

Ukrainian Baptists convert missile into pulpit

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Ukrainian Baptists may not be beating swords into plowshares yet, but some have started by converting a weapon of war into a pulpit to proclaim the gospel of peace.

Elijah Brown, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, [tweeted](#) June 8 from Kyiv: “Hundreds of Ukrainian pastors are in a conference to study 1 Peter under the theme of serving as pastors in a time of suffering.”



Elijah Brown (left), general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, and Igor Bandura, vice president of the Baptist Union of Ukraine, stand behind a pulpit made from a missile shot down over Ukraine. (Photo from Twitter)

Along with a brief video clip of the worship service, Brown posted on Twitter a photo of himself and Pastor Igor Bandura, vice president of the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christian-Baptists, standing behind a

“very special pulpit.”

“It is a missile shot down over Ukraine that some of the lay Baptists converted into a pulpit on the one-year anniversary of the war and in the spirit of Isaiah 2:4,” Brown explained.

In that passage, the Hebrew prophet envisions a time when God “shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (NRSV).

‘The things that make for peace’



Baptist laymen converted a missile that was shot down over Ukraine into a pulpit to mark the one-year anniversary of Russia’s war against Ukraine. (Photo from Twitter)

Over the past 15 months, Ukrainian Baptists have been focused on pursuing “the things that make for peace” in a nation torn by war.

In the days and weeks immediately after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Baptist churches provided respite care for internally placed people from Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine.

During the winter months, Baptist congregations became what Ukrainian Baptists called “centers of hope and heat” when many homes lacked both.

With assistance from the Baptist World Alliance and the European Baptist Federation, Ukrainian Baptists developed mobile kitchens and staffed them in areas where people were unable to prepare their own meals.

During a [webinar in February](#), Bandura noted the toll ministry in a war zone has taken on pastors—both those who were displaced from about 300 churches in Russian-occupied territory and those who have been serving day-in and day-out to meet needs.

“Most of our pastors are really tired,” he said. “You can see this when you speak with them and when you look into their eyes.”

To encourage them, the Baptist Union sponsored two-day and three-day retreats for pastors and spouses—and organized the June conference.

“It’s an honor to be in Kyiv with them,” Brown tweeted.