

HIGHLIGHTS

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Ukraine Crisis
IBC Churches Respond

Multination & All4Aid
When God is at Work

MLC, Multiply, & Women
Conferences Held



*Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers,
for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)*

IBC Churches Respond to Ukrainian Refugee Crisis

For many of us, the war in Ukraine remains at the forefront of our thoughts. Many are responding to the refugee and humanitarian crisis created by the war. Throughout the history of the International Baptist Convention, its member churches have responded to and helped the refugees who have come to their doors. Their stories have been captured in the pages of *Highlights*. We've read of Matthew of Sudan who found love and forgiveness at IBC Sofia, Bulgaria. We've read of the Ussefi family from Iran who found salvation at IBC Sofia and later shared that faith with Iranian immigrants and refugees in Greece and France. We've read of Afghani and Pakistani and Syrian refugees being helped in a number of IBC churches (see story on page 8 for one example). All of these touched our lives.

But as someone said, "This time it seems different." Perhaps, for those of us in Europe, it hits a little closer to home. It could be us. Or it may be us next. We don't know.

When war began in the Ukraine in February, several of our IBC churches were on the frontlines in caring for the refugees streaming to their doors. You can read about their ministry in the pages that follow. Others were not on the front lines but immediately began offering support for those in need.

Prayer. Participation. Partnership. Read on to find opportunities for each of these.

Judith Lynn Maxwell, Highlights Editor



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Published by the International Baptist Convention
Am Dachsberg 98, 60435 Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Phone: +49 (0) 69 9540 8505
Email: admin@ibc-churches.org | www.ibc-churches.org
Tim Faulkner, General Secretary
Judith Lynn Maxwell, Editor
Cover photo: Churches in Bucharest begin Ukrainian services
in the midst of the refugee crisis by Naty Tully.

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Celebrating in the Midst of Suffering

At various moments in my life, I have been in line with other friends, waiting to throw the rice as a new couple emerges after their wedding ceremony. On a few of these occasions, at the same time, another group was gathered at the church across the street. They were dressed in black and preparing to follow a hearse to the cemetery. That is how life is at times, and sometimes it can feel awkward to celebrate in times of great suffering.

Churches with Residents in 2022

- International Baptist Church, Berlin, Germany
- International Baptist Church, San Jose, Costa Rica
- International Christian Fellowship, Oberursel, Germany
- Emmanuel International Church, Paris, France
- North Sea Baptist Church, Stavanger, Norway
- International Baptist Church, Cologne, Germany


This edition of *Highlights* will focus on the suffering caused by the crisis in Ukraine and the resulting refugee and humanitarian needs that the war is creating. International Baptist Convention churches have regularly responded in these moments, and this time is no exception. However, before we turn to the difficult topic of ministering in the midst of the war, I will point out some reasons for celebration:

- When I began as General Secretary in October 2020 there were about a dozen churches looking for pastors. Today there are only a few. Let's thank God for providing pastoral leadership for churches.

- This year six churches have residents. That means that six churches have committed to hosting a young leader or leader couple for the purpose of developing them for ministry. Like an extension of the church staff, the resident gains valuable on-the-job training. Convention funds help make this possible. Praise God for the growing number of graduates of the residency program. These are potential future IBC leaders who are raised up from within our churches.
- In 2012 the most recent emphasis on church planting began. With coaching from a sister church association the IBC adopted a methodology. Pastors regularly dreamed, planned, and trained for starting new churches. As a result we have at least 14 new churches in the past 10 years. Initially IBC churches in different regions partnered together to start new churches. Later several churches started their own daughter churches. Most recently we are seeing daughter churches in the language of their host culture. Let's celebrate a greater vision of cooperating with God for new churches.

- After a two-year hiatus, the Ministry Leadership Conferences returned in late March (see article on pages 4-5). A dozen IBC leaders gathered in Buenos Aires and a hundred more in Dubrovnik. These family gatherings are always a highlight of the year but especially precious for leaders who have been ministering in Covid times. I am grateful to the Lord for IBC brothers and sisters who faithfully serve in leadership to the local church. It was encouraging to be back together again to recharge and refocus for ministry in the coming months.

- IBC churches gave 8989.80€ to the Global Missions Offering for 2021. This money will go toward helping single parents in Rwanda, earthquake victims in Haiti, and the Pomeranians in Brazil.

We take comfort in God's work in every circumstance of our lives, in the highs and the lows. As you read the articles that follow I trust that you will be encouraged as you read of bold faith and a faithful God. The current war is an opportunity that we do not want to lose as God responds through His children in local churches around the globe. 



by Tim Faulkner
General Secretary

10 Years of Starting Churches!

- 2012 - Converge International Fellowship, Darmstadt, Germany
- 2012 - Lifebridge International Church, Panama City, Panama
- 2012 - Tamarindo Church, Costa Rica
- 2015 - Rome International Church Rome, Italy
- 2016 - Koinonia International Christian Fellowship, Aalborg, Denmark
- 2016 - Waypoint Christian Church, Landstuhl, Germany
- 2018 - GLACE Church Vicenza, Italy
- 2018 - IBC Bonn, Bonn, Germany
- 2018 - Emmanuel International Church, Ternes Paris, France
- 2018 - Multination Church, London, England
- 2019 - River of Life Church, Frankfurt, Germany
- 2019 - Mittelpunkt Brazilian Fellowship, Berlin, Germany
- 2021 - New Song Church, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2022 - Internationale Gemeinde Köln, Cologne, Germany



Euroventure 2022 Online

8-10 July

Phil Knox, Speaker

Track Times with leaders from around the world

Registration now open!

