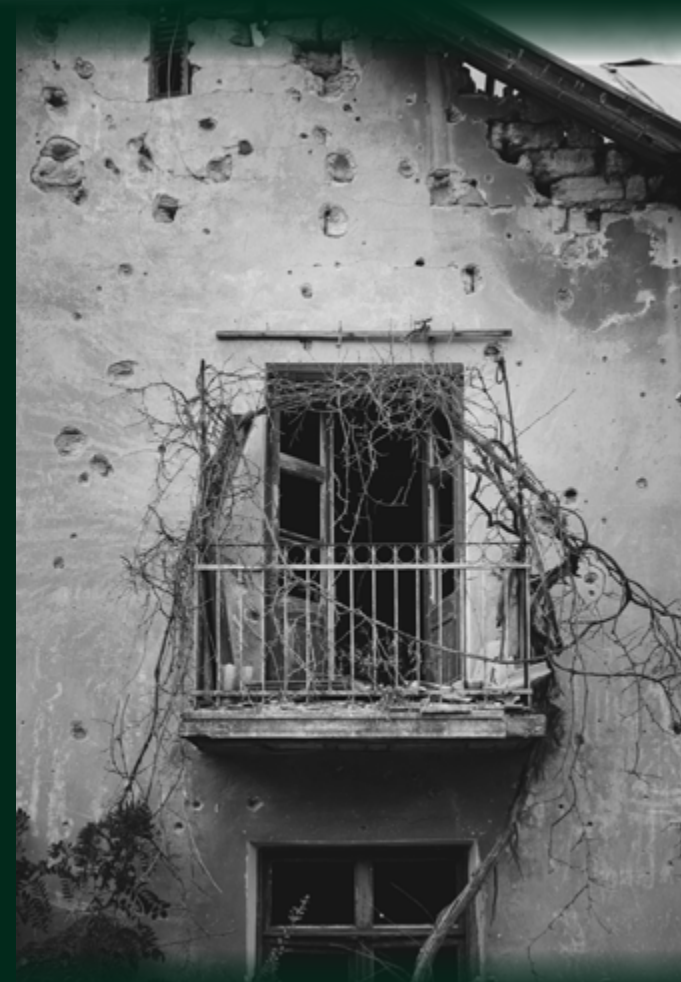


Hand of **HELP**



April - May 2024

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Good Mourning



As we walked the streets of a village in the Mykolaiv Region of southern Ukraine, we quickly noticed that not a single home had been spared. Every building was either completely destroyed or in need of extensive repairs. It's one thing to read about the devastation or see aerial photos; it's another to stand amid the rubble and realize that the blood, sweat, and tears of an entire generation were laid waste with one well-executed bombing campaign.

Everything these people had, as far as earthly resources were concerned, they poured into their homes. They labored and saved and sacrificed for some new shingles on the roof, the new drapes the wife always wanted, a fresh coat of paint, or a door that didn't protest each time you opened it, but now it was all gone. It was all rubble and dust and pieces of memories like wedding photos and baby pictures blowing in the wind.



We met with around two hundred locals, most of them seniors, all of them holding on to the hope of an imminent end to the war. We heard countless stories of octogenarians purchasing a few bricks with every pension they received in hopes that one day, their home could be restored and they could die peacefully in it.



We wept with those who were weeping and grieving the loss of their children or parents but did not offer false hope. False hope and pie-in-the-sky fantasies might work on those who've had easy lives, but these were not those types of people. For them, it wasn't so much that good, peaceful lives turned violent and hard all of a sudden; it was that hard lives turned harder still.



As I shared with the locals, the Holy Spirit reminded me of a passage from Ecclesiastes, one that I probably mentioned in passing in a previous newsletter article: chapter 7:2, "Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart."



It is certainly not the message they wanted to hear, but it is the message they needed to hear. Empty promises of resolution, prosperity, or false hope would benefit no one.

What they needed to hear is what we all need to hear as well. This life is fleeting. It comes and goes, a vapor dancing on the breeze, and the moment you think you've grasped its meaning and know the way of it, it slips through your fingers. As children of God, we know there is a blessing in mourning, and being aware of our end is a gift that urges us ever onward toward the finish line. It's easy to forget we are temporal and here only for a season; it's good to be reminded of these truths once in a while.



2 Corinthians 6:1-2, "We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Although it has been some time since we wrote about the outreach in Ukraine, please know that we have not stopped supporting the work of the missionaries on the frontlines. All the funds marked for Ukraine are being designated for this work, and we are committed to coming alongside our brothers and sisters who are willing to risk their lives for the sake of the Gospel.



We are encouraged by the testimonies coming out of the mourning: a new life filled with resurrection hope!

Isaiah 61:1-3, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

May our mourning be temporary and our joy everlasting,
Daniel Boldea



Good Mourning (cont.)



