain and to help other women. She wants to **do the FSF Bible Study with women in the prison** where she serves!

What a blessing to see Choose Life flourishing under the leadership of Holly, Luba, Ira and our new chairman of the Board of Directors—Pastor Igor Kucher. *If you would like to receive the Choose Life newsletters, email Holly at esperanza@abwe.cc.* Holly continues to lead our **village clinic ministry**, going to 6 villages every month. We just started the clinic in Zarya in January, and she is seeing great spiritual interest there already and patients attending the Sunday services led by Pastor Roma. May God continue to draw patients to Himself at the clinics in Zarya, Shurino, Limaniy, Krasnosyolka, Sahanskoye, and Kubanka. **Pray for Pastor Lonya**, our primary Ukrainian partner in the village clinic ministry, as he and Holly make decisions about ministry direction and trips to refugee centers in eastern Ukraine.

Holly is organizing a **medical team in September 2020**, anchored by ophthalmologist Dr. James Oakman who has served with us many times. They are planning one week in Odessa and a week in eastern Ukraine. They need another **primary care provider** and a nurse to assist Dr. Oakman. **Please write Holly if you could serve** these hurting people in Ukraine.

Holly and I discussed the best time for me to come help her in Ukraine next year. I would like to go for 2 months, but may have to divide that into 2 trips, possibly August and December. I have to work around my schedule at ABWE IHQ and medical missions conferences I need to attend. **I cannot wait to return to serve the dear Ukrainian people** whom I love so much! Pray for the schedule and finances for this ministry.

Thank you for your faithfulness in your prayer and financial support! Remember that a large portion of my monthly support goes to the village clinic ministry in Ukraine. **Your giving still enables God's work in Ukraine** as well as my ministry with ABWE missionaries globally. This is a great way to "love your neighbor".

Rejoicing to be God's ambassador to Ukraine and beyond!

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