MLCs Offer Encouragement, Fellowship,

MLC Argentina

The Ministry Leadership Conference in Argentina was an incredibly encouraging experience! MLCs in Latin America are more intimate than their European counterparts, allowing everyone to fellowship with everyone throughout the week.

As pastors and other leaders gathered from churches in Argentina, Panama, Costa Rica, Colombia, Bolivia, and Guatemala, we were encouraged by the teaching of Chuck and Ingrid Davis.

We first met Ingrid at an MLC in Athens five years ago, and a couple of the pastors in Latin America were so impacted by her, that they told me they would like her to come speak in Latin America as well. So we invited her and her husband Chuck. They have served as missionaries in Mali, and Chuck spent years pastoring in the U.S. while Ingrid had a speaking ministry blossom that also led her to working closely with Arrow Leadership. A few years ago, they felt led to go into ministry together.

Those attending this MLC were impacted by the way they worked together as a team. Their example of a healthy and united marriage was inspiring to the point that we dubbed them “Chingrid”. Ingrid spoke to heart issues, as she has a lot of experience ministering to missionaries who are struggling with emotional and other issues. Chuck is a skilled leader who has a light-hearted presentation style that packs a theological punch.

In addition to the support and loving challenge we received from “Chingrid,” we also enjoyed two



Our tour along the Tigre River.

tours. One took us up the Tigre River where we saw everything from mansions to shipwrecks that were stranded in the shallows. The other tour took us around downtown Buenos Aires with an audio guide filling us in on the rich history of Argentina and seeing sites like the church where Pope Francis used to serve.

One of the other inspiring elements of this retreat was not only the hospitality and expert hosting and planning of Werner and Adél Swart but also seeing their young adult children participating in the family ministry, doing everything from leading music to running tech to organizing tickets for tours and more. They are an inspiring family making an impact in Argentina, and we are thankful they had the time to also host this incredible MLC!

David Fresch



Chuck Davis encourages leaders at MLC Argentina.

photo by David Fresch

and Learning

MLC Croatia

We always expected a few cancellations for the Ministry Leadership Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia, due to Covid infections. And while there were a few of those, we also had an unexpected cancellation due to a passport issue. And it was the main speaker – Gene Wilkes!

What we had hoped would be our first in-person MLC in two years turned into a bit of a hybrid meeting as Gene quickly videoed all of his messages and devotions and sent them for us.

Gene's messages on "A New Way of Living: Practicing the Beatitudes Everyday" helped those attending to look at the beatitudes in a new way by looking at the people, the characteristic, the promise, the illness, and the exercise. He challenged us to take up the habits of exercise needed to become more godly men and women. Each participant received a copy of Gene's book to help them delve deeper into the topic.

Seminars during the weekend-long conference included Building a Leadership Development Pipeline; Multiplication, Migration and Matthew 28; Equipping Church Members for Monday; International Church Worship Experience; How to Live the Life You Love to the Glory of God; Children's Ministry in the International Church; and Intercultural Intelligence. For the first time, we had a Young Leaders' Forum where young leaders had the opportunity to interact with several seminar leaders on topics relevant to them.

Besides enjoying the seaside location of the conference, participants also had a chance to tour nearby Ston with its old town and saltworks, followed by a typical Croatian dinner complete with local entertainment.



Gene Wilkes joins us by video.



IBC Costa Rica leads worship at MLC Croatia.



Our tour ends with Croatian meal and entertainment.



Many also enjoy visiting old town Dubrovnik.

Multiply Conferences Span Two Continents

In March we pulled off a new IBC first – two Multiply Conferences on two continents in the same month! Approximately 70 leaders from countries in South America, Central America, and across Europe gathered in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Dubrovnik, Croatia, to join the “multiplication conversation.”

The energy was high, and the excitement is growing! More and more IBC leaders and churches are embracing the heart of God for church multiplication. Our time together was encouraging and uplifting as we worshipped together, prayed for the nations together, and learned together.

We tackled the BIG multiplication questions: What does it mean to multiply? What makes something likely to multiply? Are we multiplying the things want to? We considered the specific question of what makes something “reproducible” and considered it in the context of disciple-making.

I believe as we get better at multiplying disciple-makers, small groups, and leaders, we will be well on our way to multiplying congregations.

Neil Cole put it this way: “If we cannot multiply churches, we will never see a movement. If we cannot multiply leaders, we will never multiply churches. If we cannot multiply disciples, we will never multiply leaders. The way to see a true church multiplication movement is to multiply healthy disciples, then leaders, then churches, and finally movements – in that order.”



