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How Crates for Ukraine May Become Seeds for Church Planting

by Jamie Dean, OPC Communications Coordinator

Not long after Russia invaded Ukraine last year, an American missionary living in the former Soviet state found himself consulting a crisis manual published in the Dominican Republic.

It wasn't what MTW missionary Doug Shepherd expected to be doing last spring, but the sudden war left Ukrainian pastors scrambling for the best way to respond to circumstances they'd never faced before.

Shepherd skipped the manual's chapter on how to form a police force, but he found another section particularly helpful: how to form a crisis team.

What he learned helped the MTW team devise plans for assisting refugees fleeing their homes and organizing tangible aid for those staying behind. That effort eventually led to the project called Crates for Ukraine—an opportunity for PCA, OPC, and other congregations in the United States to pack sturdy boxes (or "crates") of much-needed supplies for shipment to the MTW team in Ukraine.

This year's winter edition of Crates for Ukraine brought in more than 1,300 crates full of medical, hygienic, and other basic supplies that are difficult to obtain or purchase in Ukraine.

Each crate includes the L'viv church's name, address, and website, along with the web address for their Reformed publishing house, with many resources available online for free, including Bible study materials. It also includes a sticker with Isaiah 41:10: "Fear not, for I am with you..." Though the crisis team can't meet every person who benefits from items in all the crates, Doug Shepherd says the church's contact information serves as breadcrumbs for those who might want to find them later. It might also serve as seeds.

Even during a war, Hacquebord is thinking about church planting, and says he's hopeful the crates project will provide many contacts for people in other parts of the country and lay groundwork for potential church plants. Ruslan, the leader of the crisis team, says he often hears from people who have benefited from aid and want to say thanks, including many who need to hear the gospel.

Read more on our website: OPCDisasterResponse.org

UPDATES

Turkey Earthquake Fund Update—

OPC Disaster Response continues to explore options to partner with other like-minded ministries in the region as we wait to hear from those in the area regarding their needs. To date we've collected \$139,254.52 in generous donations. Thanks to all those who have given! The fund continues to be open to accept donations. Please continue to pray for the efforts of Reformed pastors and missionaries in the region.

Measuring Success: Sheds of Hope in Neon—

To date, 17 "Sheds of Hope" have been distributed and assembled in this Spring effort to shelter the few possessions that flood victims were able to save. With each shed, Mike and other volunteers are sure to pray and

introduce Neon Reformed OPC for future contact before departing. Mike and company have also helped to add shrubs and flowers in town in an effort to bring new life where there was once only inches of sloppy mud. Slowly the town is beginning to look alive again. And there are still several weeks left in this effort!

Tornadoes Strike the South and Midwest—

We are happy to report, after checking with the OPC Presbyteries in the affected regions, there are no known needs after the recent storms and tornadoes hit in the midwest and southern U.S. Please join us in praising the Lord for the loving protection shown to His church and pray for those of whom were affected.

SERVE

Short Term Missions Opportunities—

Boardwalk Chapel Ministry Teams: 2023 & 2024

The Chapel is looking for weekend work teams to serve in May 2023!

English Camp in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic English Camp team has been filled! Praise the Lord for His goodness.

Missionary Associates Needed in Montevideo, Uruguay

The Uruguay Mission is seeking people to assist with outreach, evangelism, and music in worship.

Serve at the Uganda Mission

The Uganda Mission is welcoming visitors willing to serve in the areas of childcare and hospitality. There is also a great need for individuals willing to do facility maintenance.

Serve in Japan

The Japan Mission is happy to receive mission teams willing to assist with a variety of tasks!

Teach ESL at the Missionary Training Institute in South Korea

Interested in traveling to South Korea and teaching English to missionaries? Two or Three ESL teachers are needed to serve in 2024.

Team Praha 2023

Join Jerry and Marilyn Famik for three weeks of youth ministry and service in Praha, Czech Republic! These three weeks will be packed with evangelism and sightseeing.

Team Puerto Rico 2023

Iglesia Presbiteriana Sola Escritura (OPC) in Guayama, Puerto Rico is eager to welcome individuals or a group to help with Vacation Bible School this summer.

Check out these opportunities on our website: OPCSTM.org

Disaster Response Opportunities—

Neon, Kentucky Flooding

Spring volunteers are needed for May! Join Neon Reformed in reaching out to serve the community.

Turkey Earthquake Fund

Donations to this fund will be used to bring a ministry of mercy to those suffering from the earthquakes that struck Turkey and Syria at the beginning of this month.

Register to be a Disaster Response Volunteer!

Let us know you are interested in serving so that we can call on you when the need arises. There are currently 506 registered volunteers to date!

Learn about these opportunities and more by visiting our website: OPCDisasterResponse.org

Where you can find us: Facebook: OPC Disaster Response & OPC Short-Term Missions Instagram: @OPCSTM

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