

PARTNERS IN MISSIONS

Training National Leaders for "Ministry"

Ray and Pam
Trantham

 **Odessa Missions**
Training National Leaders for "Missions"



Ministry adjustments: Last year, as we prepared to return to Ukraine, we were shocked when Russia invaded Ukraine. We expected the conflict to be worked out soon, ... but a year and a half later, the situation is no closer to resolution. I have just returned from my second trip back to Ukraine. After teaching and working at the college for three months, it is necessary to ask, **"What is the most productive way to conduct ministry?"** We want you to understand the situation, our pain in being away from Ukraine, and how we see the needs. We need your prayers and support as we continue to evaluate the best methods for doing ministry. Pam and I are grateful for your continuing support, and our goal remains; *"Training national leaders for ministry."* You have been faithful in sharing with us in this work and we feel it is important to keep you informed about how the war is shaping our mission work. Mission work is needed more than ever in Ukraine, but we need to make some adjustments because of the situation.

We remain committed to being full-time Ukrainian missionaries, and to the *"training of national leaders for ministry."* Given the current circumstances, full-time "residency" in Ukraine, is not the most prudent approach to achieving this ministry goal.

In recent years, our mission work in Ukraine has focused on "office" and "classroom." Both of these aspects of ministry are necessary, and neither can be accomplished independent of the other.

After spending the past three months in Ukraine, it was agreed that under the present circumstances, several similar trips devoted to teaching intensive courses, would be the most productive method for accomplishing the "classroom" part of our ministry. Similarly, it was agreed that it would be prudent to conduct the "office" part of our ministry outside of Ukraine as much as possible.

The Bible college has recently switched from semester long classes, to teaching all classes in week-long formats, which takes into account the changing security situations. Ukrainian teachers have also switched to a similar hybrid work schedule.

This is not an option that we would have considered two years ago, and we do not view this as a permanent solution. Dealing with safety and conflict in Ukraine is a serious distraction from ministry, and we hope by conducting part of our ministry out of Ukraine, we can have a greater overall effect.

Because of the changing conditions in Ukraine, a larger portion of the "classroom" ministry is conducted on-line. This requires additional time in the office to prepare and administrate classes. This approach should not change the total amount of time I spend in the classroom during a given academic year.

This is a situation that can be easily adjusted when the security and ministry situations change in Ukraine. We have Ukrainian residency and permanent legal status in Ukraine. We will continue to own a house, across the road from the Bible college. I am scheduled for in-person classes next semester and continue to maintain many of my ministry duties while working remotely.

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Tax-deductible contributions:
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Updates: While Ray is teaching a few months at a time in Ukraine and doing most office work in the States, Pam will continue to be involved in several volunteer ministries in the States, as well as helping to maintain ministry communications with Ukraine. - Shortly after the start of the war, Regina and her two children fled with millions of others. For the past year and a half, she has been living in Hattiesburg, while Sasha continued ministry and humanitarian assistance in Ukraine. In February, the government granted Sasha a three-week visit. Regina and Sasha have made the decision that it is time for their family to be reunited in Ukraine. Regina and children will be returning to join Sasha in Ukraine.

Terrible suffering: At the beginning of this month the largest dam in Ukraine was blown up, causing immense flooding in the southern area of Ukraine. This was 120 miles from Odessa, which immediately began to receive refugees. Sasha called to remind me that I had a second older refrigerator on my back porch, and asked if he could give it to a family of six refugees he was helping. He said they had a temporary place to stay with electricity, but no water. I told him to take the refrigerator and anything else that could help. The next day, a picture of debris washing up on the beach in Odessa, ironically showed a refrigerator washed away in the flooding.

Missiles in Odessa: The city of Odessa is in a location that is difficult for Russia to reach and has been spared from much fighting. During the past three months, I saw and heard explosions from drone and missile attacks, but this was not common. This past Saturday, an Iranian drone hit an apartment building in our area, and seriously damaged the apartment of one of our elderly church members. A college friend of Regina's lived in the nearby building and reported damage to her neighbor's apartment. Our congregation in Ukraine is gathering resources to assist our church member in repairing her apartment.



Housing for six refugees from Kherson flooding

Crater in playground beside apartment building



Refrigerator washing up on beach in Odessa

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