10 YEARS OF STARTING NEW CHURCHES

During the conferences, we realized this year is our 10-year anniversary of starting new churches in this most recent season of IBC church planting. We praised God and celebrated the new churches God has birthed and added to our IBC family! For a list of churches, please see the graphic on page 3.

Additionally, we have IBC churches supporting church planters in several countries through the European Baptist Federation Mission Partnership, supporting church planting via missionaries in the Middle East, Philippines, and Brazil, supporting local host-nation language church plants in their cities, and one even supporting a street church. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised!* (Psalm 145:3)

Our dream is to see every IBC church engaged in starting churches and the churches they start starting churches ... then we will have joined God in a movement reaching the nations around the world! 🌍

Darryl Evetts



Women Wake Up to What is Possible



“Dear God, thank you for this day. Thank you that I’ve not grumbled, been greedy, unkind or over-indulgent. I’m very thankful for that. But God, I’m about to get out of bed now and I’m going to need a lot of help. Amen.”

Ah, have you ever felt like that as you woke up to a new day? Sometimes we wake up happy to start a new day, or maybe realizing the day is going to bring challenges and we’re going to need help.


But sometimes we’re not so awake spiritually, cozy under the comfortableness with what has become normal. Maybe normal means only attending Sunday service and then not really thinking about it much during the week. Or it could be that we have never really learned how to do Bible study on our own, or we feel like our prayers are always the same and don’t get past the ceiling. Perhaps we feel like we’re supposed to serve in some way but we’re just not quite sure how. What does it mean to wake up in those kinds of situations? The first weekend in May 150+ women from many different IBC churches had the chance to explore that thought.

The plenary sessions and the four seminars of this year’s IBC Women’s Conference were all around the theme “Wake Up to What is Possible” and offered practical steps each of us can take to have a little less spiritual slumber and little more thoughtful activity. Jessica Hermann (IBC Bonn) explained Bible study methods and helped women use them right away. Diana Anton (Bucharest, Josiah Venture and Lifespings International) shared God’s invitation to reach out to those around us just as He has reached out to us. Andrea Wood Schmitz’s (ICF Oberusel) seminar on spaghetti and spiritual gifts might have been a little heavy on the carbs, but it was a great explanation of how our growth in understanding and using our gifts is not always straight and direct. Often it is a bit more messy and intertwined with our own perspective and excuses, input from others, and God’s point of view. A deep dive into Psalm 51

led by Sandy Chadwick (currently in Denton, Texas, but previously in several IBC churches) encouraged women to pray through the broken places in life and recognize God’s mercy.

Uplifting worship led by Nicola Münster, Wendy Penggu, Neshi Mavani (IBC Bremen) and Naldy Veldhuis (IBC Eindhoven) started and closed each plenary session. The main studies were led by Naty Tully (IC Bucharest) who challenged women to recognize their circles of influence, the unending resources in God our Father, the opportunity to intentionally choose joy, and the exciting responsibility to share with others the hope for eternity. The healthy reminder that we need to wake up to the fact that change starts with God’s work in our own lives wound through all of the sessions.

Apart from study times, free-time activities offered a great way to wake back up to group fun and fellowship post-Covid. A bonfire and s’mores, crafts, games, walks in nature, and impromptu coffee/tea chats let women mingle and catch up in their weekend away. It was easy for the night hours to pass quickly, and I’m afraid waking up on Monday morning might have been difficult for some. But I think they would say it was worth it.

“Dear God, thank you for this day. Thank you for your abundant resources and the joy I have in you. Change me so that I can be a positive influence and share the hope I have in you. And God, I’m about to get out of bed now and I’m going to need a lot of help. Amen.” 

Jacki Faulkner



Naty Tully

A Testimony on the Rebirth of Bethel IBC



by Rodrigo Assis da Silva
Managing Director,
All4Aid and Former Pastor,
Bethel IBC

He [the Lord] shows love to the foreigners living among you and gives them food and clothing. So you, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 10:17-19)

It was a cold Sunday morning in January 2014. I had recently moved to Germany to pastor Bethel IBC in Frankfurt. As I stood at the front leading the service, a young Afghani man entered the church for the first time. Visibly nervous, he kept walking from one side to the other at the back of the church, anxiously staring at me. When the service ended, he ran to me and started sharing his life story and the reason why he was there. I didn't know it at that time, but that encounter would set in motion a series of events that would transform my ministry in ways I could never imagine!

The church, at that time, was in desperate need of revitalization. The challenges were not just low attendance, low income, and financial debt. The ministry structure was obsolete. The church building was run down and located in a part of town that was not so easily accessible. To make matters worse, the church had recently experienced some theological confusion. Despite all of this, there was something very special about that church – the people. They were some of the most loving and welcoming people I had ever met. I noticed that on my first visit. That really drew me to them. Following God's call and their invitation, I accepted to come as their new pastor.

"Are you the pastor?" the young Afghani man asked me. Then, pulling up the leg of his trousers, he showed me a bullet wound scar and said, "My name is *Nek. I'm a Muslim and a former elite policeman from Afghanistan, trained by the U.S. forces. I was shot by the Taliban in a battle, but I survived, managed to escape and later fled the country. When I arrived here in Germany, I had a dream where I saw

a man in a white robe saying to me, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'. I told people in camp about my dream and someone said this is in the Bible. Is it true?"

