

Ukraine – We Can Make a Difference!



by Rev. Dr. Bob Henley

A Lesson from the Past

One event from Jesus' earthly ministry can connect us to the deep sense of inadequacy we experience when facing overwhelming human need.

On that occasion, thousands of people had gathered to hear him teach. They had been astounded by his compassion and miraculous works. Having gathered in a remote area, the people had eaten nothing all day. As it was getting late and aware of the crowd's hunger, Jesus turned to his disciples. His words stunned them, saying, "You give

them something to eat."

In response, one of the disciples sheepishly brought a young boy to Jesus. The lad had offered his five small barley rolls and two small fish. Looking at the enormous crowd and the meager resources, the disciple said to Jesus, "But what are these among so many?"

A Tragedy of the Present

For the past five weeks, we have watched a dreadful human tragedy unfold daily. This is no natural disaster. The suffering and devastation being inflicted on the people of Ukraine has come from the twisted mind of an evil tyrant, Vladimir Putin.

This overwhelming tragedy can leave us with a crushing sense of hopelessness. We ask, "What could we possibly do to make any significant difference?"

A Gift Received & Multiplied

A young boy brought his meager resources to Jesus. Jesus took what was offered and

miraculously multiplied them until everyone had more than enough to eat.

We in the Ocean Reef community have been given an opportunity to multiply a different kind of gift – one that will make a difference in the lives of the people of Ukraine. This global crisis is unprecedented and for that reason we are making this appeal.

An anonymous Ocean Reef Member is providing a matching gift of \$100,000 for Ukraine relief. Our challenge is to multiply that gift. This is a timely opportunity to express our compassion through action, by responding with generous financial gifts, small and large.

We Can Make a Difference

The needs are urgent. Because of the urgency, we are being asked to respond with our tax-deductible gifts between now and the weekend of Passover and Easter, April 17th.

Every gift, like the loaves and fishes, will be multiplied. Our gifts will put resources into the hands of those already on the ground in Ukraine, on the front lines, alleviating the suffering of the people.

How Will the Gifts Be Distributed?

Pack St. Clair is the chair of a small team of Equity Members whose responsibility is to make decisions for the distribution of the funds provided.

They are already at work, researching competent organizations presently serving in Ukraine. Any organization being considered must possess a Four-Star Rating from Charity Navigator. This rating is only given to organizations with demonstrated financial integrity. The rating reflects an organization's established practice of maximizing the impact of the support entrusted to them, by minimizing their administrative and fundraising costs.

Our team's purpose, depending upon the total amount of gifts received, is to provide any organization selected with enough funds, in Pack's words, to "Move the needle!"

How Can We Participate?

Each of the four faith communities of the Chapel at Ocean Reef will be asking their participants to support this effort generously. But the team wants to expand the opportunity for support beyond the faith communities to the entire Ocean Reef Community.

You can do your part to multiply this generous, matching gift by writing a check to: PCOR-Ukraine Relief. Then send it to PCOR, 31 Ocean Reef Drive, C 101 – PMB 248, Key Largo, FL, 33037. Or you can scan the QR code in this article. It will connect you to PushPay, a safe and secure means of giving electronically.

Each gift is tax-deductible, and every penny received will be given in its entirety to the organizations selected.

What Can We Expect?

Will what we do meet all the needs? Of course not. But take a moment and recall a powerful scene from Steven Spielberg's film, *Schindler's List*. Toward the end of the film, Schindler is presented with the gift of a gold ring. It was crafted by those Jews whose lives he had saved from an earlier evil tyrant, by giving them the protection of work in his factory.

Engraved on the ring was a quote from the Jewish Talmud. The engraving said, "Whoever saves one life, saves the world." Their gift was saying to Schindler that by saving their lives, he had saved humanity.

When we give to support Ukraine relief, we are multiplying what we have. Our gifts are a hopeful response to human need in this overwhelming tragedy. What we do together will make a difference in the lives of people in Ukraine. By our generous support, what we do for one person, according to the Talmud, is saving the world.

