

25 April 2022

#Tymchenko #REALIS, #Ukraina, #60days-of-War,

Dear friends and partners,

This Easter newsletter is coming out late even from the perspective of the Eastern (Julian) calendar. But there is no “belated Easter,” because Christ is risen, and He is risen indeed! Thank you for sending us warm Easter greetings! Warmest wishes of peace and hope to all of you!

The past 60+ days have been filled with war, and in the lives of my family, coworkers, and myself, these two months have evoked dark feelings. The grief, despair, loss, and anger were sometimes overwhelming and paralyzing. But time to time they gave a way to unexpected and amazingly bright hope, fulfillment, and love. I wonder if Jesus’ disciples experienced a similar combination of contrasting feelings around Easter? We remember these lines from the Nicene Creed, tragic but also vibrating with joy and confidence:

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to Heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.*

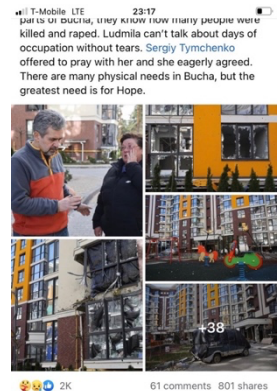
These last 60 days have been filled with a heady mixture of tragedy and joy. Amidst the darkness, light shone through ordinary people from Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, and many other countries. In the face of evil, these people chose kindness, courage, and self-sacrifice. As my mother loved to say:

*The darker the night, the brighter the stars,
The deeper the sorrow, the closer God!*

Let me tell you about some of these wonderful people I encountered on my trips back to Ukraine. There was the head of a bank, Alex, and the CEO of a big company, Rauf, who helped deliver food and medicine to those who were hungry and sick. There was a middle-aged pastor from Bucha, Sergey, who saved the lives of hundreds of people in the basement of his church. There was a former Soviet paratrooper, Brian, who fought in Afghanistan, attended a Bible study group led by my father in Kyiv, emigrated to the US, and came to Ukraine as soon as he heard the war had begun. I learned that Brian has been rescuing people from dangerous places while risking his own life. There was a young volunteer, Alex, who raised \$20,000 toward my nephew David’s medical treatment. Praise God, David is doing better in a Kyiv clinic, but he has a long way to go towards healing and, hopefully, walking again. At this point he still needs 24/7 care, and we are looking for a better hospital for him

I could continue, but let me just give you a few facts about our current ministry:

- REALIS is now partnering with [The Integra Foundation](#) in Bratislava, Slovakia. It is a Christian group led by a person who discipled me when I was in my 20’s.
- Bratislava is currently our home base.



- Together with Integra, we have already delivered seven big trucks of food and survival necessities (like generators) to Kyiv and Kharkiv. We plan to continue sending one or two trucks every week for next five months.
- Andrey Yukhimenko, the pastor of our church in Kyiv, began working for REALIS in order to coordinate this humanitarian project.
- We have already driven over 12,000 km delivering humanitarian aid to various places in Ukraine.
- With Integra support, REALIS will train 60 counselors to give first aid psychological help. Ten REALIS counselors are already working with people who have war-related psychological trauma.
- We plan to restart our educational programs in the beginning of May.

There is one more story I want to share with you. Many of you sponsored the building of REALIS' dormitory in Vorzel, a town near Irpin and Bucha, just outside of Kyiv. You also helped make it ready for refugees during the war. As a result, the dorm was supplied with beds, a generator, and a potbelly stove. During the first two weeks of the war, it provided shelter for at least one family. (Other local believers and REALIS families were evacuated earlier.) After Russian soldiers occupied Vorzel, they looted and destroyed the belongings of many local people, including those who lived in four houses around REALIS. However, the Russians didn't enter our dormitory. They saw the outer brick walls without plaster and they looked through the windows of an unfinished room on the first floor. They figured that the building was empty and there was nothing of value inside, so they left. During the occupation, many local people suffered for more than a month from cold, hunger, and lack of water because the town's power station was destroyed. After the Russian army abandoned Kyiv's suburbs, REALIS humanitarian help has been one of the major sources of food and water for local people. For the past two weeks, REALIS' stove heated up food for them and REALIS' generator pumped water from the well to the water tower supplying the town with water. Thank you for your partnership. It makes a difference!

Now, in addition to DAI International: <https://daintl.org/give/dai-partnered-ministries/>, you can support REALIS's projects and programs through my PayPal account using my email address: s.tymchenko@realis.org

Very soon there will be regular updates on the REALIS web page: <https://realis.org/en/> as well as REALIS Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RealisChristianCenter>. Until then, you may find some updates on my Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/sergiy.tymchenko.1/>

Христос воскрес! Він насправді воскрес!

Сергій і Ірина Тимченко / Sergiy and Iryna Tymchenko