Jesus had introduced himself to *Nek in a dream! I knew Jesus could do that. Still, I was in awe! In the weeks that followed *Nek was discipled and baptized. A couple of months later, we baptized another 10 refugees. Nearly every Sunday, new refugees showed up at church. As they learned about Jesus, the congregation also learned about their needs and responded by helping them to find housing, apply for jobs, access legal support, and enroll in language classes. It was beautiful!

At some point, refugees made up about 40% of the Sunday services attendees. You could see them serving everywhere, as part of the welcome team, in the kitchen team, or playing instruments in the worship team. Our services started being translated into Farsi. A Farsi-speaking weekly Bible study was launched. Two Muslim-background evangelists were employed by the church in partnership with a mission organization. An Iranian refugee man was elected as an elder.

Between 2014 and 2018, we baptized 67 refugees in the baptism pool of the church. The two evangelists and I baptized hundreds of other refugees in lakes, swimming pools, and even bathtubs. Most of these newly converted refugees came from countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. With time, most of these brothers and sisters integrated into German society, learned the German language, and slowly found their way into German-speaking churches.



Bethel IBC relaunches as Multination Church, Frankfurt in August 2018.

Frankfurt and the Birth of All4Aid



Together with brother *Nek on his baptism day in March 2014.

It is amazing to look back and see how God injected “life” into Bethel IBC, at a time when that was critically needed, and how He used the influx of refugees and the love of the members as catalysts for the church’s revitalization. Bethel IBC today has a new name (Multination Church), a new vision (multiplication), a new Sunday service venue (a nice hall at the city center), and a new financial situation (savings instead of debts). The church is free from the burden of building ownership and is poised for a new season of greater ministry success under a new pastor, Mason Smith.

But God did not stop there. That refugee-welcoming church environment also fostered in 2017 the birth of All4Aid, a Christian non-profit organization that pursues the vision of “displaced people attaining life in all its fullness” (John 10:10b). The original idea for All4Aid was simply to create a different type of legal entity to work in parallel with the church and serve refugees locally. For instance, as a non-profit, we would gain access to refugee reception centers much more easily.

However, soon All4Aid started being given opportunities to expand. An NGO (non-governmental organization) decided to give All4Aid their fully equipped community center on Lesbos, Greece. A mission organization covered a large portion of All4Aid’s costs in 2019. Three members of Bethel IBC felt called to become full-time All4Aid missionaries. Later on, All4Aid was gifted another community center in Cyprus. More recently, three buildings in Romania were offered for All4Aid to house Ukrainian refugees.

Today we (All4Aid) find ourselves working on an annual budget of approximately one million Euro, leading a team of about 30 people (support-based missionaries, locally hired employees, and commu-

nity volunteers included), mobilizing more than 100 short-term volunteers annually, and managing missionally designed programs in a few countries. We also find ourselves providing accommodation for up to 89 refugees of war and transporting 3,000 kilograms of food every week into Ukraine to bless local church partners. I cannot explain All4Aid’s growth, except to say it is God.

Now, based on the lessons we have learned these past years, I would like to leave you with five practical suggestions which are applicable to churches conducting any type of refugee ministry:

1. EMBRACE THE CONCEPT OF INTEGRAL MISSION.

Our understanding of mission today is still impacted by modernity and its dichotomous perspective of reality: spiritual and physical, sacred and secular. From there, and making a big generalization for the sake of brevity, Christians have developed two main concepts of mission. On the one hand are the “evangelicals,” who see people mostly spiritually and in need of evangelism. On the other hand are the “liberals,” who see people mostly physically and in need of social justice.

Integral mission, I would argue, is a more biblical theology of Christian engagement with the world. At its core is the idea that there should be no division between belief and practice or between faith-sharing (proclamation of the gospel) and social action (demonstration of the gospel). Rather, following the example of Jesus, the church’s mission should be to bring the gospel in a multidimensional way that meets peoples’ needs holistically. I would encourage you to consider how your church’s engagement with refugees could contemplate both spiritual and material needs.

2. BE MOVED BY VISION AND CALLING, NOT BY NEEDS.

Meeting the material needs of refugees can be overwhelming, especially if you try to meet different needs without boundaries. I would encourage you to define your vision and calling, considering what is manageable and feasible and establishing the specifics of your engagement (what you will do, how and when). We, for instance, defined that we would help refugees on Lesbos with showers, laundry, food, and clothes but never with travel to/from the island – no matter how sad or desperate their situation may be. It may sound harsh but being moved by vision is essential in refugee ministry. It prevents you from de-



All4Aid team unloading food and hygiene items in Ukraine, April 2022.

veloping a “savior complex,” from getting “lost” in the midst of the needs you try to meet, and from getting burned out, ultimately becoming ineffective. It allows you to focus on what God has called your church to do and on doing that with excellence.

