

Q4NL22

NEWSLETTER

THE LATEST UPDATES INSIDE



GOD MAKES A WAY - WARTIME REFLECTIONS

During our recent European Team meeting in Turkey, VP of European Operations, Bart Rybinski and Ukrainian National Director, Dasha Novikova shared some of their powerful reflections on God's provision and protection during the beginning months of the war earlier this year. We wanted you to hear directly from our team about how God has continued to make his faithfulness known every day.

Russian Troops Cut Off Roads to the West by Bart Rybinski, VP of European Operations

In the early weeks of the war, we all dealt with uncertainty and an incredible amount of worry for the people with whom we work so closely. This year, I saw how powerfully God works in providing for our needs. The fact that so many of our loved ones were able to evacuate from Ukraine was a true miracle.

When threats of war grew stronger, we wanted to make sure our staff was safe. We told our staff that we would work out the details for their safety if they wanted to leave early. Our Ukrainian National Director, Dasha, left early, but the others did not. When bombs started falling, our lives completely changed, but not nearly as drastically as our Ukrainian friends.

When people start hearing explosions for days every 2 hours, their apartment building is constantly shaking, and they have to walk seven floors down with no elevator, their countenance changes.

God provided room for our Warehouse Manager from Kyiv, Lida, by providentially opening train space in the chaos of thousands of people elbowing each other for a spot on a train. It was amazing that they made it to Poland and to see the way the body of Christ provided for them. Another colleague from Kyiv, Olya, stood at the border for 8 hours with her 3 children, until someone out of the goodness of their heart invited them to wait in a car to get out of the cold. Finally, by the Grace of God, we found them one of the last hotel spaces in the bordering town!

I talked daily with our Ukrainian team, as well as close partners like Sasha Prokopchuk. As Sasha and I would talk on the phone, I could hear bombs going off in the background and yet sensed such a strong spirit in him. It wasn't a pleasant memory, but a powerful one. Sasha and his son Vanya's commitment to stay and risk their lives to get our books and Bibles out to other parts of Ukraine was one of the most impactful things I have seen in my life, along with witnessing the spirit of the others who stayed behind to serve.

I recall that there were many checkpoints in Kyiv to the warehouse. Only small cars were allowed on the road to our warehouse, and 1 mile of the road would take an hour with document checkpoints. Not many risked going to the area. It looked like Russian troops were advancing and might take over the warehouse district for weapon storage, so Sasha, Vanya, and others worked tirelessly to get many of the books out.

It was amazing to see God open doors, through people opening their lives and hearts even in dark times.

For I was Hungry and You Gave Me Food By Dasha Novikova, Ukraine National Director

War has hurt me, moved me, and made me value simple things in my life. Together with horrors, difficulties, and atrocities, I see God's light more obviously as EEM donors, staff, and ministry partners have answered the call to provide humanitarian support through Ukraine Aid as well as Bibles. We are not just providing spiritual revival with God's Word, but we are helping those who have lost everything. Together, we did not decide to sit on the sidelines and watch, but we decided to give bread, a blanket, a warm drink, and God's life-changing Word. With every piece of bread, every blanket, every warm drink, and with every book, we saw pure joy reflected in the face of those desperate for help and hope.

As partners in this ministry, we are taking time to clean wounds and give helping hands to the ones that need it the most. Even during the darkest days this year, I have seen very bright rays of hope. It would be easy to sit and be depressed about current events, but seeing each member of our team helping people escape was amazing to witness. Nobody just stood by and watched from a distance.

We were also blessed to find friends to go to our Kyiv warehouse, pack books, and ship them when it was dangerous. So many individuals who were hungry for God's Word approached EEM with a request to receive Bibles for themselves and their kids. Our team was worried shelling would start because warehouses were the military's first target for hiding troops and weapons. I remember thinking, "If possible, we needed those books out to those who need them, for tomorrow they could be burned."

During the height of the pandemic, there was so much bad press about the church arguing and splitting. But since the war began, we have seen churches working together in unity and many Christians on the frontlines serving sacrificially. This is not in the media. This is what the body of Christ was called to look like, and we are seeing living examples of the church pursuing Christ's call for unity, and we need the world to know. Every day we see someone from one church who

has a van, someone from another church has food, and someone from a 3rd church has workers all deciding to work together to make an eternal difference in people's lives. It is like thousands of small ants working together for a common goal to be the hands and feet of Jesus so that others will know God and his son. Every donor, every team member, and every ministry partner is helping these churches and individuals to work together to provide food, medicine, shelter, and Bibles. We are all partnering with the Holy Spirit to keep thousands of people alive physically and spiritually.

