

Dear friends,

We are sure that many of you have been following the dramatic and tragic events that have been happening in Kyiv and other cities of Ukraine over the past few days and weeks. What started a few months ago as a peaceful political protest against President Yanukovich's reneging on his promise to sign an agreement of association with the European Union, escalated into a series of bloody battles brought on by the senseless beatings of young protesters by the police. The protests then broadened to their underlying issues; the large-scale political and financial corruption that has plagued Ukrainian governmental institutions for a number of years. The David-and-Goliath-like situation that the world witnessed, while inspiring at times, has nonetheless ended tragically for many and has brought this nation to the brink of disaster and perhaps even civil war and open conflict with Russia.

On February 22, as we watched (via live cam on the Internet) the crowds on Kyiv's main square cheering the decisions made by a now changed Parliament, we had very mixed feelings. We felt great relief that the shedding of blood is likely to be stopped and joy for all democratically-minded Ukrainians because they seem to have won a great victory. On the other hand we felt deep sadness because it's obvious that the battles are far from over. Ukraine will be fighting for its very life in the economic sector as it tries to keep itself from falling into complete financial bankruptcy and chaos. But perhaps the biggest battles ahead are not physical or financial, but emotional, psychological and spiritual.

Ukraine is a very broken nation in pain and deeply in need of restoration. Yes, there are many once-beautiful places in Kyiv and a number of other locations that will need to be carefully and lovingly repaired; yet these are but symbols of the real "destruction sites" crying out to be restored. (See http://www.cnn.com/2014/02/20/world/europe/kyiv-slider/index.html?iid=article_sidebar) More difficult than that with bricks and mortar, will be the rebuilding of this society. The road ahead will be very hard to say the least. Bringing evil-doers to justice without resorting to violent retaliations will take strength of spirit not common to most men. What this country needs are post-war heroes who are prepared to rebuild every social institution at every level; every citizen needs to be vigilant in fighting both corruption and hate at their very source – the human heart. That's where the problems begin and fester; the solution as you know, involves the greatest of weapons of spiritual warfare – the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. Thankfully, it is already at work in this society. Yet there is so much work to be done. Christians and all people of good will, both here and abroad, are called to be God's hands and feet in the process of reconciliation and reconstruction. At the same time, we must not place our hope in any one politician, even if he is a professing Christian. Our hope must rest firmly in God.

On behalf of the Ukrainian people and all the churches and Christian schools of Ukraine of all denominational affiliations, we ask you to set aside time to pray for friend and foe alike. Let this be our part in supporting Ukrainians over the next few months especially when decisions will be made that are critical for the future of this nation and this region of the world.

Please pray about the following urgent needs:

- A peaceful solution between Russia and Ukraine involving the crisis in the Crimea.
- Stability and peace among all nations involved.
- An end to all violence and corruption at every level.
- Comfort and the peace of God for all those who lost loved ones. (A three-minute musical video tribute to those many who lost their lives was televised in Ukraine. There are graphic images portrayed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKbp-d8aa9g>)
- Sincerity, wisdom and cooperation among all political leaders for the restructuring of the various governmental institutions.
- Wisdom for all churches, NGOs and government agencies as they help restore peace, trust and hope among people.
- Upcoming elections and appointments of new political leaders.
- Recovery of stolen national wealth and financial assistance to stabilize the economy.
- A special outpouring of God's Spirit that leads people to repentance and dedication to Him in ushering in His Kingdom in a greater way in Ukraine and surrounding nations.
- A greater vision among teachers and churches of the potential impact of Christian education on the Ukrainian nation of the future.
- Wisdom for us as we adjust our ministry to these unexpected events. Unfortunately, we had to postpone our international Christian teachers' conference which was to be conducted near Kyiv in just a few weeks because of

the dangers of travel as a result of the ongoing and potential unrest throughout the country. Three other important upcoming ACSI events have also been postponed or cancelled.

We want to thank many of you who have written to us and have prayed for us and our staff. Thankfully, we are all safe. We closed the office for several days for reasons of safety and because city transportation was either shut down or reduced. As it turned out, during the worst of the violence last week we personally were outside of Ukraine on a long-planned R&R to Spain.

We continue to covet your prayers for wisdom in providing training and services for the teachers and schools of Ukraine and the other countries of the former USSR.

May the Lord bless each of you in your service of our King.

Raymond & Cindy Le Clair
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