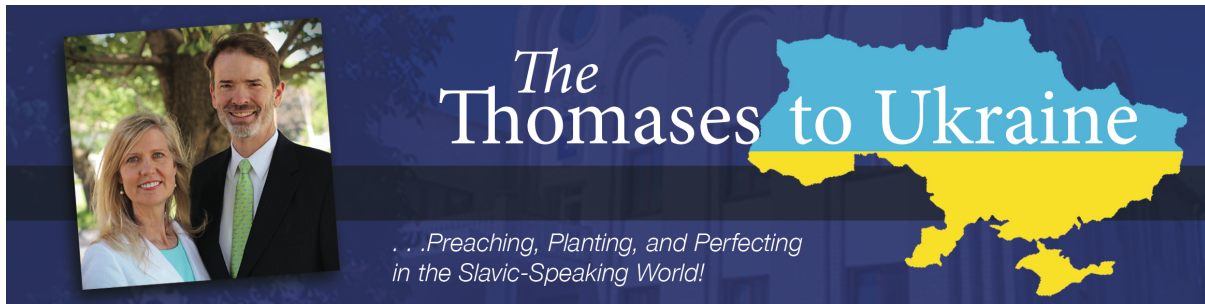


**From:** Missionary Derek Thomas dthomas.sbi@42386965.mailchimpapp.com  
**Subject:** Mine Fields by Day, Evangelistic Work by Night  
**Date:** August 21, 2025 at 7:37 AM  
**To:** memorialbaptistchurch@gmail.com

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August 20, 2025

Dear Praying Friends,

Our first 2 weeks in Ukraine have been filled with gospel opportunities. Compassion for Ukraine sponsored 2 more camps bringing 250 young people from Eastern Ukraine to our camp in Lutsk. SBI staff and students did a wonderful job organizing and serving in the camp. The youth, the majority who come from unbelieving families, heard the gospel, many for the first time. By the end of these camps, to the glory of God, we had around 80 decisions for Christ. **Thank you for your partnership in prayer to this end, but please continue to pray for these precious ones to grow in grace and for the gospel seed to be watered in those yet to respond.** One girl who attended, Sophia, is the daughter of an Orthodox priest. Please pray for Sophia, her father, and God's continued work in their hearts through the power of the gospel.

We traveled to meet with partnering pastors in the Kherson and Mykolaiv regions where we participated in multiple evangelistic aid outreaches. We were encouraged by their vibrant and growing gospel ministries. One local pastor, Anatoli, is evangelizing 15 neighboring communities in addition to serving in his

local church. Together, we preached in a village which has no church. Praise God Anatoli now leads meetings here regularly, with souls responding to the gospel. **Pastors like Anatoli repeatedly report that aid distributions demonstrate Christ's love and encourage greater openness to the gospel. Thank you for your gifts to Compassion for Ukraine that make testimonies like this possible.** Another pastor we worked with in these regions was Pastor Vlad. He takes aid, water, and shares the gospel in 18 villages in his church's vicinity. However, Pastor Vlad and his family have paid the ultimate price for their ministry.

During the time of Russian occupation, the invaders planted many mines in his area. One year ago, Vlad's 19-year-old son, Ivan, while serving with his dad stepped out of his car and into eternity when a mine exploded beneath him. Now Pastor Vlad's 24-year-old daughter, Dasha, works in a mine removing the mines that took her brother's life. During our visit, Dasha worked in the mine field during the day, only to join us that evening to minister in song in our evangelistic meeting. Many that night raised their hands to receive Christ.

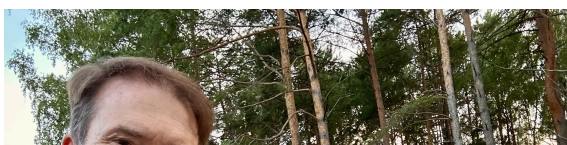
***While the difficulties and tragedy of war are growing in Ukraine, so the soldiers of the cross are rising to serve.*** What an honor to partner with such heroes of faith, and with you, our partners from home, "holding the ropes" for us and our Ukrainian team in prayer.