Blessings



Nothing and Everything



Not too long ago, we shared that while building churches is one of our favorite projects, due to the ever-increasing number of projects and the cost of building a sanctuary being what it is, we are unable to take on such expensive endeavors. Well, the Lord certainly had other plans!



Perhaps sometimes we need a reminder, maybe even a gentle rebuke, that God is not limited to what's in the bank account, geography, or anything else for that matter, and when He wills something, it is done, as good as finished, because He has willed it.

Although Ethiopia had never been on my bucket list of places to visit before I died, I found myself there, on the ground, and was able to see the Adame Tulo, Ethiopia, church project featured in a previous newsletter through to completion. In this parched, arid land with minimal

resources, we witnessed firsthand the Lord blessing a new spiritual oasis where desperate souls might hear of His amazing grace!

During our time there, we participated in the inauguration of a church in a village an hour away - a place where faithfully preaching the Gospel under the shade of the few trees in the area has drawn 24 individuals to salvation.

As I sat in the very back of the church, the simplicity of the worship moved me. It brought back memories of home, sitting on rough-hewn benches in the middle of summer with no air conditioning and singing our hearts out all the same. There were no frills, stagmanship, laser light shows, smog machines, choreographed dances, or someone insisting that we raise the roof for Jesus, just Christ-centered worship. I spent over half of the service weeping as villagers with little to nothing joyfully worshiped our heavenly Father! They, in fact, had everything!



How do these testimonies of heavenly provision come about? Through God-birthed self-sacrifice of individuals like yourself!

As our trip to Ethiopia drew near, I grew concerned over the unmet finances needed to finish the project. Then, one afternoon, an older gentleman called and shared how he had been saving to buy a truck for a good part of his life. One day, he came home, and his wife handed him the newsletter with the article regarding the Adame Tulo church. He was surprised to see that the amount needed was the exact amount he had saved. With incredible joy in his voice, he shared that the thought that came to mind was, "I can live without a newer truck, but those people can't live without a church."

He wanted to apply the entire amount to the project, and any gifts already received were now available for building materials and day laborers, completing the project's needs.

I share this with you, not suggesting that anyone do the same, but rather that you rejoice with us! After forty years in ministry, if we've learned anything, it's that if we are faithful, He is faithful. Follow where He leads, do as He says, and be consistent, and His faithfulness will be such that even the godless will marvel. He truly is the God who supplies all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

We echo Paul's words just a couple of verses above, "Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account." Just as the Philippians, you are storing up for yourselves treasure in heaven.

Just as we completed one church project, a request from Romanian missionary Paul from Gorj came in.

Brother Paul has been faithful in the little. He and his team have been sharing the gospel in the village of Poiana Seciuri via their tent ministry for some time. Now, an opportunity has presented itself to purchase a church building, and the number of people coming to the Lord is sufficient to warrant a building.



They had their first spiritual harvest there just last month, the baptisms of a brother and sister repenting and proclaiming their faith in our Lord Jesus for salvation, and have been growing ever since.



The land with the two buildings on it is being offered for \$9,700. The land alone, with a working well and electricity, is worth more than that.

While the missionaries have yet to decide whether renovating the existing structures or building new ones would be most cost-effective, this is an exceptional opportunity to take the first step in establishing a church in this community.



Thank you for praying for this and all of our projects!

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ..." Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the One who has granted us everything!

Daniel Boldea

Measure Twice, Move Once



During our last trip to Poroshkovo, an impoverished village in Ukraine and home to an isolated group of Romanian-speaking locals, we experienced one of those preventable situations. We stood back and chuckled as members of our team tried to stand up a refrigerator that they had hauled from the accessible part of the country road all the way into the home. No one bothered to measure and see if the ceiling was tall enough to allow for it; they just assumed it would fit.

Since no amount of head-scratching would raise the low ceiling or shorten the refrigerator, and since laying it flat and using it as a chest refrigerator wasn't an option, after a couple of minutes of contemplation, the executive decided to swap out the refrigerator for one going to a different family.

Thankfully, these lighthearted life lessons over the decades have prepared us to move on projects carefully, thoughtfully, and, most importantly, prayerfully.

Some situations are simply out of one's hands; the trick is to identify them, acknowledge one's inability to effect any change, and trust that God has a plan and purpose and will work it out in due course. Anyone who's been in ministry for any length of time will attest that there's always something that arises, some circumstance or another that we cannot plan or control—and it ends up throwing a wrench in months of methodical planning.

On the other hand, there are likewise small details that we should be cognizant of. With due diligence and patience, most of the issues that snowball into impossible situations can be prevented or mitigated.

The needs of Poroshkovo are far too vast to list. We purchased a cow, tons of firewood, hundreds of food parcels, washing machines, refrigerators (including an extra-tall one), and stoves. The greatest need that we currently have on our radar



is wells. Water is essential, as we all know. You can survive longer than one might think without food, but if you have no access to clean drinking water, you are not long for this world. Entire neighborhoods have access to a single well, which is often the reason for much discord among the locals.



