

Greetings from Ukraine,

WOW! WHAT A TRIP! WHAT A TRIP! I will explain that comment first before I get into what is going on with us and UBI.

After a couple of months of being at home for fund raising, holidays and connecting with family and friends we left to come back to Kiev on Jan. 29. Our daughter-in-law dropped us off at DFW for our flight to Atlanta, Amsterdam and Kiev. All things went very smoothly. We even were "selected" for "pre-checked", which meant we got to go through a special TSA line that had about 4 other people in it. GREAT! We had plenty of time to go to the Delta lounge and relax before the flight to Atlanta. Flight to Atlanta was smooth and no problems. We had to wait there a couple of hours before boarding our flight to Amsterdam. We took off fine and were in the air long enough for the drinks to come around and also for the dinner to be served. We had just started our dinner when the plane began to vibrate violently with a very loud noise, then a big bang and then very quiet! Finally after a few moments the pilot came on saying the plane had had some mechanical problem and we were going to head back into Boston for a landing so it could be checked out. Stewards were told to immediately clear the plane of the dinner service and prepare for landing. We were sitting near the wing and had been served our dinner but hadn't had a chance to finish it. The poor people in the back had not even been served. A lot of "buzz" was going on wondering what had really happened. As things were being cleared the pilot came back on and said we had totally lost one engine and that he was headed for Boston which was about 35-40 minutes away. Well things got very quiet as we were all wondering if we would make it safely back to Boston. I can tell you it was a LONG 40 minutes with a lot of praying going on. I texted our son, Rhett about the problem and ask him to pass the message a long to the rest of the family and all be praying for a safe landing. Finally, finally the run way came into view and there were red lights flashing everywhere. As we approached our gate there were at least 7 fire trucks, lights flashing, waiting for us to land. They deplaned us faster than we have ever been deplaned. I'm sure they were



just using precaution in case there was a fire.

There were 347 passengers all now back at the gate wondering what in the world was going to happen. This was about 10:00pm. We sat there for a bit when a guy finally announced they were going to try to get another plane out of JFK and it would be about an hour. So we waited. Then another announcement came that they were still trying to get a plane from JFK. So we waited. Finally about midnight they said a plane would be coming and possibly about 2AM we would take off. In less than 5 minutes they announced that wasn't going to happen and that Delta was trying to arrange rooms for us all to overnight. Everyone had to line up (347 people) and wait for a room assignment. We finally got our room assignment about 1:30AM and then were told to go pick up our luggage and and wait for a shuttle bus. Now we had SIX large suitcases, two carry-ons and computer bags!!! No one wanted to get behind us!!! We drug all this stuff out to where the buses came and of all things it was pouring snow and freezing cold.



We stood in line for a good while when we just decided to leave our luggage in line and go wait just inside the door. Finally a bus came. The hotel had one bus that held about 20 people so he was having to pick up 20 people, go deliver them and come back for another load, poor man!! The bus driver and others were very kind to us in helping us load all our luggage!! We finally got to the hotel where the line up to register was miles long. They only had 2 people to register 347 people!!! But it was after 2:30AM and they were just not staffed for this kind of emergency . Finally we got up to our room and collapsed into bed at 4:00AM. We were so exhausted but it still took a long time to unwind. We just thanked God we were both ok.

While we were at the airport they had announced that our plane to Amsterdam would not be until 6:00 the next evening so we knew we would have a long time period before we had to get back to the airport. The next morning we got back to the airport about 5 hours before they plane was to take off as we had heard Delta was giving out food vouchers so decided to go early and eat at the airport and just wait there until departure.

I must say Delta went over and beyond to try and compensate for all this mess. After all the people had deplaned the night before and were waiting at the gate to see what was going to happen, Delta brought in all kinds of soft drinks, juice, water and dozens and dozens of large pizzas especially for the ones who had never even been served dinner but plenty for all on board. They took care of our room and food costs and even gave us 17,500 air miles.

