

The Gazette

OF MUSIC MISSION KIEV

Music/Widows/Orphans and Children/Church/Victims of War



Each delivery includes Bibles, including children Bibles in the Russian language



Returning to home basements, thankful for care



After 12 hour drive relief supplies reach needy and thankful people

Victims of War

For well over two years, our team has been reaching out to victims of war which include orphans near the war zone in overcrowded conditions, elderly near the conflict who are hiding in their basements, those wounded, and the families of the wounded and killed. We interviewed Sasha and Sergey who bring assistance to many in greatest need.

For over two years now, we have been sending relief supplies to thousands of needy people – victims of war – in the east. What have we been sending?

Sasha— We’ve brought both physical food and spiritual food. These relief supplies included lots of smiles and warmth. The large print New Testaments are very important for pensioners with weak eyesight. Children Bibles are delivered to victims of war in the east. Some kids didn’t even know what the Word of God means. “The Word of God” was a new expression to them. This really surprised me. When we distribute the Bibles, we can start a spiritual conversation. Upon receiving a Bible



Sasha takes time to explain “The Book”

with their food, they sometimes ask, “Where did this help come from?” to which I would answer, “It does not come from me, it comes from God, and we are just delivering on His behalf.” If time permits I would always say some words about St. Paul’s Church in Kyiv, which is behind this project with their prayers. God acts through people.



Thankful orphans, at orphanage near war zone

Sergey— I think Sasha answered this question perfectly. We’ve been sending a lot of food items, and other essential supplies that have been appreciated in the east, especially in the front-line villages. Among these items are canned meat, canned fish, vegetable oil, vegetables and fruit. But what is really special about this mission is the way in which those relief supplies have been distributed. They have always been distributed with a smile, with a word of encouragement and prayer. And that’s what makes this humanitarian mission really unique. Sasha’s smile is also unique. I don’t think anyone else can copy this smile.

Why do we do this?

Sasha— Because we love people and they badly need our help, both physically and spiritually.

Sergey— God commanded us to do this. Our Lord Jesus himself was also a refugee. So He has a heart for victims. We just need to be obedient to His Word which reinforces what Sasha said, “It is not from us, it is from God.”

What are the living conditions of people in the war zone?

Continued on page 2



Sasha— Every day people are dying from the war. People live under unfavorable conditions. Regular trucks of food do not go there. In those front-line villages virtually all of the people still live in their basements. Every day they hear the cannons, and immediately they run for shelter. They spend a lot of time in their basements. I've befriended some of the volunteers at a music school, and they tell me that there is a bombardment almost every day. The people live in a very sad reality. That's what it means to live in the war zone. That's the tragedy.

How have they managed to survive the cold winter?

Sasha— Many have not survived. I've heard that some homebound pensioners have died. And it's not just the cold winter. Just the other day a lady was walking and was killed by a bullet, in the middle of the day. Thanks to humanitarian missions that send warm blankets. We are one of those missions, and thanks to those who help civilians, thanks to food packets that have been delivered on a regular basis.

In what ways do you connect with individual human beings?

Sasha— Initially we get to know local volunteers and leaders in different settlements and then they introduce us to the most needy individuals. These volunteers know the situation on the ground. They introduce us to local leaders. The cities and villages are very different. Most recently we have been visiting small front-line villages in greatest need. These are needy people that we have met and helped many times. For example, at a big orphanage, there is a mixed population. Some are IDP's (Internally Displaced People) and some are disabled. We have been going there at least once a month for over a year now. We have delivered food, diapers, fresh fruit, wet wipes, but even more importantly, we spend time with them. We talk, paint simple things together, play ball during the summer. This informal fellowship is invaluable. These orphan children have very open souls, and they reach out to us as we reach out to them. They always remember that we promise to come back.

We visit a retirement home on a regular basis, about 10 times over a period of over a year, delivering food packages and large print Bibles. Some of them are bed ridden, but many still have sharp minds and they can read. They were very happy to see us, although some have no recollection of previous visits. But that's understandable, they are advanced in years and some are very sick.



A common scene, near the war zone

There is one important observation. Certain IDP's were initially very needy and we have stayed in touch with them. I'm pleased to see that they are not idle. They want to grow and improve their lives. They work and rent houses and some keep pigs or chickens. That's a very positive thing. It made me happy. It was good to see that they have not fallen into despair. They have begun to rebuild their lives, virtually from scratch.

Sergey— The seeds that we have been sending are very helpful — coming in the nick of time. They will be planted and it's part of the rebuilding story.

What are people in the East telling you when you provide them essential living supplies?



Food for widow and a large print New Testament

Handicapped pensioner gratefully receives a healthy food package and garden seeds



Spaciba!



Many elderly are unable to leave the area of conflict



Many recipients live in basement bomb shelters



Thank you



Thankful recipient of a beautifully illustrated and colourful children's Bible



Sasha shares kindness and a widow says thank you



Woman receives a Bible for a grandchild



Gratitude and friendship



Sasha, with a smile



Sasha brings tender loving care to each delivery



Gratitude. "When will this war end?"



Food package included at least 15 seed packets



Each delivery has many Bibles



Pensioners hide in their basements with no electricity or heat



The elderly are delighted to receive large print New Testament in their language



Pensioners return to their basements, thankful for care package and Bibles



Seeds bring a smile and hope

Sasha— They ask, "When will this war finally end?" That's the most frequent question. They somehow think that I know the answer. The next most frequent comment is "When are you coming again?" Of course, a lot of people are simply saying, "Thank you," or "Thanks be to God." They tell us they are praying for our feet and our wheels. But of course they often say we hope to see you again because they are happy to receive this assistance. There are lots of lonely elderly women who seem to have no support. Their children are far away. Men die early in the East. Miners do not live long. Their children are scattered all over Ukraine, or beyond. Most children are unable to help. Our mission is such a valuable assistance, especially for lonely needy pensioners.

