

The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry Inc.

# GLOBAL REPORT

Spring 2021

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## The Eastern European Relief Fund

*Caring for the Neediest Jewish People in Eastern Europe*

Many Jewish people in Eastern Europe are children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors. They have suffered so much and seen so little kindness throughout their lives. These hurting, weary people recently rejoiced like children when our Friends of Israel (FOI) field workers delivered food baskets to them, having not seen such abundance in a long time.

It is because of people like you, the generous supporters of FOI's Eastern European Relief Fund, who make it possible to minister to the poor, elderly Jewish people in Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus. Because FOI's International Ministries team uses this relief fund so extensively, we ask you to consider partnering with us to meet ongoing needs. **The neediest Jewish people in Eastern Europe should not be forgotten.** The Eastern European Relief Fund ministers to these precious people in ways that are life-changing.

*The neediest Jewish people in Eastern Europe should not be forgotten.*

### SHARING GOD'S WORD

Our workers in Eastern Europe give Bibles to the Jewish people they visit when they deliver food, medicine, and clothing. With every delivery, they share the gospel of eternal life: that Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead so that those who put their faith in Him can receive salvation and forgiveness from God (Jn. 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:3-4).

The gospel tears down a wall that has been built between Christianity and Jewish people because of the persecution Jewish people have suffered at the hands of professing Christians over many centuries. This wall is especially prevalent in Eastern Europe, where most Holocaust victims died. One factor that can overcome such an obstacle is genuine love. The medicine, food, and clothing express our love in tangible ways and let Jewish people know there are true Christians



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who really do love them. Only when we minister to them in word and deed will they see the love of Christ in action and consider the biblical truth we cherish.

*Only when we minister to [the Jewish people] in word and deed will they see the love of Christ in action and consider the biblical truth we cherish.*

they receive practical help. They learn there are Christians who care about them, who love and pray for them. That knowledge encourages them and gives them joy and hope that leads toward faith in God.

They often ask our workers why we do these things for them. We tell them about our devotion to the Jewish Messiah who died for us.

#### **STRENGTHENING THE HURTING**

Because some individuals are atheists, it can be jarring when one of our workers visits and prays with them! Many of these people are afraid and lonely. One of their greatest needs is hope. That's why the Eastern European Relief Fund is so important. When you give to it, you directly serve these Jewish people in meaningful ways. In fact, Jesus said you are ministering to Him (Mt. 25:35–40).

FOI has incredible opportunities to minister to Jewish people in Eastern Europe, especially in Ukraine. Through our workers,

#### **MEDICAL ASSISTANCE**

Tetyana, one of our workers in Ukraine, recalled helping a 65-year old Jewish man visit a neurologist. Like many in Ukraine, he struggled to find transportation. But Tetyana's assistance allowed him to see the doctor, who diagnosed him with a serious illness at an early stage. He wanted to show his gratitude to FOI, believing our help gave him a second chance to live. Tetyana told him about God's love and that many believers, with their prayers and donations, made his visit to the doctor possible.

The average elderly Jewish person to whom FOI ministers in Eastern Europe lives off a meager pension of \$250 per month. Like the man Tetyana helped, these people have many health problems. Their low incomes mean they delay buying needed medicines, hesitate going to the doctor for diagnosis of problems, and postpone vital medical procedures indefinitely. Our workers help by purchasing common medications these people cannot afford and by driving them to the doctor whenever possible.

The day they learn we are coming to visit them at home, these dear people usually look out their windows and wait eagerly for our workers to arrive. Though they are penniless, sometimes they even prepare meals to share what little they have.

#### **CLOTHES FOR BELARUS**

Delivering clothing to the needy in America often means dropping it off at a Goodwill store without any hassles. Providing clothes to the needy in Belarus, however, is a risky, dangerous mission. Clothes are purchased in Poland and stored in the house of a Christian near the border. When one of our teams goes into Belarus, each worker grabs a bagful. Our people are limited in the amount they can bring across the border. If the guards mistakenly think our workers are attempting to enter the country to sell the goods, rather than give them away, the guards could confiscate the clothing.



FOI volunteer ministers to elderly in Belarus

The entire process must be filled with prayer and wisdom. Once in Belarus, FOI leaves the clothes at synagogues and Jewish centers. Our team also visits homes in partnership with local Baptist churches in Belarus that can minister to the people once our workers have returned to Poland.

### CHILDREN'S CAMPS

Our Polish worker Timothy Rabinek told me about a woman from Belarus named Suzanna who shared that her granddaughter went to one of FOI's Polish summer camps for Jewish children. Suzanna shared that, after camp, her granddaughter started attending Sunday school at a local church, and the whole family became believers! Timothy and his team prayed with Suzanna and praised God because He works even when we do not realize it.

This interaction would not have been possible without the Eastern European Relief Fund. These camps are places of fun and safety, where children can study God's Word and learn of His love for them and for Israel and the Jewish people. The relationships that developed over many years of visiting Jewish people have paved the way for our workers to invite these children into this life-changing experience.

### SUPPLYING FOOD

A huge need met by the Eastern European Relief Fund is food. In Ukraine alone, FOI provides more than \$25,000 each year for food for the elderly and lower-income families with children. This includes recent partnerships with Jewish soup kitchens in one of the poorest areas of Ukraine. The city of Chernivtsi used to be a center of Jewish life but now is home to only a small number of Jewish people whose pensions are merely \$70 to \$150 per month—not enough to live on.



Children show off jackets delivered by our FOI workers



FOI intern helps buy food to bring to the elderly in Ukraine



FOI volunteer ministers to elderly in Belarus

FOI helps to provide daily hot meals for the next several months. The Jewish leader of the soup kitchen left us this message:

*“With your care, you save many people whose fates are scorched by the Holocaust, in the time of poverty and disasters. God bless you!”*

“With your care, you save many people whose fates are scorched by the Holocaust, in the time of poverty and disasters. God bless you!” These types of ministries help people see Jesus and understand He truly loves them. Word and deed go together.

#### **JEWISH PEOPLE IN EASTERN EUROPE NEED YOU**

As a grandfather with five grandchildren, I know quite well the joy of children receiving gifts at birthdays and Christmas. The way these grown men and women rejoice like children when they receive generous gifts from FOI reveals their feelings of deep appreciation for our ministry.

“We were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing” (Ps. 126:1–2). Receiving food, medicine, clothes, and companionship, along with prayer, brings tremendous joy to the hearts of our Jewish recipients. It also builds the perfect connection for sharing the Good News about the Jewish Messiah who gives eternal life through faith in Him.

**Today, will you help produce such rejoicing in Jewish hearts?** Your financial support of any amount will go directly to the Eastern European Relief Fund, which opens so many doors in so many ways for the Jewish people of Eastern Europe.

Please consider making a gift today.

Thank you,

*Mike Stallard*



**Mike Stallard**  
Director of International Ministries

If God has spoken to you about providing much-needed support for the ministry in Eastern Europe, please send your gift to The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc., PO Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08099, or visit [foi.org/global-report](http://foi.org/global-report) to donate online.