Later as we all regathered to board the plane about 5 that evening there was such a feeling of camaraderie and we were all talking as if we had known each other for years. I thought that was very interesting but then I guess if you think you might die with this group of people there is a special connection. There were a few complainers but most people just felt it was worth the hours of discomfort instead of being at the bottom of the ocean and we certainly said "AMEN" to that!!! Well, this is the "short version" of our experience getting back to Kiev so now you understand why I said WOW, what a trip!

When we finally arrived in Kiev it was an absolute joy to see Sasha and Natasha waiting for us. They brought us home and 2 of our staff were waiting to get all our luggage up to our apartment. They would not let us lift one finger!! They are sooooo sweet and wonderful to us. We couldn't believe we were finally home. We unpacked a bit and fell in bed. I got up feeling sick with a head cold which eventually really set in. I think it was exhaustion and stress. Jay Don, so far is fine plus he had to deal with student interviews the next day. I don't know how he had a clear head but he did very well!! We have 4 new students, 3 women and 1 man. After student interviews we had a great staff meeting and got pumped up for another semester at UBI. The staff honored Jay Don for his birthday and gave him an "Ukrainian flash drive"!!! He loves it but I quite honestly would rather have flowers!!!





Sunday the church honored Jay Don for his birthday and celebrated that. I hated to miss our first Sunday back but didn't want to spread my germs!!! He didn't get back till late as several people wanted to meet with him, as usual!!! We also rejoiced at the baptism of Jenny, a very precious teenager. She has been coming to the church for quite some time. Her dad, Alexander, was baptized this past year.



Monday was opening chapel and it was so good to see everyone. The room was full and we had a few of our graduates also attending. There is always such an excitement on opening day and it is very special. We made pictures of our 4 new students and then of the whole group. It looks like we will have another wonderful group of students. I didn't feel very good but felt I had to go as it was scholarship day and I knew our students would want their money!!! After chapel Jay Don was again honored for his birthday and given a very pretty painting of Kiev. The students were very sweet saying that they had noticed the only paintings on his office wall were from Donetsk and they thought he needed one of Kiev!!!



After classes we all had lunch together. Germantown church had provided money for pizzas and Jay Don had provided birthday cakes for everyone. It was just super to all be together again.

This seminar week Jay Don is teaching "Character Counts" and Dema is teaching Jude and Philemon. This will be followed by a 3 week term where the students will study Christian Evidences 1, Life and Teaching of Jesus, Romans and Isaiah. Plus we will have the men taking their preaching classes and the women will be taught via Skype by Thereasa Winnett on Christian family. Plus teaching a course Jay Don is to go and teach 3 afternoons at the University in Kiev that we work with.

This year while we were home we did not make the usual travel to northern Texas, Oklahoma and Tennessee. Instead of us going there, Sunset decided it would be a great idea to host a couple of fund raising dinners for UBI and hopefully those folks would come to the dinners. As most of you know since we lost everything in Donetsk the expenses for the school have tripled. Jay Don and I just can not handle all of that so the fund raising dinners have been organized, one in Arlington, Tx. and one in Memphis, Tenn. The one in Arlington is on March 9th and the one in Memphis is on March 13th.

Jay Don and I and Sasha and Natasha Maluga will be coming to the US to attend each of those dinners. (I really can't quite comprehend getting on another plane at this time but suppose I will for UBI!!!) Please, please if you are near either of these areas make plans to come to the dinner. It will be a great and informative evening and UBI really needs the financial help. It is soooooo exciting for us that we will actually have Sasha and Natasha with us so many of you can meet them in person. They are both like adopted kids to us and a vital part of the work at UBI. You will love them as we do and enjoy a wonderful evening of being together. We will be sending out more detailed information as the final plans are made.

Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
Jay Don and Mary Lee

God Bless,  
Jay Don and Mary Lee