

Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine and beyond

*Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food,
supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,
while you are enriched in everything for all liberality,
which causes thanksgiving through us to God...
Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*

2 Corinthians 9:10-15

December 23, 2019

Dear Prayer Partners:

Greetings from ABWE IHQ in Harrisburg PA! I am combining **Thanksgiving and Christmas** themes in this letter. What an easy task as I thank God for your prayer support and for His wonderful gift of His Son to provide our salvation. Your ongoing care for me is such a blessing. Many of you provide financial support which keeps my ministry going both in the US and in Ukraine.

God has given me wonderful opportunities to speak in several supporting churches the past few months. It is difficult to find time for this travel with my new position. I look forward next year to seeing many more of you as I continue visiting supporting churches. A huge challenge for us a few weeks ago was the emergency medical evacuation of a missionary from Cambodia to Bangkok, whom God took home to Heaven. I spent many hours on phone, email, instant messengers, trying to help him. We trust our Sovereign God to fulfill His purpose. I have also helped missionaries in Europe, Africa, and Asia work through medical issues. My greatest joy is providing this kind of support globally!

What a joy to share with you a great answer to prayer in Ukraine—"seed you have sown...which causes thanksgiving through us to God". My friend Alyona wrote me a few weeks ago that her mother accepted Christ as her Savior! It has taken years for her mother to come to faith. Her mom compelled Alyona to have an abortion at age 18 during Soviet control of Ukraine. They had no concept of Christianity at that time, other than the Russian Orthodox Church. The pregnancy was advanced requiring a surgical abortion, with complications forcing a hysterectomy. Alyona could not accept the fact that she killed the only child she could ever have. She tried to commit suicide twice and still has the thick ropy scars on her wrists. She began drinking to dull her pain, leading to alcoholism. God miraculously led her to a Christian rehab center in Odessa in the mid-90's! There she found out that Jesus Christ is truly God, salvation is grace conquering all sin, and faith can vanquish addiction. She was gloriously saved, freed from alcoholism, and married a man she met at the rehab center. They moved to Krasnosyolka with Alyona's mom and came to our church several years after I started the clinic there. Oleg was outgoing, while Alyona was shy, sweet but rarely smiling. In 2011, I spoke at a women's conference in Odessa and invited ladies who had had abortions to participate in our first post-abortion Bible study, "Forgiven and Set Free". Alyona came running to beg me to sign her up for that Bible study. That was the first I knew of her abortion history. Carolyn Rice came in December 2011 to lead our first FSF group. Alyona poured her heart into that Bible study, learning the fullness of God's forgiveness for her abortion, how to deal with her grief and anger and how to restore her relationship with her mom. She attended the training for FSF small group leaders, then started working with me in leading a small group spring of 2012. At that time, her husband Oleg's health started failing from chronic hepatitis and cancer, resulting from his days of addiction. He died in June 2012, just a few weeks into the FSF course. Alyona showed God's peace and strength through it all. She later said that the principles she learned through FSF helped her deal with her husband's death. For the past few years, I have watched Alyona blossom from ignoring children after her abortion to teaching Sunday School! We have been praying for her mom's salvation all these years. I have shared the gospel with her often during clinic. What a joy to see God's love transform her!

Thank you for praying for our Ukrainian patients and rejoicing in God's work there!

Merry Christmas with thanksgiving!

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