



The Rue Family UKRAINE

November 2023 – January 2024

Dear Praying Friends and Family,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. New Years is a time when we stand in the present, while bidding farewell to the old and anticipating the new. It always reminds me of Revelation 1:19. This letter hopefully will provide a past, present, and future understanding about the ministry the Lord has so graciously committed to us for His glory.

The past few months were spent catching up after my last trip into Ukraine, taking meetings in FL, WV, NY, OH, KY. We cherished the holidays where we were allowed to spend time with family. January was full with meetings, tax preparation, and prayerful deliberation about the Lord's will for the future of our ministry.

The two most common questions asked during furlough are, "When are you going back to the field?" and "Can you even get back to the field?" We have spent some time in prayerful consideration, taking counsel with our people in Ukraine, and monitoring the war. As such we are still committed to the ministry God has given us to finish. The two questions remaining are, "Where?" and "When?"

After thirty plus years as a missionary in Ukraine, I've had enough experience to know both the opportunities and tolls of furlough. At the outset of this furlough, I wanted to accomplish as much as possible seeing that we won't be given another opportunity for a long while. Our next term in Ukraine will require a lot of steadfastness and stability necessary for planting a new church. At the outset, I knew that this furlough was indeed going to be a very full one. After our last stint of seven years on the field, there was much to do: churches to update, new churches to visit to replace lost support, fundraising for certain projects, medical issues to tend to, and children to help get reacclimated in the homeland. Keep in mind that all of this was done during the Covid pandemic. Any one thing in the list could fill up a lot of the traditionally allotted one-year furlough. We did what we could but did not come close to finishing the things on the list. We planned to return to the field anyway and were excited to do so.

Then the war broke out. We decided to continue with our unfinished furlough list while, simultaneously, raising funds for the refugee work. Going back to the field with no unfinished business was a very welcome thought. We also hoped and prayed the war would come to an end and we could just return to our home in Ukraine and pick up where we left off. This was our "Plan A" and would have been the best for many reasons. First, we have a fully set up home for my family waiting for us. Second, we have an established ministry giving us the ability to easily obtain religious visas necessary for missions work in that region of Ukraine. Thirdly, we have helpers there, consisting of those we led to Christ and trained ourselves, who are anxious to help us with our next phase of ministry. Lastly, all the time-consuming bureaucracy associated with life overseas (bank accounts, insurance, residency registration, background checks, tax identification papers, etc...) were already accomplished.

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Sending Church
Bible Baptist Church
1173 Jo Jo Road
Pensacola, FL 32534

Field Address
A/R 60 Glavposhtamp
65001 Odessa, Ukraine
Phone: 513-376-1011

Support & Mailing
Charity Baptist Mission
P.O. Box 692
Bristol, TN 37621

Email: RueMissions@yahoo.com

Website: www.RueMissions.com

Seeing we had unfinished business to tend to, it was wise to wait and see what the Lord would do with this war. I am taking the long view of the work in the Lord's mission field. I did not want to have a knee jerk reaction and just start doing things to keep me busy for optical reasons. It is now, however, time for "Plan B."

It looks like I will need to make at least two trips into Ukraine within the next couple months. The first, Lord willing, will be in March where I hope to accomplish a few things. The Lord graciously allowed me to win more souls in eastern Ukraine in two days than I have in a long time, and I want to go back for more! Another reason is that I need to move my family. It is still not clear what is to become of the Odessa region, so we have decided that it is time to begin making preparations to move to another location. We are not sure which, but we will either move to a safer city within Ukraine's borders or to another city just outside its western border. We are praying the Lord will show us the place where we can minister to those displaced by the war and/or from which I can make trips into Ukraine, continuing the progress for our long-range plans. Lastly, I hope to be able to secure a vehicle for our use upon arrival if possible. It is too risky to be sitting in a potential war-zone with no transportation.

My main prayer requests are for guidance, wisdom, preparation, and provision for our return. Please pray for the Lord to make it abundantly clear where He would have us minister. We are also praying for the Lord's provision for our return. We need return tickets to the field. I purchased "Round Trip" tickets when we returned to the USA for furlough. Our original return tickets recently expired and the airline has exhausted our extensions due to Covid and the war. This was another expense that I was not expecting. Another pressing need is to set up a new residence for my family. There are two options from which to choose and I'm not yet sure which would be safest and cheapest: one, going and packing up our house and hiring a truck to move everything or, two, just downsizing and starting over. We will probably have to do a little of both but either way, we are going to need extra funds for the move. After talking to my men in Ukraine about future trips and ministry it is evident that I'm going to need a vehicle for independent travel within Ukraine, first and foremost. We sold our vehicle in Ukraine prior to returning to the US for furlough to help cover the expenses of relocating. There are a lot of details to consider but I'm sure the Lord will sort them all out in His time.

We want to thank each one of you for your concern for our safety and prayerful support of our ministry. Please continue to pray that this war will quickly come to an end. Better yet, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

That Ukraine May Know Him,



Christopher Rue

Phil. 3:10