During our time there, we shared the Gospel with close to a thousand people and prayed that there would continue to be a great spiritual harvest!

Hand of Help Staff

We have identified the location where the first well will be dug; it is for two elderly widows who are physically incapable of hauling water from the nearest well they currently have access to. It will also serve as a source of water for their immediate neighbors.



As the Lord provides, we will continue to support the work of the local pastor, John, and help as we are able with the many Gospel-centered humanitarian projects he undertakes.



More Blessings



Child of the Month

We first met Rares and Maria when the local authorities asked us to offer the children a home. The siblings had witnessed emotional conflicts and fights between their parents. Being deprived of parental affection, poorly dressed, dirty, and hungry, they were in desperate need.

After the parents' divorce, the mother and her two children were shunned from their paternal grandmother's house, and things progressively worsened for Rares and Maria.

Their father made it clear that he had no interest in his children, while their mother, lacking a stable home and finances, was in no position to take care of them properly. Left in the sporadic care of their neighbors and relatives, the children were often neglected, unsupervised, and without the most basic care at a very young age.

Despite all these obstacles, God opened the way for Maria and Rares to become a part of our Hand of Help family in 2013.



The two siblings quickly adapted to their new life and friends, and we were overjoyed to see them grow harmoniously.

Rares is currently in the sixth grade and is passionate about sports. He plays baseball and participates in numerous competitions around the country. He is doing very well and has great results. He also plays the flute in our center's orchestra.

His father is currently working abroad, while his mother remarried. We are so thankful that God helped the siblings and their mother rekindle their relationship and start visiting each other.

Thank you for your love and support for these children. You are a blessing to our ministry!

Please lift Rares and his family before the throne of grace. May God work in their hearts, and may the Holy Spirit draw them unto salvation. May they find hope and peace in the knowledge of Christ and dedicate their lives to worshipping the Lord!

Dear Brethren,

2 Timothy 3:1, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.”


Most things in life are a matter of degrees. When gauging pain, we are asked to do it on a scale from one to ten. The same goes for weariness and hunger, and for those aware enough to understand it, even stress. During winter, when the girls go out to play in the snow and come back inside complaining of being cold, I ask them how cold exactly; their degrees are a spectrum beginning with icicle cold and ending with refrigerator cold. Icicle cold means dad should crank up the stove and start warming some milk for hot chocolate while cupping their hands and blowing on them, and refrigerator cold means they were just done with playing outside and wanted to come in.

It's not as though the church has not endured perilous times. On the contrary, ever since the primary church gathered in the upper room and received the gift of the Holy Spirit, perilous times have been a constant, a given, something expected and unsurprising. Even so, as he wrote his letter to Timothy under divine inspiration, Paul was compelled to stress that perilous times would come in the last days.

Since Paul himself testified to his life being in constant peril, what we must suss out as wise Bereans is the degree to which the last days will be perilous and where the peril will come from. If you know where to look for the enemy, you will see him advancing before he is within striking distance. If your back is to him, he'll be breathing down your neck by the time you realize something is amiss. Where will this peril that Paul speaks of originate? Will it be peril via persecution from the outside in, or something more sinister and destructive?

We discover the origin of the peril Paul speaks of and how it will manifest within the text of his letter. All the things Paul outlines as staples of the last days were present in his day, but they were present among those of the world. From being lovers of self to lovers of money to being proud, blasphemers, unholy, unloving, headstrong, and haughty, just to name a few, all of these existed among the godless, but as yet they had not wormed their way into the church.

The warning Paul gives, the alarm he sounds, is that in the last days, these things would be present among those claiming to be children of God, bought with a price, and



redeemed unto righteousness. The despondency, anguish, and despair evident in his letter is that those tasked with watching stopped watching, those tasked with warning stopped warning, and those tasked with preaching the whole counsel of God started preaching something other than the truth of Scripture.

When we couple Paul's words with those of Jesus, who warned that in the last days, there would be false teachers, false prophets, and false Christs, it is undeniable that those who would not deny the truth but stand firm on the foundation of the Gospel will be fighting a battle on two fronts: persecution from without, and false brethren from within.

We have been warned, and the purpose of the warning is not to ignore it but to be ever more watchful and vigilant, weighing the things we hear based on what the Word of God says and nothing else. We are commanded to identify those who would attempt to corrupt the household of faith and, from such people, turn away.

As the saying goes, it's always darkest before the dawn. The closer we get to the return of Jesus, the more sinister and destructive the enemy's plans and schemes will become. Through it all, as long as we keep our eyes on Jesus and continue to walk in His way, though the dangers and snares are many, we will persevere, for He is with us, guiding our steps and keeping our feet from slipping.

With love in Christ,

Michael Boldea, Jr.