

James F. Myers Ministries

Ukraine update: February 21, 2022

Proverbs 25:25 As cold water to a weary soul, So is good news from a far country.

Dear Friends,

We are alive and well in Ukraine. We are so grateful for all of you who have been praying for us, and we have been encouraged by many of you writing to tell us of your concern and how you are standing with us in prayer. Surely, through your intercession at the throne of grace we have been obtaining mercy and finding grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

It should come as no shock if I tell you that you can't trust much of what you see or read in the media. There is so much that is hype and hyperbole and partial truths or outright lies that it is really hard to know what to believe. So let me give you my perspective.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is not imminent, it happened in 2014. Since that time there have been close to 40,000 casualties, with the number of Ukrainians killed at more than 14,000. Close to 2 million people have been displaced. Contrary to many reports, most people are not fleeing to Russia but are moving to the west to the capital city of Kiev and other cities or other European countries in many cases. The US State Department has been issuing Level 3 and Level 4 threat warnings for more than seven years now. What is happening now is not something new.

It is true that there has been a large Russian military build-up all around Ukraine – on the eastern border, on the northern border in Belarus, in the south in the Crimean Peninsula, and in the west in the Transnistria region. No one knows for sure if this has any real significance or if it is just grand theater being produced for Putin's aggrandizement. It may be that he is doing a lot of posturing in order to achieve political goals that do not include a full-scale of Ukraine at all.

Let me tell you what I observe in Ukraine. In the Donbas region of southeastern Ukraine several cities are under the control of Russian separatists. There have been continuing skirmishes for years between these Russian-backed forces and the Ukrainian military, accounting for the casualties mentioned above. However, for the most part, Ukrainians are not living in fear of an all-out assault.

I have traveled to many place around the country, and except in that one region there is no indication of a country on the brink of war. And except in that region a person can travel freely by car or public transportation without being stopped at checkpoints. There are no soldiers or military vehicles along the way. I have flown domestically into and out of cities in Ukraine with no problems, no increased scrutiny at the airports.

In the capital city of Kiev the airports are open, with more concern about the Corona virus than a military invasion. There are no long lines at the airports with people frantically leaving the country. In fact, the last couple of times that we have flown into Ukraine recently, the incoming planes were full. Apparently people are not afraid to come here. There are no special forces at the airports or along the highways. Businesses are open and there is no evidence of panic buying. The shelves are fully stocked. There are no long lines at the gas stations. Churches are not overflowing with people cowering in fear because of a perception of imminent danger. People are not huddled in their homes and we hear little talk of war. By all appearances Ukraine does not look like a country that is unduly alarmed by all of the news coming out of the US and western Europe.

Obviously things could change rapidly. We have no way of knowing if they will. We receive notices from the US Embassy here, almost daily, warning us to leave the country immediately. I have even received telephone calls from the State Department in Washington to ask if we are still in Ukraine, and, if so, do we plan to evacuate. The last time they called I asked if they had some information that was different from what I could get from the media, and they said no. So I want to know what has changed in the past week or month or year?

There are some who are making decisions based more on fear than fact. KLM airline has suspended all of its flights in and out of Ukraine because their insurers have refused to cover any losses that might be sustained due to a war. This results in economic loss both for them and for Ukraine. Other companies headquartered in the West have also suspended working here. This has also had some impact on the economy here. As you have probably heard a couple of countries, including the US have pulled their embassy staff out of the country. But the vast majority have not done so.

We are not oblivious to the potential danger, and we have considered what steps we might need to take in the event of war. We have some food stockpiled, some gasoline and a power generator. We know where the border crossings are should it be necessary to leave. But we have no plans at present to evacuate. In fact, we do not anticipate leaving unless forced to do so. Our thinking is this: what kind of example would we be, what testimony of faith in the Lord, if we tell our people to trust in the Lord and then we bail out at the first hint of trouble? This is our life, our ministry, our home – until the Lord moves us!

Please continue to pray for Ukraine, for its leaders to have wisdom, for its military to have courage, for its people to turn to the Lord in their hour of testing. Pray for us that we can continue to preach the gospel, to keep on training our Bible college students to prepare them for ministry. It is our privilege, our joy to serve the Lord here.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.

Psalm 91:2

Jim and Phyllis