3. LOOK OUT FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE.

Since you can never meet all the material needs of all the refugees around you, many times you will have to establish some criteria for who exactly you are going to serve. As you do, I would encourage you to look out for the most vulnerable. Some of that might be obvious. In general, refugee women and children are more vulnerable than men. A single mother with young children is more vulnerable than a couple with young children. However, sometimes it is not so easy to make that judgment. Romani people with Ukrainian nationality are more vulnerable than Slavic Ukrainians. Afghani refugees from the Hazara ethnic group are more vulnerable than Pashtun Afghans. Learn about the people you are engaging with, and look out for the most vulnerable.

4. MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW GOOD PRACTICES AND MEET LEGAL REQUIREMENTS.

Having a good heart and willingness to help is great. But, depending on your type of engagement, it is very likely that you will need to implement rules and policies. They might be based on common sense, on your voluntary commitment to adhere to “good practices,” or on your duty to meet legal requirements. If your church does not have policies on Health & Safety and on Children’s Safeguarding, for instance, I would encourage you to work on them. If you are getting involved with more complex activities classified as humanitarian aid, I would encourage you to get acquainted with the SPHERE

minimum standards and other guidelines and regulations.


Let’s ponder the scenario of a church wanting to use its building as accommodation. Taking into consideration SPHERE standards, each person should probably have at least 5 square meters of living space and share a toilet with a maximum of 20 people. Families should be kept together, and single men and single women accommodated separately. Fire exits should be marked and clear, and beds or mattresses laid out in such a way that wide corridors are kept for people to safely evacuate in case of an emergency. The accommodation should only be accessible by the refugee guests and by those accredited to work with them. It shouldn’t be a publicly accessible space where anyone can walk in. Following these types of good practices and legal requirements would be essential not only to help protect the refugees’ integrity, but also to protect the church’s reputation.

5. REQUEST REFERENCES AND POLICE BACKGROUND CHECKS ON VOLUNTEERS AND HOSTS.

Your volunteers will be engaging with vulnerable people who are easily susceptible to abuse. Whether you are taking volunteers for a short visit to a refugee shelter or are asking families to host refugees in their homes, do not assume that you know your volunteers’ character or that their willingness equals good character. I would strongly advise you to request at least two references on those engaging with refugees under supervision (those serving as a group and together with a leader). If volunteers will engage with refugees in a manner that they are alone with them in unsupervised settings – for example, hosting refugees in their own houses – I would recommend that, in addition to references, you request police background checks. I know this goes against the culture of most local churches. But, as the old saying goes, it is much better to be safe than sorry.

CLOSING

As Russia’s invasion into Ukraine once again pushes the theme of refugees to the forefront of debate in our society and challenges us to consider how churches should respond, I hope that the testimony of what God has done through a refugee-welcoming IBC church in the not-so-distant past can be an encouragement to you. In a similar way, as you discern and plan any engagement with refugees, I hope that the practical suggestions that I shared based on the lessons we learned these past years can be useful to you.

If you would like to learn more about All4Aid, please contact me at rodrigo.assis@all4aid.org or visit our website – all4aid.org. 

A Series of Unfortunate Events

Editor's Note: International Church Bucharest is one of the IBC churches on the frontline of ministry with Ukrainian refugees. Pastor Bill Tully and his wife Naty have lots going on (including Naty speaking at the IBC Women's Conference). So we asked if their daughters, who are ministering right beside them, would offer their perspective.

"There is a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time hate, a time for war and a time for peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:7-8).

Well Mr. Putin decided it was time for war. I don't know why, but what I do know is that he is hurting innocent people.

I found out that this war broke out in February. I thought it was just a story, but when people started coming to our church (International Church of Bucharest) to stay, I realized that this is real. I was worried, scared, but my parents said we were safe because we have NATO. But I was very sad for the Ukrainian families.

The first family that I connected with was a family of five people. The mom Masha, the dad Alex, the daughter Sasha, the son George, and their grandma. (The grandma was a Christian, and she even joined our Bible Study.) They stayed for about a week.

The day they left to go to Germany was a Sunday, so they came to our apartment to stay while the church was having the service. That morning my older sister Mina and I really connected with them playing foosball. When we left to go to church they decided to join. They were very helpful in Sunday School. They even helped a little girl warm up to the kids. There were a lot of people from Ukraine,

and they were either refugees or missionaries. They left at about 11:30. We gave them a big hug and told them it was a pleasure to know them even if it was through the war.

The next week we cleaned the church and made grab bags which contained: water, snacks, masks, toys, lip balm, wet wipes, deodorant, and cream. We are really grateful to the people who helped. And we are really grateful to Jesus because without Him nothing that we are doing would be accomplished.

Another family that came was a family of six people. The mom, the dad, the 13-year-old son named Pasha, the 11-year-old daughter Sasha, the 7-year-old son Vanea, and at last the cutest one of them all, the 6-year-old daughter named Maria. (She was the cutest, funniest, and most cheerful person you will ever meet.) We played a lot with them. We ran around the church playing tag and hide and seek. Although my sister and I spoke a different language that did not stop us from making new friends. When they left, they were really grateful (I noticed that about all of the Ukrainian people we hosted.). The little girl Maria was so sad she started to cry. I was very sad too.