Tell us about the children.

Sasha— They are very happy when we come. They run to us to get a children's Bible. This pleases me greatly. Once a mother came with a child, and the lady was not on the list of the most needy, but I always have a children's Bible handy to give to the child. I even opened the Bible and showed the trusting child. It is very moving for a child to be so trusting with a total stranger. It was a timely conversation, right after all the elderly ladies had received their food packages, so I had some time to spend with the children. Lots of elderly asked for children's Bibles for their grandchildren.

Sergey— For those not familiar with God's Word, a children's Bible is a good way to begin.

We sent thousands of seed packets most recently. Were they well received? What did people say?

Sasha— Initially some people did not know what was in the packages, in addition to food. When they saw that there were seeds, they were very happy.



Sergey— Both Sasha and I believe that those seeds will contribute to the rebuilding of their lives. It will be great to take pictures of their gardens later on. Sasha said he would later taste some of their vegetables, and they said, "Do come back and taste them."

We have a good team that helps plan each trip. How does that work? What role do you each of you play on that team?

Sergey— Sasha and I are just part of the team. There is much planning before we ever load the food into the truck. We sit down with Wes to talk about budget, safety, what items to buy, how to distribute Bibles and other pressing needs. Sasha and I plan which route is best to travel and which communities should be visited in what order. Other Ukrainians assist us on the team.

Sasha— The next step is to make phone calls and place orders for large quantities of food items. We physically go to the market, load the supplies, and then hit the road. We spend 12 hours on the road. We phone civic helpers on the front lines to tell them what time we are coming. When we arrive, we put items into individual packets, and the civic helpers approve the areas that are safe to travel. Villagers gather around vehicles and the most needy people receive their food packages and other essentials. Some of these local leaders are very active in church ministry.

Sergey— Sasha is a true hero. I am really in the background. He is really doing the work on the ground.

Sasha— You are too modest, Sergey. Your role is very important too.

Thank you to all of you who have helped support this mission by your gifts and prayers. You are part of our team. God is doing amazing things through us all.



“Experiencing God” Bible Study for Widows

by Kim Janzen

In the midst of ongoing conflict, financial crisis, problems in their homes and with their health, a group of 25 widows are experiencing God in a fresh, new way. They are seeing that God is working, and He is pursuing a love relationship with them. They are listening to Him speak and are turning their lives over to Him in obedience. For many months now, this incredible group of widows have been studying Henry Blackaby's "Experiencing God." It has been thrilling to watch this weekly discipleship group arrive with their Russian textbooks, their memorized verses, and their extensive, completed homework. "I love seeing our widows' enthusiasm during the class. Their eyes light up when they understand a spiritual truth. They love to share how God is working in an incredible way in their lives." Taisa is 86 years old. She became a Christian in January and joined our church. Now she comes weekly to class, bringing an extra notebook filled with notes. During the twilight years of her life, she is hearing God and experiencing Him in a miraculous way. Our widows' faith has grown, and they are excited about obeying God and knowing Him more. You are never too old to follow God.





Singers in double choir formation for Handel's masterpiece

Frogs, Lice, Hail, Darkness, Crossing the Red Sea..... and much more!

The Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus (KSOC) under the direction of Wes Janzen gave a premiere performance in Ukraine of Handel's *Israel in Egypt* in the English language on March 28, 2016. Some of the written comments after the concert included;

"My friends came and they liked it a lot. There was no doubt about the meaning."

"I loved the music. My soul was flying in the ball."

"The concert conveyed miraculous eternal truth."

"We brought friends and they had goose-bumps. We were overwhelmed with a flawless performance."

"It was very emotional, beautiful and professional."

"This great concert will be in my heart for many years."

"My friends liked it a lot. It's a great honor to work with such a great group with people who know what they are doing."

"My colleagues said it was great, especially the stereo effect of double choir."

"It was gorgeous and powerful. We made many people happy."

"I'm thankful that I had the opportunity to take part in such a beautiful project."

Our KSOC Artistic Director chose this important work for several reasons: "It's new to our musicians. It's new to Ukraine. The timeless texts come from the Bible, primarily from the book of Exodus. The texts speak of God's truth, judgment, mercy and covenant plan." The words were carefully translated into Ukrainian and projected on the big screen. Even people in the back row of the balcony could clearly see and understand the meaning.

For 22 years KSOC has shared wonderful concerts in the city of Kyiv. That continues. But recently, through Canadian support, outreach concerts by the KSOC are now for the first time held in many other cities throughout Ukraine, including, so far, Zaparozhe, Lviv, Irpin, Lutzk, Ostroh and Rivne. "We are called for such a time as this," says Dr. Janzen, "and audiences throughout Ukraine are very receptive. The crisis in Ukraine is causing people to think about deeper issues. Pray that we would be faithful."



"I can see clearly now"



"Israel in Egypt" memory captured for an eager listener



Full house, back rows, "Israel in Egypt" concert



Back row of the balcony for Handel's "Israel in Egypt"



The leadership of this church warmly embraces our cooperative work



Vika, our incredible concert coordinator and assistant conductor, collects scores after concert



Largest Baptist Church in Kyiv is idea venue for KSOC concerts

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND SUPPORT!

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