Your friends and faithful servants,

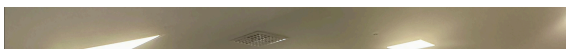
Derek and Julie

**P.S. If you have not received a printable version of this prayer letter by email, but would like to, please write us at [dthomas.sbi@gmail.com](mailto:dthomas.sbi@gmail.com).**

**Also, please follow us on Instagram at [missionaryderek](https://www.instagram.com/missionaryderek) or through our Facebook page [Derek Thomas](#)**



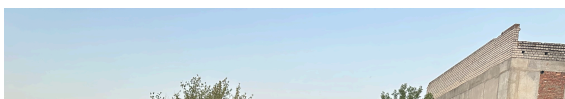








Compassion for Ukraine sponsored 3 weeks of camp ministry this summer. Slavic Baptist Institute staff and students manned the camps and did a wonderful job. We also received help from America, with several Bible College students coming over to lend a hand. It was truly a blessing to witness the Lord working through our national and international laborers, reaching so many children and young people from unbelieving homes. Most of these young people come from regions very close to the war. Thank you to all who participated here in Ukraine, and to all who served from the U.S. through your prayers. In the top right photo Sophia sits on Julie's right side.









The opportunities to preach the gospel continue. Above are photos from recent evangelistic meetings in Kherson, and Mykolaiv regions. A pastor in Ukraine urged that now is the time to actively spread the gospel throughout the country. People In Ukraine are in physical need of aid, while living with a heightened awareness of death and eternity. Please pray for this work and so many partners here who labor tirelessly to "redeem the time." Pray as well for the Lord's grace for pastors like Pastor Vlad in the bottom photo between Sergio and me. Can one imagine the loss of a child, only to see your daughter working every day in a mine field? Only God's grace can sustain and keep such servants of God at such a time as this.



Pictured above is a mine field in Kherson region. Previously occupied by Russia, many fields and areas were left littered with mines. Workers trained by the Ukrainian government, such as the one pictured, dedicate themselves to clearing these fields of mines. Sometimes the Russians double stacked the mines, so that when the top mine is removed the bottom mine detonates. Pastor Vlad's son, Ivan, was killed not far from here. Dasha, Vlad's daughter, works in these fields. Some estimate it will take Ukraine 100 years to clear the most heavily mined areas.





Sergio and I were able to visit Pastor Oleg while in the Kherson region. Due to the prevailing danger, we couldn't drive to Kherson city where he pastors, so he drove out to meet us instead. Pastor Oleg's church continues to run 450-500 every Sunday. He still holds evangelistic aid outreaches. However, Pastor Oleg has children at home, the youngest being a 9-year-old son. He shared how challenging it has become, as the people he ministers the gospel to often end up in the hospital later that week, some missing arms or legs due to mines and drones. Please pray for him, his wife, and for wisdom and God's direction. Russia is attempting to make Kherson city a "gray zone."







One of our great blessings was to be with Pastor Dima and our church family at Living Hope Baptist Church of Kyiv. We've enjoyed our time there in fellowship and are looking forward to the upcoming baptismal service on August 31. Please pray for this service and for the Lord's continued work in hearts. As you can see in the bottom right photo, we have a new preacher at Living Hope. Dima and Erica's miracle baby, Oscar, a gift of God's grace, is an evangelist in training.







The devastation of war continues for almost 4 years. Pictures like this are from recent attacks. Just yesterday 614 drones and missiles were shot into Ukraine with hits at 11 locations across the country. Please pray for an end of this cruel war.



Pictured behind us is "Mother Ukraine." Originally built during the Soviet era to honor the Soviet triumph over Nazi Germany, it has taken on new symbolism following Ukraine's independence and the full-scale invasion in 2022. The monument has become a symbol of Ukrainian resilience and defense, considered by some to be a living symbol of Ukraine's historical struggles and evolving identity. The monument stands 335 feet, making it one of the tallest statues in Europe.

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