Through everything, I learned that we should all help because if we were stuck in that situation, I know we would want people to help us. And I would not just want for someone to tell me they are going

to help but to be "hands on" just like mom says. :)

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3:17 "God will bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time to judge every deed."

Even if we don't like what the Russian army is doing we should not judge them, but pray for them because we know God is the best judge and He will judge in the best way. 🌱



By Bella-Grace Tully
(12 years old)



IC Bucharest prepares grab bags for the refugees.

More than a Charity



By Mina Esther Tully
(14 years old)

Imagine you just moved into your brand-new house. You're eating lunch in your new backyard and suddenly it gets bombed. I know you must be thinking, "She watches way too many Sci-Fi movies." But actually, this is what's happening right now in Ukraine.

Many of the refugees we've been helping told us that they had just finished renovating their homes or that they had just moved into a brand-new apartment right before this all started. Can you imagine how much they had to leave behind without even a second glance back?

Our church (International Church of Bucharest) really stepped up to help the refugees. At the moment we have 12 beds available in the church. It does sound small when you compare that to the thousands who are fleeing Ukraine, but our church people have also become host families.

Most of the families that come for help are exhausted and hungry. So, we feed them and give them a nice warm bed to sleep in. But that's not all. As my mom likes to say, "We are more than a charity, we

are a ministry." I can't remember one refugee we have met with whom my mom hasn't shared the gospel or given them a Bible. They literally walk out of the room with big smiles on their faces and holding a Bible. In Moldova my grandpa had the blessing of baptizing one Ukrainian refugee. A lot of Ukrainians are being ministered to, so as a result they are seeking God and asking spiritual questions.

One of my favorite examples of that is when we met a family of seven.

They called one late night asking "Can you help us? We need a place to stay." Looking at the time we decided to put them in the church because it was super late and most people are asleep at that hour. They decided to stay for about a week before going on their way to Germany to start their new life. Right before they left, the grandma who was the only Christian in the family told my mom that she's been trying to witness to her son-in-law but he was never really willing or open to hear the gospel until now. He was so touched by our help and love towards them that this is the first time that he will reconsider the option of Christianity. Wow! How awesome is that!

While I'm just 14 years old and as my parents like to call me "immature" while I may not totally get everything in this world, I definitely know one thing for sure: a lot of innocent people are hurting right now. While things here in Bucharest, Romania, seem so overwhelming to me, I'm not the one whose house got bombed or who had to leave everything behind, including family, belongings, friends, and even the best ice cream shop in town.

When the refugees flee Ukraine, some have just five minutes to pack. Don't get me wrong, but what could you possibly pack in five minutes from departure? And the sad part is that they only pack necessities. I guess that makes sense, but I wouldn't want to leave my Grogu (Baby Yoda) in a place that I may never see again. It's so sad, but it's the reality.

Most refugees we meet have only their clothes on their back. An example of that is when my grandma found a couple of Ukrainian boys picking up sticks on the rustic Moldovan roads. For what? To play with. As soon as she heard that, she did what any grandmother would do. She gave them a bag full of toys. As soon as the boys saw it, they were overjoyed.

We're so grateful for the financial support. It has been such a blessing. Without it, we wouldn't be able to purchase so many things that are needed. On top of that, it's been such a blessing working with all the volunteers coming in from the U.S. They took a big risk to come to a far-away place and deal with us.

What I can tell you is that helping with the refugees really stretched me. First, I grew in patience. I've been taking care of a lot of refugee kids at the Ukrainian church service. And let's just say that most of those kids are not "little miss innocent." They are so disobedient, but I try to be understanding that these kids are going through a lot. With God's help I haven't lost my cool with them yet. Second, I learned that things can be very random. I'm the type of person who likes following a plan. This has helped me learn that it's good to just "go with the flow." Pray for me, I'll need it!).

No matter what age you are, you are not too young to help. Just continue to pray that God will protect those in harm's way and that God will give strength to all the volunteers. Here is a verse that I really like: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).



Playing with the kids.



Photo by Judith Lynn Maxwell

Meeting Needs in Bratislava

Three brief stories that show some of the direct ways that our church, Bratislava Faith Community, has been able to support refugees:

SEEING THE LOVE OF JESUS

One couple in our church housed a 17-year-old boy and a 20-year-old young woman for a number of weeks. They regularly took these two to doctor's appointments, to meetings at embassies, to buy clothes and food, and so on. After a conversation with their mother who remained in Ukraine, they all agreed for the sister to transition to Ireland where she has a friend and where the government has offered tangible support to refugees. Through the giving of many around the world, our church was able to buy her plane ticket and to give her some money to live on until her government financial support began in Ireland.