PRAY WITH US

1. Pray for our team ministry partners on the frontlines of the Ukrainian-Russian War risking their lives to provide food, water, medicine, evacuation support and God's Word..
2. Pray for EEM staff in Belarus who are constantly in danger of religious persecution. Ask God to give our staff strength, wisdom, and protection.
3. Pray that God will raise up more donors who are passionate about God's Word and eager to partner with us to meet the ever-increasing demand for Bibles in 30+ nations.
4. Pray for our expanding work in Turkey as we discern open doors to provide Bibles where people are hungry for access to God's Word.
5. Pray for the millions of people who will receive access to the Bible for the first time to give their lives to Christ.



Bart Rybinski

Members of the European Team



UKRAINE UPDATE: OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD

By Sasha Prokopchuk, Ministry Partner in Ukraine

Recently while flipping through the news, I came across an article written by a psychologist who suggested that Ukrainians have aged 10 years in the last six months. Lack of sleep, sheer terror, and deep personal loss have had a profound physical effect on the people of Ukraine since the war began in February.

Our war-torn country has endured more than seven months of escalating devastation and displacement. Whether we've aged or not, I don't know, but it's a fact that we're different. War changes a person's philosophy on life, their perspective, and attitude toward many things. There's a reevaluation of what's important and who is trustworthy. Amid the hotbed of war, you realize there are no insurance guarantees, treaties, memorandums, negotiations or signatures of those in power that can protect you.

Sasha Prokopchuk



How will we reflect on and respond to the events taking place in Ukraine? It's tempting to hit the pause button on life and wait helplessly for the war to end. We could allow ourselves to become consumed with hatred, aggression, or despair. Or we can ask the Lord to use us to advance His Kingdom.

OUR WEAPON IS LOVE

As the heart-wrenching stories from Ukraine continue to be in the news, be encouraged: God is alive and actively working here. There's an army of followers of Jesus Christ that are not pressing the pause button by waiting on the sidelines for the war to end, nor are they allowing anger or hatred to consume them. Rather, they recognize that this is not just a war between two countries. It's a war between good and evil, a war between light and darkness. Our spiritual weapon is love, which is impossible to defeat. With the love of Christ, evil has no chance.

In every person, there's a part of the divine and a part of the flesh. We were created in the image of God, yet we're human. Which will we allow to take the lead during the significant trials of life? Who will prevail, our flesh or our spirit? God's Word shows us the way. Romans 12:21 instructs, "Don't be overcome by evil,

but overcome evil with good." The Lord also reminds us in Galatians 6:10, "As long as there is time, therefore, let us do good to all, but especially to our own by faith."

At my church in Kyiv, we continue to see how applying these biblical principles allows God to reach the people of Ukraine. Five months ago, as the war continued to intensify, we began to visit a group of 30 refugees who had lost their homes in the Donetsk region. We brought them food and other practical needs, and most importantly, we brought them the hope-filled Gospel message. Over the course of four months, we continued to visit and supply needed humanitarian items, while always encouraging them to place their hope and faith in the Lord.

Recently, three of the refugees said they wanted to become Christ followers. Just a few days later, we went to a nearby lake and witnessed each of these new believers joyfully enter the water to die to sin and be born unto God, publicly proclaiming they have chosen to join the body of Christ.

That same day, the church invited residents of our apartment complex to a prayer meeting, and many elderly and displaced people attended. Our fellowship began with a short

Bible lesson and followed with prayer. After addressing their spiritual needs, we were able to bless them with much-needed gift cards for the Supermarket.

Through the support of our friends at EEM (Eastern European Mission), an organization that has been delivering God's Word to the people of Eastern Europe for more than 60 years, they've been able to give hundreds of thousands of Bibles to people in Ukraine free of charge. This spiritual sword is an essential tool these new believers need as they strive to develop and grow their faith.

The Gospel is spreading, and those without hope are finding the eternal hope that comes from knowing Jesus Christ. It is this peace that passes all understanding that we need to sustain us as we persevere through the physical and psychological ravages of war.



THE WORLD CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT HOPE

We have more requests for Bibles than we can fulfill right now. The requests for Ukrainian language Bibles alone have doubled! Every Bible requested represents an individual hungry to know God. We are seeing more requests than ever for God's Word in the middle of so much violence, hatred, disease, divisiveness, fear, and death because there is a growing longing for hope.

In an effort to make a dent in fulfilling the number of requests, we plan to raise \$3.5 million with our 2022 Million Dollar Sunday campaign. This will provide approximately 700,000 Bibles for 700,000 people. Reaching this goal for 700,000 Bibles is not possible without YOUR partnership in sharing the Gospel.

