

PARTNERS IN MISSIONS

Training National Leaders for "Ministry"

Ray and Pam
Trantham



Odessa Missions

Training National Leaders for "Missions"

Update on our location: In the past, I have sometimes wondered what the supporting churches of the Apostle Paul thought about the time that their missionary spent in prison. We can conclude from Acts, that the Apostle Paul probably spent about five years in prison, under house arrest, or traveling by ship to prison. We don't mean to compare ourselves to Paul, but we try to find some way to look at our extended stay in the States due to the COVID-19 restrictions. While we have been "stuck" in the States, some of our Ukrainian missionaries have been "stuck" on their missionary internship. With flights resuming, we have just now been able to return to Ukraine, and several of our students are also in the process of returning to Ukraine.

Flight cancelations and changes: When international flights were suspended and border crossings were closed, the airline changed our return flight to an "open ticket," allowing us to return whenever flights resumed. That should have allowed us to rebook our flight as soon as travel resumed. However, there seems to have been a very low demand for flights, resulting in the airline canceling, and combining, many of their regular flights. We first booked a flight for July 9th, only to have it canceled. After many hours with the travel agent we were rebooked three times and ended up with a similar flight on July 12th.

Future travels: We wish we could predict the future. The COVID-19 virus has an impact on global travel. Normally we visit the States for a few weeks each winter to update half of our supporting churches, ... and then see the other half the next winter. When we were unable to return to Ukraine, we considered the possibility of visiting the second half of our supporters. The problem was, that while we were unable to return to Ukraine, churches were also unable to meet together for face-to-face worship services. We succeeded in visiting and updating the half of our supporters that were originally planned for this trip. The problem is that we are unable to plan for flights and travel plans next winter. Most experts expect international travel to remain unpredictable for the foreseeable future. If we are "stuck" somewhere, it is best as a missionary to be stuck on the mission field, instead of stuck at home. We remain committed to doing ministry in Ukraine, and to keeping you informed about the work that you are supporting. In the past we have been committed to making a live presentation to your congregation every two years. We are working to maintain clear informative updates about the mission work in Ukraine, while adapting to a changing world.



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Tax-deductible contributions:

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Finances: It seems that COVID-19 has impacted every aspect of our life. This is true of mission support as well. Our work in Ukraine is dependent upon your regular financial support. Pam and I are truly grateful for your confidence in our ministry and the support that you provide. *"Thank You"* We realize people have lost jobs, and new ministry needs have arisen within our own community. We have all been moved by the concern often shown for those less fortunate than ourselves. We thank you for your continued support for the work in Ukraine in this time of difficulty and uncertainty. Staying at home, has given me some time to update our web site, and we would encourage you to give on-line at www.partnersinmissions.org



Ray speaking about missions at Amory

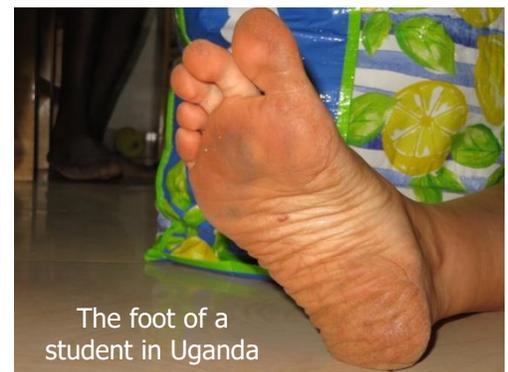
We have been busy: Even though we were unable to return to Ukraine, we have still been busy. If we had been in Ukraine, classes were canceled and the Bible college, along with all schools, were closed. If we had been in Ukraine, I would have been working in the office, which is what we have done while in the States. My parents church in Corinth, has allowed me to use an empty room during the week, where I have worked on course materials, on-line resources, and plans for the next group of mission students. We spoke for a mission emphasis Sunday in Amory, and have been involved in other ministry activities.

25 years: As we noted in our last newsletter, this past month marked 25 years of service in Ukraine. The current situation is not one we would have expected 25 years ago. We have been working diligently to get back to the ministry and home that we have come to know and love. Ukraine has imposed more strict regulations on social gatherings and movement than we have experienced in the States. We have been required to be quarantined for 14 days after arrival and had to be registered and tracked by apps on our phone. We recognize that there are many uncertainties about the future. Although travel and the health situation remains outside of our control, our God continues to rule the universe.

Looking to the future: As we look to the future we are optimistic. The need has not changed. God has not changed. We made a commitment to, train national leaders for ministry in Ukraine, and to train national missionaries to go out from Ukraine. -- That is an exciting future. That is a future worth striving for. We invite you to join us. We need your prayers and financial support. May God's grace be upon his people as they do his work.

I was sitting on the floor after a long day in Uganda with some of our missionaries, and decided to take a picture of one of the feet beside me. I was reminded of the text in Romans 10:14-15:

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: **"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"***



The foot of a student in Uganda

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