

July 2025 Ukraine, UK

UKRAINE

We made a brief but very intense visit to Ukraine, which, as mentioned in last week's message, is under the most intense bombardment since the war started. People in many cities have been sleeping in shelters or unable to sleep at night due to the swarms of drones attacking all Ukrainian cities every night. There has been a very sharp uptick in the attacks with much destruction. The stress level is heightened because the anti aircraft fire is going up from all around you, some of it just small arms fire from machine guns. You have the impression you are in the middle of a battlefield even though there are no enemy soldiers on the ground. And then there's the constant drama of falling debris from the missiles fired from both sides, along with the wailing of sirens all the time. And this has been going on night after night. So many traumatised people and kids who will develop PTSD. No Ukrainian city is free from this now not even in western Ukraine. We were in a particularly bad air raid this time, with men on the roof of the building next to the hotel firing all they had at the incoming drones. We recorded some of it at about 3 AM and sent it to our WhatsApp group [let us know if you'd like to join it] and there was instant prayer. After that a drone came heading right at us but shot down by the guys on the roof next door, although at low altitude- it exploded in mid air. All projectiles sound like they're going to land on you as they come down but this one would for sure have hit either the hotel or buildings next to it. So thank you for your prayers. But that night some missiles did hit with many killed and wounded in their beds. Here was the view in the morning of a block nearby:



Against this background our objective was to give major material assistance to our sister and her family bombed out from their home in the northern border region. Their house had its roof blown off but it's been partly repaired. I and they are living in a quieter area in western Ukraine. The old lady's house next door was destroyed and she's living in their home. We also discussed with the family the possibility of evacuating them to the UK. A huge decision for people who've never travelled much and have elderly relatives who will never leave Ukraine. We succeeded in giving financial and other assistance thanks to your generosity.

Then there are the military service issues. Brother N is in prison on a hard regime, poor food, little soap, and he has been allowed to have his own kettle and now an electric ring to cook any food we can give him. We provided these things and set up for them to be continue to be provided and can only ask for your prayers for all those in these situations. There is a real fear of the "TCK", the unit who go around arresting random men and demanding their ID documents to check against the data base of who has been called up but not showed up for army service.

Here's some graffiti wishing "Death to the TCK":



There are many stories of those arrested and refusing to do military service being beaten. Recently a conscript who refused to fight was beaten with iron rods and died- and those who try

to avoid the callup and are caught are given brief training and then sent to "zero", the front line. There's a recent news article about these things at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp3l22z5y2zo> but these things are commonly experienced. So many of our brothers and their families live in constant fear of their arrest.

A bright spot was the baptism of MISHA son of sister Svetlana, baptized in a river over which a drone had flown and exploded just hours before. They study the Bible together everyday and he had gone through the whole *Bible Basics* course. But it's not only the joy of being of one mind on all doctrinal issues that binds us so close to this family, it is the fellowship of the Spirit experienced with others who are genuinely devoted to being spiritually minded. Misha has his military service coming up and is not on any academic path that would delay that. So he and Sister Svetlana are prayerfully considering being evaluated to the UK and we pray for their wisdom in this. We stand ready to help them.

Do please continue to pray for it all. And for our wisdom as well as thanksgiving that we are all still in one piece through it all. Svetlana's elderly relatives are in the Sumy area just by the Russian border with drones flying over them constantly and are currently studying with us with a view to being baptized next visit. Do pray for all that too. And for this war to end and the Lord to return.



Svetlana is having to grow all their own food to survive and she brought along some seeds for Cindy to sow in the garden in Croydon UK, and also some tomato seedlings- which couldn't be taken as it's not OK to take them through security etc.



Video [in Russian] at <https://youtu.be/IHdtyTp80bY>

UK

After pub church a group of us had a truly spiritual time together baptizing KAYLA. There was a really strong feeling of the Lord's presence at this baptism. Here was a woman from a terrible background who had not had any real love in her life... almost visibly struggling to believe that indeed the love of God and Jesus is real for her. And getting there. This personal sense that God truly loves even me... is priceless. It is the essence of what believing life is all about. She had already decided to be baptized and had come a long way across London for the baptism. This was most definitely not a last minute, spur of the moment decision. Yet as the reality of it all dawned on her, it was just visible how she was just awed at the extent of God's love for her. Of course, it was emotional, there were tears, how could there not be. The photos capture something of her path to realization, a realization possible only thanks to her very genuine faith / trust in the things of the Lord Jesus and His Kingdom. Thanks all for playing your part in a wonderful event. There was just joy all around. Cindy made Kayla a special cake, with raspberry jam made by Daniel from his freshly harvested raspberries out of the garden. She'd clearly never

had such love in her sad life.



And then the night before Duncan left for Ukraine there was really quite the spiritual send off. We drove down to brother Ryan's place near Lee on Solent, just opposite the Isle of Wight, and had such an amazing evening together on the beach. Ryan's fiance FAITH was eager to be baptized, and also her school friend AMBER. Amber's boyfriend Daniel came on his bicycle, and also Ryan's parents. Along with us from London. And what a great time we had. All these young people are standard local British folk from near that beach, had gone to school together, and are all aged 19 or 20. Again and again we are seeing this theme, of young British people turning to God. They mentioned they enjoy the *NEV Bible* and commentary and all have the app. We had a baptism service on the beach and summarized the basic doctrines of the Gospel for those who had come to watch:



And then Ryan helped Duncan to baptize Amber and Faith. So much joy all around:



Faith's mum lives in Gosport and was so eager to watch her daughter being baptized, having been told all about it by Faith and Ryan. She couldn't attend but watched eagerly on Facetime live:



Afterwards they did what they usually do on the beach, all good British fun down at the beach in the Summer. Forgetting the polluted water [this is near Portsmouth...] they swam together,

played with the water pistols they'd brought along, and played with the frisbee in the water:



And then we shouted them fish and chips, before the hard goodbyes. It was really pure joy in the Lord, our joy surely reflecting that in Heaven above. One gets the impression there will be some trips down to that beach for more baptisms. People are thirsty for God, Jesus, the Bible, and something "real" rather than the fake stuff of mere religion and churchianity. Great thing is that these folks had all come to Christianity for the first time, and so have no baggage of false teaching. We truly give thanks to the Lord for His work and seek to continue to be part of it.

Video at https://youtu.be/39_ykJu3rol



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