It's been said that a person can live forty days

without food, four days without water, four minutes without air, but only one second without hope. We all need hope. The requests for Bibles are pouring in, and our distribution continues to increase at a rate that confirms this hunger for hope. People want to know Jesus. From Ukrainian refugees fleeing a war-torn nation, to public schools in Croatia and North Macedonia...people want the hope which is only found in the Bible. They want and need Jesus!

For over 60 years, you and others like you have been answering the call to provide the hope only found in the Bible. It's our continued commitment to provide Bibles and Bible-based materials to the 30+ nations we serve in the 20+ heart languages they speak. We simply can't do it without you.

As disciples of Jesus, we have the hope this world needs, and we know it's our responsibility to share that Great News. Will you provide a Bible to a child, a woman or a man hungry to know God and find lasting hope?

Donate, learn more, and keep up with our campaign goal at eem.org/mds.

MILLION DOLLAR SUNDAY

PROVIDE BIBLES AT EEM.ORG/MDS

HOPE

September 1 - December 31

Our Million Dollar Sunday (MDS) campaign provides funding for Bibles and Bible-based materials, free to all. Your donations during this campaign will transform lives as God uses our partnership with you to proclaim the love of Christ!



NEW PODCAST OUT NOW

We are excited to announce EEM's new podcast called "55:11." This podcast is centered around inspiring stories of God's power globally in the lives of ordinary people hosted by Dirk Smith, Payton Armstrong, and Brooke Kehl. We seek to share impactful stories as living examples of Isaiah 55:11, scripture and challenge ourselves to stay rooted in the truth with every episode. If you attended any EEM fundraising dinners/events in previous years, many of these episodes recount some of our favorite stories shared at these events. These are the stories that have shaped our ministry and continue to inspire us to keep our eyes on Jesus, study God's Word, and partner with you

to provide everyone access to a Bible in their heart language. Our final episode of season one will feature an interview with a special guest from Ukraine to discuss our current work in the midst of the horrors of this war. You will not want to miss a single exciting episode.

You can stream the podcast through Spotify, Apple, Google, or anywhere you listen to podcasts. You can also listen via our website (eem.org/5511podcast). We would love for you to subscribe, rate it, and give an honest review on any of these platforms. We hope you are encouraged, and we look forward to hearing your feedback!

A BIBLE FOR EVERY MACEDONIAN CHILD

In August of this year, 225,000 Children and Teen Bibles were delivered to North Macedonia to be distributed as gifts to every child in the nation. As a sign of good will for this project, the North Macedonian government waived importation costs, saving EEM nearly \$65,000 this year. An additional 225,000 Bibles will arrive in 2023 to complete this inaugural project that has been recognized as the largest book donation North Macedonia has ever received.

To celebrate the effort to place youth Bibles in the Macedonian language into the hands of every school-aged child, EEM Ministry Partner Jura Lazar and the EEM leadership team were invited to the capital city (Skopje) to meet with government and church officials.

During the celebration, one of the church

leaders spoke to our team and shared the following encouraging words.

“Christ loved children so much that he told adults to be like children. Thank you all for loving the Macedonia Children. You are showing the love of Christ to our children with this gift of Bibles....Here [Macedonia], the Gospel seed was sown first by the apostle Paul, but this country, like all the countries of the world, has a need for the message of Christ to be continuously shared with each new generation. This is a book [Children’s Bible] with that Gospel message for every generation... You are providing for the need of our younger generation to know Christ and providing them an opportunity to practice in their lives what they are learning. On behalf of our children, I say thank you.”

It’s important to remember that only 20-30 years ago, extreme ethnic violence broke out between the countries that currently make up former Yugoslavia (Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Montenegro). Ethnic, political, and religious tension caused great bloodshed between 1990 and 2001 when thousands died, and millions fled. Heinous war crimes and unthinkable atrocities between groups of people took place, reminiscent of the current Ukrainian-Russian War.

This project is an incredible testimony to God guiding our team to national leaders who are people of peace, desiring for others to have access to God’s Word. EEM continues to see God’s hand at work through local Christians partnering with government leaders. Through it all, God’s Holy Spirit is working among people to push past tension to pursue unity for the sake of the Gospel. May this work move us toward the fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer “...that they all may be one.” (John 17:21).

Join EEM in prayer over the impact of this project and future projects of children’s Bibles. Please pray that every child will be transformed by the message of Jesus Christ.



EEM with Macedonian Government and Church Officials



Bible distribution in September



A SEEKING HEART

By Scott Hayes, Publishing Director

We operate under the tagline, “The Bible. We want everyone to get it.” According to statistics from Wycliffe Global Alliance, 1.51 billion people, speaking 6,661 languages, do not have a full Bible in their first language. The journey to know God cannot progress far without access to God’s word. Access to His truth is one of the most important steps in a lifetime journey, but there are other facts that determine whether the journey ends in the Kingdom of God.

