

## Introduction to Press and Public Message Russian Invasion Ukraine

1975 on May 1st, my wife and I entered the then Soviet Union at Chop. Shortly before that, we had watched the May 1st parades in Debrecen, Hungary.

Russian customs men were already hitting the vodka, with no attention or in the mood to search for our load of 1,500 Bibles and tracts, hidden in the sides and bottom of our hulking Oldsmobile. After Kiev and Kharkow, now cities in the frontline, we travelled to Moscow and from there to Leningrad and back home via Finland/Sweden. Our baby of less than a year old in the back seat didn't notice much of the enormous tension we as parents endured.

By now, my wife and I have spent nearly 50 years in the service of the Eastern European peoples and other nations who have also suffered, or still do, from atheistic Communism. The Gospel has proved to be the only force that can effectively stand against any oppression, and so we know that millions of Christians are praying now and doing all they can, with the many fellow-believers in Russia. Even more than at the time of the Iron Curtain, they have a much better idea of what is really happening. As then, people know now: *What the Russian state media say, you have to turn it around and then you have the right picture.*

But Christians have the added benefit of the love of Christ and the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth.

That is why we call on every Christian, but also non-Christians, to pray over this message, first for the victims and those affected and no less for the perpetrators, but above all for wisdom and guidance: God, what can and may I do for my fellow human beings now?!

Our approximately 20 organizations, especially our partner Shidno Europejska Misszia in Beregowo, a Ukrainian-Hungarian border town, and many other experts in this large field, are on the alert to do the necessary with your practical help and also financial contributions.

Please send your questions ABOUT and / or registrations for helping practically via [info@christiancareeastwest.nl](mailto:info@christiancareeastwest.nl) or [info@eeouk.org](mailto:info@eeouk.org)

Together with the thousands of western Christians who, a century ago, first started doing this beautiful work of helping the persecuted Believers, we are now carrying on with it after all these years and at this time, we are looking forward to reinforcement

On behalf of our entire international mission team,

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**Russian Invasion Ukraine– February 24, 2022 – Message to Friends, Press and Public! By Matthias van der Weide – Trustee Eastern European Outreach UK/Chairman OostEuropa Zending/Christian Care East West(NL)/ President Eastern European Outreach International**

*Beloved fellow workers in God's kingdom, and all who wish to hear it, share this to all....*

Shortly after the 1991 storming of the Russian parliament in Moscow by Yeltsin and his supporters, we travelled with a team, including Hiske Engels from Venezuela and Bert Dorenbos, a Pro-Life activist, via Minsk to Moscow and were allowed to taste the freedom of the moment, by even preaching the Gospel in Moscow's streets. It looked like the end of an atheist-communist regime. Shortly afterwards, we were able to open a soup kitchen in Moscow for the elderly, in collaboration with the city's social services. Bible reading and a biblical message was passed on with the meal. Our organisation financed the meal. We were excluded one day, as the city council did not want to work with Christian charities.

That was the beginning of a long series of governmental restrictions that also confronted numerous newly emerged evangelical churches. It gradually became clear that Russia was going down a path that would not harmonise with worldly democracy. Since 2006, the eastern border of our Eastern European International ministry has been on the St. Petersburg/Kiev/Istanbul line, with the Istanbul/Tirana line on the south side. In addition, from the very beginning we were active also in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America. Our main task is to make people known with the love of Christ and the salvation that only He can give. That has no borders and goes beyond any culture or political opinion. With the core of the Bible word in **Titus 2:11-12 (KJV) "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world..."**

**(NIV) "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age..."**

Working full-time with my wife, Gerrie, for OostEuropa Zending/ Christian Care East West since April 1974, this is central to all our work and is expressed through our newsletters and activities. The text in Titus speaks first of all about an inter-denominational approach and - judging without respect of persons – the **grace of God to all people**, regardless of their church or ethnic background! And what manifests afterwards, a way of life that has everything to do with the promise of Jesus: **Life and Happiness in abundance.**

**Since Adam and Eve**, faced with the horror of their son Cain's murder, by his brother Abel, **wars have always come**. The violence took such dramatic proportions for the first thousand years, that God sent the flood. Only 8 people, Noah, his wife, their three sons and their spouses, according to this Bible story, were given the opportunity to build a new world order. Today's **nations and civilizations** spring from them. **Law and order were introduced** to make life somewhat bearable, but wars kept coming. The English evangelist, John Bunyan, whose works are read worldwide, wrote an allegory about the life journey of the Christian men and also women (*The Pilgrim's Progress*), which is concretely about Titus 2:11-12. A lesser known work of his, deals with **the war for the City of the Human Soul**, which is in fact a war without ending till Christ returns. It is about a struggle with spiritual weapons, **purely Scripture teaching**, through which even people who are physically in prison or enslaved, can live in unlimited spiritual freedom and be a great blessing.

But their attitudes and beliefs do not make them any less vulnerable **because they are often the target of aggression**, crime and tyranny. However, this can bring a positive result, because their sacrifice and commitment often cause so much curiosity, that people start to investigate and accept the message of God's grace. This happens not only to ordinary people, but even more so, to educated people, such as the well-known Oxford scholar C.S. Lewis (writer of the *Narnia Chronicles*). As a convinced atheist in the trenches of the First World War, he was confronted with immeasurable war and suffering. Not long after, God's Spirit convinced him of the grace and Salvation that Titus describes for us. He became a strong advocate for an 'unadulterated' Christian lifestyle and **his speeches during WWII at the BBC** received a lot of attention in England and later especially in the USA. After his death in 1963, the ***Chronicles of Narnia (as a Christian Allegory) were filmed, and are even now a cinema success.***

I would like to end this letter with a biblical text that teaches us why wars can be short-lived, namely because sometimes God forces the warring parties to do so, and thus also offers hope for Ukraine, and the whole world, not least Israel, from Psalm 46: 7-10, especially verse 9 (KJV), **"He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire."** (This is literally described in Revelation 16:6 and named the War of Armageddon.) **Jesus the Prince of Peace will bring peace, but especially aims at peace between man and God, for the salvation (healing) of soul, spirit and body. So let us pray: Lord Jesus comfort all afflicted in Ukraine as well as Russia and everywhere.**