



The sufferings of the saints are examples, but the suffering of Christ is something else. Therefore the Passion of Christ should be separated very far from the suffering of all others. It is more severe. But the specific difference is this: All the saints have served God by their suffering and have set a good example by it, but not one of them shed a drop of blood or sweat *for us* . . . This only Christ did. Therefore His Passion is not merely an example, as is that of the saints; but it is a treasure and the price paid for our redemption.

Martin Luther

Good Friday sermon,
March 30, 1537



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Praying for Peace

It has been my privilege to serve as a missionary in the Eurasian region in Odesa, Ukraine, and in St. Petersburg, Russia. I know fellow Christians in both places and have worked with them in forming pastors to serve people with the Gospel. Watching the news about Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been wrenching. Leaving behind obvious comments about the foolishness and corruption of human governments to do what is just and right—"Put not your trust in princes..." (Ps 146:3 ESV)—I pray for our brothers and sisters in both Ukraine and Russia.

I have not had direct contact with people in Odesa, but with hope I read news in the LCMS' *Reporter* that Bishop Serge



ELCU help station in Ukraine

Maschewski and the Ev. Lutheran Church of Ukraine (ELCU) are actively helping in cities in their *oblast*. Likewise, Pr. Sorin Horia Trifa of Romania (who has been mentioned often in my newsletters) has been directly assisting refugees arriving from Ukraine. A picture of Pastor Trifa's son, Sergiu with a group he met at the border is heartening—the light of Christ shining in a dark place:



But the story in Russia is also wrenching. The Russian government's aggression has deeply affected everyday people in Russia, people who have little control or say in Russia's international actions.

This is the situation for my former colleagues, students, and friends in the Ev. Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCIR). Western sanctions have had an immediate and catastrophic effect on them. Foreign funding has been entirely lost so that the Theological Institute (TICI) at which I taught has closed. All LCMS missionaries have left as required. Pr. Jerry Lawson and his family were able to go to Helsinki, Finland, but had to leave much of their household "stuff" behind and are essentially refugees.

Staying behind in Russia is my friend, Pr. Leif Camp. Pr. Leif is in an unusual situation. While an American and LCMS trained, Leif is also a Russian citizen and a pastor in the ELCIR.



Pr. Jerry Lawson and his daughter, Cosette with Pr. Leif Camp as they leave Russia

He wrote his friends and supporters: "My call has been to serve [the Ingrian] Church as a pastor and missionary. Nothing in the current situation prevents me from continuing to do so—from continuing to fulfill what God has called me to do. In fact, the needs of the Church, the need for someone to teach, minister, mentor and so forth have in the last two weeks



Praying for Peace (cont.)

multiplied. Yes, I face uncertainty, I will face financial difficulty, I might face some harassment, and who knows what else. As difficult as these things will be for me to face, this is what God at this point is calling me to do.”

Lord, have mercy!

May God use the troubles of these times to strengthen and embolden all of us in our confession of Christ, in fervent prayer, and to continue to do the work He gives us to do.
- Charles +

PLEASE PRAY FOR...

- Those affected by the current conflict in Ukraine, especially those of the ELCU in Ukraine, the ELCIR in Russia, and our missionaries and friends.
- Pr. Jerry Lawson and family; Pr. Leif Camp
- Godly leaders in these times of trial and uncertainty.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- God's blessings via the many supporters and "pray-ers" of our mission.
- The grace of God in giving us another Lenten season of contemplation of the sufferings of our Savior for our redemption.
- Opportunities to show the love of Christ in the midst of human sorrow.

Updating my status to you

The times they are a-changin'!

With all the upsets in the international scene (COVID; war in Ukraine), and in view of my age (67) and health (OK, but there are some issues), my service in international mission work is being adjusted. I am still assigned to work as part of the Eurasia Region as a theological educator, but my "deployment" will continue to be in the U.S.

As you know, my work in theological education has been online ever since COVID first appeared on the scene, and so my work is less dependent on my physical location: *Have modem, will Zoom*. In other words, I will be continuing to do what I have been doing, just from the U.S.

What will be different is that I will be available to other regions for short-term

mission travel and teaching. The idea is to take courses that I have created and offer them either online or in-person wherever they may be useful in international work.

In this regard, God-willing, I will be heading back to Palanga, Lithuania in April. There are also discussions and preliminary plans for possible service in Asia or India.

As details and questions about this new situation are worked out, I am grateful to be able to continue to serve the church and her mission. And, I also continue to be very grateful to you for your support and prayers as partners with me in mission-teaching.

I'll keep you updated as we go along.

- Charles +

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me.
But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.

O Israel, hope in the LORD
from this time forth and forevermore.

-Psalm 131 (ESV)

Psalm
131



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