The fruit of our work depends deeply on the movement of God’s Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit depends deeply upon the condition of the individual heart. We can give people Bibles, but we cannot force them to have “seeking hearts.” We cannot go on their journey for them, nor can we put them on an escalator to speed up their search for truth. Trying to fast-forward the knowing of God is as dangerous as helping a chick break free of an egg.

The chick has an inborn desire to break free from its eggshell, but they do not simply step out of the egg based upon decision alone. The chick must peck its way out. At this moment, it is critical that they do it on their own. In this instance, to help them means death because they need the time to grow and gain the strength to face the outside world.



Even those who have access to a Bible and possibly the blessing of a teacher cannot skip listening to God. They cannot skip the “search.” They must learn to seek and knock. They must learn to search for God’s wisdom and search to know him. Whenever Christians face disruptions and difficulties from warfare, pandemic, heartache, and grief, we look to the Bible for wisdom, guidance, and perspective. Two Bible verses give us a great perspective on this concept:

The “wise” man is the one who understands and knows God – who intimately knows God’s steadfast love, justice and righteousness (Jeremiah 9:23-24, ESV).

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding (Proverbs 9:10, NIV).

Understanding God’s Steadfast Love, Justice and Righteousness

Two people read the same text. One’s life is transformed and the other remains unchanged. Two people hear the same lesson, one repents, but the other is indifferent or mocks.

How can the response be so different? The inner condition is the difference. God “reveals” himself to “seekers.” A “seeker” is one driven by a passionate inner desire to better understand and know God. God promises that those who search with all their hearts will find Him.

To know God is more than knowledge of biblical teaching. It is a life journey and not a short day hike. It is not about reaching the summit of Mount Everest, but day-to-day experiences that deepen our knowledge, understanding, and personal relationship. There is always more to learn.

Job was on a similar journey. He was blameless and upright, he feared God and shunned evil. Yet, he did not “know” God intimately. In a moment, Job lost his family, wealth, possessions, and health. His situation was catastrophic. His level of pain was off the charts.

Job debated his horrible situation with his friends and insisted that God had made a mistake. Job was convinced, “I am righteous, and therefore, I should not be suffering.” A few of Job’s friends came and shared with him their theological knowledge and opinions. They interpreted Job’s condition from the same theological perspective, but with a different conclusion: since you are suffering so greatly, you must have sinned greatly. Repent, and God will change your circumstances. To his friends, Job stood his ground. I am righteous, I should not be suffering; therefore, God made a mistake.

A young man named Elihu was listening to the four men debate. Elihu had something the three friends did not have. His words revealed that he knew God. God spoke to Job through Elihu, but the words of Elihu were not enough. Job needed more. Job still did not know God. God confronted Job. God emphasized that He does not make mistakes.

Finding the Hidden Treasure

As God revealed Himself, Job’s intimate knowledge and understanding of God was deepened. Job found the hidden treasure. Then Job said to God,

“I (now) know that You can do all things and that no plan of Yours can be thwarted. You asked, ‘Who is this who conceals My counsel without knowledge?’ Surely, I (Job) spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak. I will question you, and you shall inform Me. My ears had heard of You, but now my eyes have seen You. Therefore, I retract my words, and I repent in dust and ashes’ (Job 42:1-6, NIV)

Job’s suffering initiated a journey of searching and questioning, but it was only after his personal confrontation with God that Job spoke the words, “now I know you.” After Job repented, God restored his health and wealth and even gave him a new family.

The journey to knowing God takes a true



Scott Hayes

seeker. The only way to know God is to want to know Him and to act on curiosity by searching. The spiritual condition of the heart is of utmost importance. God will reveal Himself when we have a repentant heart and earnestly seek.

The Bible states that the Lord searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought (1 Chronicles 28:9, NIV). If you seek Him, He will be found by you. We are not the only ones seeking. God is also seeking our hearts.

EEM’s (Eastern European Mission) passion is to make obtaining a Bible easier. As we distribute Bibles, we realize there is a mystery in our work. There is a mystery about the journey to God and the journey with God. We cannot control the search of others. To receive deeper wisdom, knowledge and understanding from God requires a searching heart. God waits for us to search for Him with the same intensity as if we are searching for a buried treasure or a gold mine.

“Seekers” need to know God’s revealed words. For many, the first step of the search is to obtain a Bible. This element is irreplaceable, and we are committed to doing our part to ensure that everyone who needs one receives a copy of God’s Word.



EEM

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\$100 for
20 books



\$1,000 for
200 books



\$5,000 for
1000 books



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