

## Eric & Beth Yodis – UKRAINE

July 23, 2025



Dear FBC Watsonville,

Ukrainian protestants have traditionally been pacifists as they knew the U.S.S.R. to be an aggressor who uses war to rid the country of undesirables. In the Soviet Union, protestants were undesirables. Russia is also a country who goes to war against civilians. For example, in the two Chechen/Russia wars, hundreds of thousands of Chechen civilians perished. So, the protestants or "Baptists" as they are generically referred to regardless of

denomination, said, "Thou shalt not kill." In Russian there is no one word that distinguishes between killing and murdering.

In recent years, most churches and believers in Ukraine have learned to distinguish between killing by aggression and killing to defend. One is a sinful act of complicity and the other is the act spoken of in Isaiah 1:17: "learn to do good, seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." And John 15:13, "Greater love has no man than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." Jesus demonstrated this love when he laid down his life defeating death and the grave. Many Ukrainian believers have come to see their participation in the war as a biblical imperative and a Christ-like endeavor. We are in agreement.

So, consider our friend, Igor. Between 2015-2018, we lived in Kyiv and as often as we were able, we attended and helped out at a small church a 15-minute walk from our flat. Igor was a big man who always had a big smile to share. His singing was not in tune with the music, but his heart was in tune with God and the finer details of intonation did not hold him back from praising the Lord in song. We still remember his full-throated singing during the music part of the service with arms held up high, head tilted back and eyes closed - it was beautiful. Afterward, he greeted everyone and shook their hands with a huge smile and for those brief moments, you felt like you were the only two people in the otherwise crowded room.

So, when we heard that Igor had signed up to defend Ukraine from its aggressors, we were surprised... and then we were not surprised. We began

to pray for him. In the last three and a half years, he has been in a number of difficult situations, and somehow has made it through each one. He is now located in one of the hottest spots in Ukraine's defense. Legions of mice infest their encampments at night. During the day, throngs of gadflies are all too eager to leave their double punctured marks, and in the evening, clouds of mosquitoes make being outside absolutely miserable. Something is always ready to bite.

We occasionally write back and forth, "Is there anything we can send you? How about insect repellent? Medical supplies?" He writes back, "We have chemicals (against bugs), but we can't always be covered in them. What we need is an anti-orc spray." Invaders are widely called "orcs" by Ukrainians, "Really what we need most of all are kind words and lots of prayer."

In our last letter we asked you to pray for Oleh. Despite many P.O.W. swaps, Oleh still has not been released, so please keep him on your list. With this letter, we would ask you to add Igor to your prayer list and perhaps all the other soldiers who were true believers long before they went to the trenches. After the Ministry of Truth links below, we'll give you our current prayer requests.

**Thank you for standing with us in dangerous and difficult times.**

#### Praise & Prayer Request

- As mentioned above, please pray for Igor and other true believers who are defending Ukraine from an evil and overwhelming aggressor.
- Please continue praying for Oleh who is in captivity and for his mother who has grieved and worried for more than three years.
- Please pray for the Internal Displaced Persons in Irpin to whom Eric & Beth have been spearheading a ministry.
- Please pray for the tens of thousands of children that have been systematically trafficked to Russia to erase their Ukrainian identity. As America streamlines its foreign aid, pray that there will be others stepping up to help fund the task of searching, researching and maintaining an active profile on these child victims.
- Please pray for our brothers and sisters in the occupied territories of Ukraine who are being persecuted for the faith. Sharing the gospel or even just the accusation of sharing the gospel can have profound harm.
- Please pray for the leadership of both America and Ukraine. Russian propaganda has become an irresistible force making it difficult for many to know what is right and what is wrong.
- Please continue to pray for the peace and revival of Ukraine, and for the defeat and repentance of Russia.