

Ukraine needs our help

Brian Keelan - September 2022

On Dec 26, 1991, after a combination of economic failure and internal political stagnation, the USSR dissolved into 15 independent states. Ukraine was one of those states. The Cold War was over... or so we thought. But, 31 years later on Feb. 23, 2022, Vladimir Putin announced a "special military operation" in Ukraine, claiming the operation was provoked by lots of "real Russians" still living in Ukraine who did not like the "Nazi" regime (with a Jewish president to boot) that was running the country and preferred to become a part of Russia. As Vladimir would have it, he was just doing the Lord's work.

Yeah... right Vladimir. That's almost like Great Britain deciding in 1898 – 31 years after we became a country – that they wanted Canada back and telling the world that they were doing it because so many British people living in Canada wanted to be brought back under the enlightened leadership of a king – or a queen. But it was really because, Hey, we didn't know that the whole oil thing was going to be so big.

History consistently shows us that war is the ultimate form of bullying and I firmly believe that Putin is a bully because what he is doing requires absolutely no bravery on his part whatsoever. His attitude can only come from a grandiose self-image where he portrays himself as a re-incarnation of Peter the Great. He doesn't seem to realize that if you are a tyrant, it always comes out in the long run. Just ask Hitler, Stalin, Lenin and Nicolae Ceausescu to name a few. Now we can add Mad Vlad to the list.

The Western media report the Russians have not been provoked by Ukraine and they have a massive edge in firepower and manpower while the Ukrainian people are putting up a courageous and resilient defense of their country against the Russians who are demoralized and losing lots of lives and equipment due to Europe and the US applying all kinds of economic sanctions and supplying arms and aid in order to bring the Russians to their economic knees. Ukraine is now portrayed – after one or two or maybe even three or more corrupt regimes – as a model state with ethical, courageous leadership. In reality, the citizens of Ukraine – people just like you and I – are being attacked by Putin and what seems to be an incompetent, unmotivated and poorly equipped army if you believe everyone except for the Russians and their pals. Like, say, the Chinese who stick their noses into things when the Chinese ambassador to Moscow calls the US the "main instigator" of the war in Ukraine and accuses the US of trying to "crush" Russia.

Then I read/watch or listen to a story that Russia is selling all kinds of oil at the new higher prices to India and China. The ruble is doing well and sure, there are some rough spots, but Russia has other allies (China and India to name two) who will buy their stuff and try to help them get around the sanctions.

In other words, I keep getting two different narratives for the same story. Brent Cooper, a guy from Dallas who has written some very insightful opinions on Quora calls it, "propaganda from both sides."

What I really wanted was to talk to somebody who had been there and seen with their own two eyes what is really going on. When I said that to Susan and Bill Miller, they told me about a friend of theirs who had just returned from Ukraine. His name is Luc Tetreault and he lives in Ottawa where he works for Fellowship.ca, He has been there. Mostly to Poland where he helps Ukrainian refugees on behalf of Fellowship.ca.

They gave me his phone number and arranged for us to talk.

"How do you help them?" I asked.

He told me they (Fellowship.ca) provide food, clothing, medical supplies and relocation assistance to Ukrainian refugees: mostly to Poland and other European countries as well as some to Canada. When I asked him to help me understand what it was like there, he told me to imagine a city like Sarnia being attacked and bombed by the people on the other side of the St. Clair River. The Ukrainians have houses and apartment buildings and condos just like we do. They also have schools, hospitals and malls and stores... just like we do. Now then, if the population of Lambton County is 100,000 people, imagine that 20,000 of those people have been made homeless by the people on the other side of the river. Bluewater Health has been levelled by enemy artillery shells. Lots of people have been killed. A couple of grade schools and a high school are also destroyed by bombs and tanks that are patrolling the streets. Kids are getting killed. Food is in short supply. People would get in their cars and

drive to safety but the 402 and the 401 are already jammed with people who also want to get their families to a safer place. But nobody can get to Toronto because the bad guys are bombing the daylights out of Toronto too. Besides, there's no fuel.

We can try to get to the Quebec border because it's safer there but once there, you run into huge crowds because there are two million other people from Ontario trying to get the hell out of Ontario. To go where?

"I don't know. Anywhere! Just get my wife and kids out of here. I'll stay here with the other guys and try to hold the fort."

But... "You can't stay here Brian. You're too old. But your son can. And so can your grandson. Oh, is your granddaughter over 13? She can stay too. But you need to go and leave the fighting (and dying) to the young people."

Now imagine 12 million people in Ukraine out of the 43 million who lived there before this started and they're in that exact kind of situation. Half of them have already left Ukraine mostly on foot and are glad for any kind of help to get them and their families out of harm's way. The other half are trying to follow the first half and more people are being added to that number every day. They are facing nightmarish dangers including nuclear threats and they are being forced to make gruesome, terrifying decisions every day. They are burying family, friends and neighbours in their own backyards. They can't go to their local grocery store for food because they don't have any food. They can't go to a hospital because it isn't there anymore.

Yet, the people who stay behind to fight are making the Russians pay dearly for every inch they gain. The Ukrainians know they cannot win this in the long run. They can only try to hold on and what keeps them going is courage and hope. Because that's basically all they've got. That and the hopeful belief that someone, somewhere will do something to help them because they don't know what will happen next if they don't get some help.

And that is where Luc Tetreault and his organization Fellowship.ca come in. And they need our help. That's where you (and I) come in. I like to help organizations that collect money for charitable causes that use all or most of the money they collect to directly help the people for whom they collect the money. Governments are terrible at this kind of thing because they pay their bureaucrats so much money and there are so many of them. If you ask them how much of the money they collect goes directly to help the people they are collecting for, they don't even know. At least that's what they tell us because they would be embarrassed to tell us the truth

If you would like to help, go to Fellowship.ca and click on the FAIR AID+RELIEF banner. Click that. Then scroll down the page and give them whatever you think you can. It's a Christian organization but I trust them.

I look at it this way. On APPLE TV you can rent the movie Top Gun: Maverick... for \$30. But the movie will become available this fall for only \$5. So, if you decided to wait until then to watch Top Gun, you could save \$25 and you could give that \$25 to Fellowship.ca to help some people who would very probably do the same for us if we were in that same situation. We have so much to be thankful for by living here and one of them is that we don't have someone like Mad Vlad living on the other side of the St. Clair River. If we did, we wouldn't have Netflix or even a movie theater and then we'd probably never get to see Top Gun.

That's just my opinion, I could be wrong but even so, I think the Ukrainians would appreciate our help and Fellowship.ca is a great way to get your money's worth.