

Ammunition, Not a Ride

It's been heartbreaking to watch the conflict in Ukraine. Our hearts break as we've watched the suffering caused by a delusional despot wreaking havoc on innocent civilians. Those citizens include many believers and churches. Amid the senseless shelling, the blasts, the refugee crisis at their borders, the hour-by-hour toll of warfare on the people of Ukraine, we have also seen a picture of courage, determination and relentless tenacity.

And there are lessons to be learned. We've seen the difference between true leadership in Zelinsky and an irrelevant, brutal, narcissistic insanity in Putin. The contrast could not be greater. One of the great quotes that we'll never forget, came when US officials offered safe passage to Zelinski from the missile torn city of Kyiv. When he received the offer, his answer was legendary: "The fight is here. I need ammunition not a ride." This terse response symbolically reflects the sentiment of every leader that is invested in the mission. Zelinski communicated that the mission was worth living for and even dying for. Against the Goliath of Russia, he stood ready for the fight rather than for the next flight out to Berlin.

When I heard that statement, I thought about those who have gone before us and have left everything on eternity's battlefield. Lottie Moon, Jim Elliot, J. Hudson Taylor, Bertha Smith and the thousands of others that sacrificed everything for the sake of Christ. Even now, we have missionaries all over the world who are in difficult spaces fighting a spiritual war for souls. The bombs can't be heard with human ears but the battle just as real. We carry the banner of the Gospel in an ever-darkening world. We are surrounded by the enemy.

Like President Zelinsky, I hope we never want a ride. I pray,

as Southern Baptists, we aren't looking to enter safe spaces far from the battle. I pray for our missionaries in difficult harvest fields in Tennessee, North America and around the world who are rescuing people even today. They aren't asking for a ride out of the spiritual conflict, they just need ammunition. We are honored to forward the ammunition they need through the Cooperative Program. Of course, the ammunition they need aren't javelin missals, long guns or drones. They conquer Satan's minions through the love of Jesus. We get to be a part of the story through the funds we send to further the mission. Thank you, Tennessee Baptists for your gifts through the Cooperative Program. Our enemy is formidable, but our victory is certain. Let's not grow weary in giving or going to where the action is—the harvest field.