

Winds of Change

Dear Friends,
In the early 1990's a European rock band called 'the Scorpions' wrote a song entitled "Winds of Change." It was a popular, melodic tune filled with words of optimism surrounding the dramatic events taking place in Eastern Europe as the Soviet Union was disintegrating.

Fourteen years later, after the successful "Orange Revolution" in December 2004, true 'winds of change' are finally blowing through Ukraine.

Today, the mood of its people vacillates from giddy delight to a sense of cautious optimism, to one of total distrust of the political system and its ability to change.

Despite the variance of opinions, most would agree Ukraine is entering a new phase in its storied and sometimes tragic history.

How will these changes impact the Christian community? I recently read an article in a secular magazine called the Ukrainian Observer. The article was entitled "Protestants in Power".

The author stated; "In Ukraine, the dominant religion has almost always been Orthodox Christianity, which makes no excuses for its support of a strong centralized state. But recently, another competitor for the souls and support of the country's believers has appeared in the corridors of power. Christianity's most decentralized denominations are at high tide in the former Soviet republic, riding on the crest of a wave of regional democratization and dissolving the debris of the former Russian empire in their wake."

Christians are becoming a political force to be reckoned with in Ukraine. Most Protestant churches supported the Orange Revolution, which brought Viktor Yushchenko to power. It is now generally accepted they are not only influential during elections but also on a regular basis in parliament, where, again, they are few but influential and respected.

The reasons for the Protestant's credibility and clout are several; not the least of which is their willingness and ability to fan out in their communities doing charitable work; working with orphans, street kids; holding summer

Early in 2005, a practising Baptist pastor, was appointed head of the State Security Service, the successor to the KGB.

camps etc. This is accomplished primarily via partnerships with Christians in the West, through agencies like HART, whose focus is on supporting National Ministries.

And now, to the astonishment of most people, early in 2005, Ukrainian Christians reached what was in Soviet times the

pinnacle of raw power; Oleksander Turchynov, a practising Baptist pastor, was appointed head of the State Security Service, the successor to the KGB. The organism that once persecuted Christians is now being led by one.

Equally remarkable, was the televised address to Parliament by the new Prime Minister of Ukraine, Julia Tymoshenko. Here are some excerpts:

"I know the number one problem in our nation is corruption, starting at the top of government." She goes on to say; "Our government program will have six subdivisions. And the first of them is faith. Faith is the main ingredient to all prosperity. And the first division is devoted to bringing real faith in God to our society."

And finally this extraordinary quote from her speech; "Ukraine will never get up from it's knees until it will get down on its knees before God."

Amazingly, God has ushered in a new government in Ukraine, without a shot being fired, without violence, riots, or bloodshed. And He has provided the country with a President and Prime Minister whom profess faith in God and the fear of the Lord openly and readily.

As guardedly optimistic as we are about the future, certainly the problems of poverty and spiritual bankruptcy in Ukraine will not be solved any time soon.

Orphanages are still filled to capacity with children who've been abandoned by their parents. Alcoholism is endemic. Young people are buying into the superficial, materialistic world that television, advertising and movies are selling them.

There is also the disturbing ever-widening gap between generations within the Christian community to contend with.

HART's ministry, therefore, is needed now as never before. With YOUR faithful partnership we will continue to impact thousands of lives each year for time and eternity.

On behalf of all of us at HART, and the 170+ National ministry partners we support in Eastern Europe; THANK YOU for co-labouring with us as we play a part in this unique move of God to transform this nation and this region of the world.

Sincerely,



Lloyd Cenaiko, President



Scene from the "Orange Revolution" in Kiev, Dec 2004

**"Ukraine will never get up from it's knees until it will get down on its knees before God."
- Prime Minister Julia Tymoshenko**