The brother does not have a passport, and Ukraine does not plan to issue passports until the war is over. Therefore, the brother stayed with this family from our church for an additional month or so. During this time, he told the family from our church that he knows he has not been taking his faith very seriously. He said he has seen the love of Jesus through this family and that he knows his life needs to change. He then asked for a Ukrainian Bible and told this family that he plans to walk with the Lord moving forward. He has since relocated with his family in Germany. Our church cannot do everything for ev-

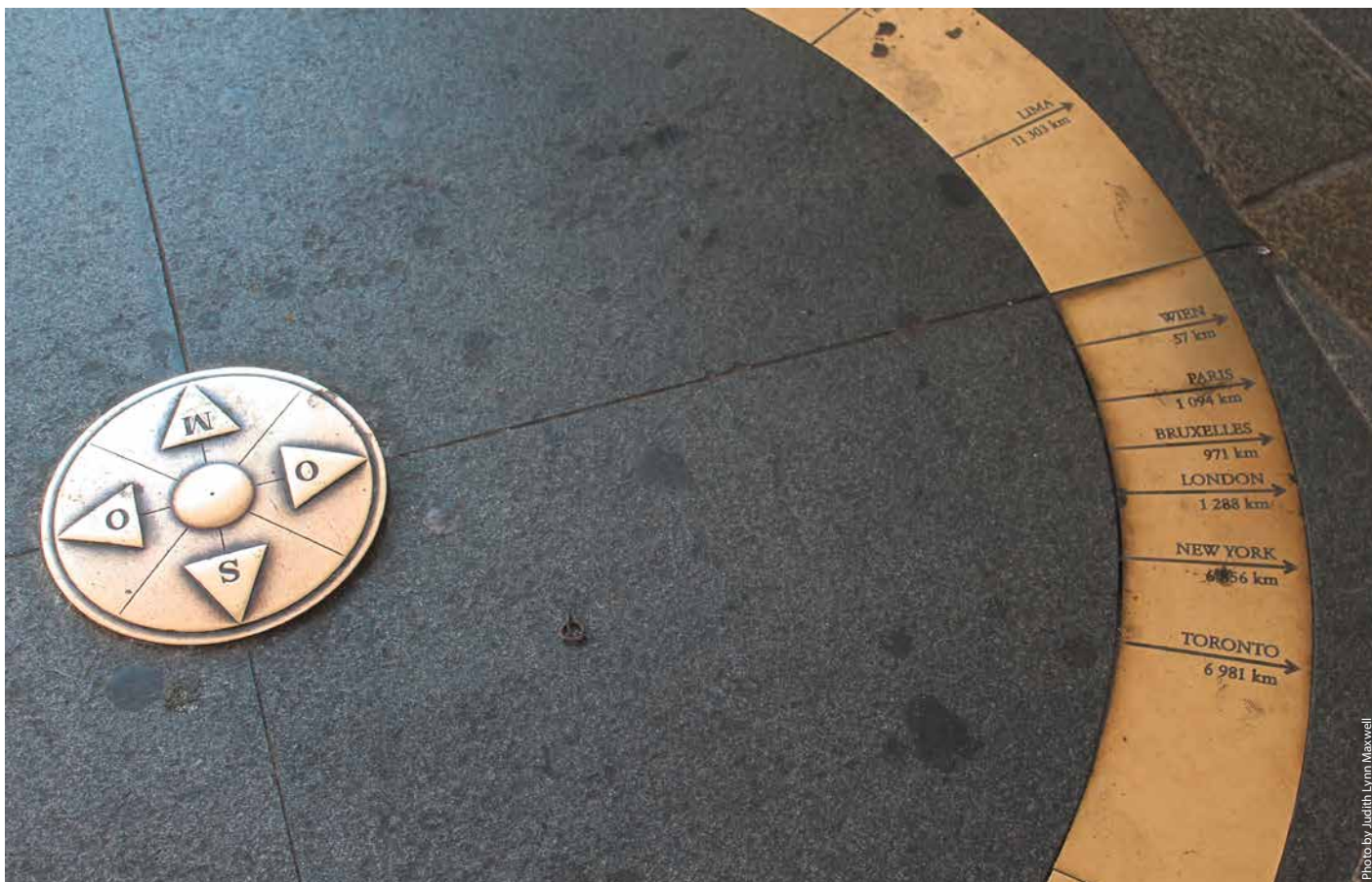
eryone, but I noticed the impact one family made in these two kids' lives. I could see the trauma on their faces the first week they came to our worship service, but that same look is no longer present. Before they moved on to different cities, I could tangibly see that they knew they had security and support within our church.

HELPING FELLOW UKRAINIANS

One of our members is from Ukraine. She has been regularly dealing with and supporting refugees that are her family, friends, and/or acquaintances. We recently found out she was personally caring for at least seven refugees at one time in her two-bedroom flat, and our church decided to send her financial support to help offset her financial costs. Once again, the giving of so many from around the world allows us to support in these kinds of ways.


OFFERING A TEMPORARY HOME

One family in our church had a refugee family in their home for the past few weeks. This refugee family has recently found a more permanent solution by moving into a university dormitory in Bratislava. While the time demand and financial burden here was minimal, our members were able to offer tem-



From Bratislava, many refugees travel on to other places.

porary support in housing and food long enough for this family to be able to find a more permanent solution.

