

**From:** Irma van Lieshout irma15vanl@gmail.com   
**Subject:** Fwd: May 5  
**Date:** 6 May 2022 at 7:42 am  
**To:** Ray Airosa rairosa@gmail.com, Joan Campbell joancampbell1@bigpond.com, Leon van Liehsout spoeks\_theater@hotmail.com, Lyn Moody lynmoody42@gmail.com



Latest from Shane and Jemimah Paxa.

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Shane Paxa (UA)" <Shane.Paxa@om.org>  
**Date:** 6 May 2022 at 3:33:52 am AEST  
**Subject:** May 5

May 5 2022

Today marks day 70 for the war in Ukraine. 70 days, 10 weeks, 2 and a half months. We just got back last night from a three-day trip to a town North East of Kyiv, where the Russians were camped for four weeks. Once again, we were faced with the total destruction and devastation left behind by the Russian army. This is Jemimah and my first time to this village, but the third trip that our church has done since the village was freed. The goal of these trips is twofold – one is of course to help clean and clear the rubble (that is all that is left from what used to be people's houses), the other is just to love and serve the people we meet. This usually means just listening, giving a hug or a shoulder to cry on. The stories that are on the hearts of the people of the town are heavy. These stories, the experiences, the things that people have seen are burdens that are wrapped around their hearts like chains of iron, waiting to be released. Talking helps. It was evident from the faces of these people that combined with the joy of having some help, just to having an ear of someone, a shoulder to cry on and a tight hug was so healing. What hope can we give, other than that which God gives? When all material things have been taken, stolen and destroyed, what is left but the spiritual side of life. During the three days we were there, we shared our time between 4 different locations, building walls, clearing rubble, repairing rooves, 15 people in all, 11 from our church and 4 from another.

Babushka Luba and Igor were the first people we helped. They were neighbours and both their houses were completely destroyed. When the Russians arrived, Baba Luba went down into her cellar while the Russians lived in her house. It was still cold back then, so they turned the heating right up. They lit a fire in the fire place as well and it all got too hot and the house ended up burning down. Igor's house was used as a base for ammunition. It was most likely bombed by the Ukrainian army. From it we cleared a mound of ammunition boxes, evidence for it being a likely target. Most had exploded in the fire, but not all. We cleared these two houses of rubble and trash. It took four 6.5 tonne trailer loads to get it all cleared away, and there was still some to go by the time we left!

Lessia, Baba Luba's daughter lived in the house next to Igor. She told of how the young men, "young boys in men's uniforms" she called them, came and got them out of the cellar that they were hiding in. At gun point the Russian boys forced them down on their knees and took great pleasure in watching them suffer. Her son Kolya (18), and husband were taken captive by the Russians. Each day she would go down to the base and beg for them to release her son. He was released after 12 days. After being released, the family tried to escape and had to crawl on their bellies in the mud to the next town. All this, but not before seeing the truck loads of bodies taken from her town to be burned in the mobile crematorium or buried somewhere. These are but a few of the graphic stories coming from these towns and villages.

These stories were mostly told over the lunch table where Baba Luba and Lessia

would spread a feast for us to enjoy. From what little they had, they shared with us. Soup and potatoes, fresh dumplings and sardines, tea of course and always with a smile. They were so thankful for the help that we were giving and showed it in their generosity at the lunch table.

We are planning to keep doing these trips as long as we can. Each week we plan to send a team to go and help. Right now there is a deficit in Ukraine of petrol and diesel, so we are praying this ends quickly, this morning I was number 63 in line at the petrol station... if each car takes 5 minutes, that's a 5 hour wait! And that for the 20L limit. These are the small things about war that I never really thought about. We are still trying to get the documents sorted for the van, but are thankful that we can still drive it around Ukraine. While marshal law is in place, things like out-of-registration cars are being overlooked, and for that I am thankful! Packets of food products go out our front door almost daily now too. After 10 weeks of either no work and little income, people are definitely feeling the pinch of the price hikes and lack of income. I see this need also increasing as time goes on and the war continues. On that note, we are all praying and waiting to see what will happen before and on May 9<sup>th</sup> as this is the Russian 'victory' day from the Germans in WW2. Many think that Putin is looking to announce a general mobilization of the army of Russian on that day, and to announce a victory in Ukraine of some kind. Please pray with us that God would bring a swift end to this war, that the suffering would be minimized and that many people would come to really cry out to and seek God at this time. Pray for our trips North of Kyiv and for the people there that we help, especially Igor, Lessia and Baba Luba.

In His name and for His glory.

Shane.

