Refugee support in Bratislava varies from one situation to the next, and the needs are so great that we have to regularly seek wisdom from the Lord as to how to best represent Him. I have enjoyed seeing Christians from all over Slovakia step up to care for refugees in need. The Slovak Baptist Union is working all over the country. There are Christian retreat centers that have turned into refugee housing. I have seen denominational lines disappear in Bratislava as refugee needs have come up. It is beautiful to see the body of Christ function like this in such a great time of need. May God use our small efforts to bring Him glory and to expand His Kingdom. 

Nick Gagnon

Resources

The following groups have resources available to help you share the gospel message with Ukrainian refugees. If you know of others, please contact us at: resources@ibc-churches.org.

DER GUTE BOTSCHAFT VERLAG (The Good News Publishers)

GBV has Ukrainian and Russian Bibles, New Testaments, and other literature. Contact them about special prices for distribution to refugees. They ship throughout Europe. Email: info@gbv-dillenbourg.de. Telephone: +49 2774 8005-0.

TRANSWORLD RADIO

TWR has radio broadcasts in Ukrainian available on its website and through AM stations and shortwave radio. Other gospel content is also available on their website: twr360.org. PDF files with this information in Ukrainian are available. Please contact us at resources@ibc-churches.org.

Medium/Frequency	Time (in UKR)	Length	Language
Shortwave 15200	18:00	1h	UKR
MW/AM 1377 kHz	20:47	1h	UKR
MW/AM 1035 kHz	21:00	1h	UKR/RUS

Brussels, Belgium

1 CORINTHIANS 12:26 SAYS *“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”* Let’s therefore glorify God and love our neighbors like ourselves by extending a helping hand to those in need and opening our arms to the needy to assist them in time of crisis.

Currently, the ones in immediate crisis are residents of Ukraine fleeing from conflict zones and arriving among us with little or no support. The IBC Brussels – Helping Hands Team was therefore set up shortly after the start of the war in Ukraine and has 33 volunteers who are mainly IBC Brussels church members. Joanna and Jos, the main coordinators are closely supported by Pastor Roland as well as the facilitators of the Legal, Practical, Pastoral, Translation/Outreach, and Prayer Teams.

Our purpose is to empower the families who come under our care, to enable them to feel supported while settling down during the first weeks and then helping them to find their way around, so they can feel ‘at home’ in Belgium for the duration of their stay here. We have a two-fold approach in implementing this mission:



The IBC Brussels – Helping Hands team

1. Financial aid to churches and organizations directly helping refugees;
2. Practical and pastoral help through: a) coming alongside refugees in Belgium needing basic necessities and engaging with families who host; (b) creating a support network through the IBC Brussels church family to share the gospel in word and deed.

A number of meals are delivered weekly to refugee families who have asked our help and we have provided for material needs.

Finding emergency accommodation for persons arriving in Belgium prior to their registration remains a challenge, but we are praying for the Lord to make a way. Next month, one of the Ukrainian refugee families whom we are hosting is expecting a baby. IBC Brussels church is looking forward to praising the Lord for His blessing to this family and rejoice with the parents as they welcome in this world a baby girl.

Helping Hands Team, IBC Brussels



Join the Children’s Ministry Cohort

The Children’s Ministry Cohort began in February so that children’s ministry leaders could meet and pray for one another, encourage one another, fellowship together, share about experiences in children’s ministry, and have fun. The hope is to build a team

to make plans for retreats and training. The cohort will meet quarterly via Zoom. For more information or to join (it’s not too late!), please contact Susana Kornahrens, children’s director at IBC Stuttgart (susana@ibcstuttgart.de).

Portimao, Portugal

DURING THE PANDEMIC, the ministry of the soup kitchen of the International Christian Fellowship Baptist Church, Portimao, Portugal, skyrocketed as many more people found themselves without work, food, and shelter. Whereas in the past we used to feed up to 60 on a Sunday and up to 40 mid-week, we are now serving up to 160 people three times a week. The number of countries represented has also increased. We now feed people not only from Portugal but also from more distant places such as Ukraine, Belarus, and Uzbekistan.

One of the highlights of the Christmas season was the Christmas dinner at the soup kitchen when we served a roast dinner to 138 people (take-away style), followed by desserts and a bag of presents for each person. These included a fleece blanket, a Gospel of Luke, a Christian magazine, and a bar of chocolate.

We now have a number of Muslims from Uzbekistan coming for food so it's a special joy to give Christian literature to them, as they may have never heard about Jesus before. Please pray that the Lord will draw them, as well as all who come to the



Alberto and Tanya cooking.

soup kitchen, to Himself. We also prepare a special non-pork option for them in our meals and sandwiches.

Among our cooks for the Christmas meal were Alberto & Tanya, a Portuguese couple who have in the past been helped by our soup kitchen. Now they are using their time and talents to help others. Please pray for them that they would come to know the Lord.

Joy & David Borgan



Portimao members pass out food and gifts.

ANNUAL CONVENTION MEETING

24-26 October 2022
Copenhagen, Denmark

Join us as we celebrate what is happening as well as continuing the discussion about being family in the IBC. This week is also the anniversary of Baptist life in Denmark, and we will look at what it means to be a Baptist, hearing from a local Baptist historian as well as some of our own IBC leaders.

