

# PARTNERS IN MISSIONS

Training National Leaders for "Ministry"

Ray and Pam  
Trantham

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



**Today and tomorrow:** In the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 6, Jesus tells us not to worry. One translation records Matthew 6:34 in this way;

***"Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes."***

Until the past few weeks, there have been few sustained attacks in the Odessa area. We woke up this morning to another report that the city of Odessa had been struck by missiles and drones. This time a large grocery store that we have shopped at in the past, was completely destroyed. When you are in Ukraine, you are always aware that any part of the country is within range of Russian attack. When there is an air-raid warning in your area, it is hard to miss the alarm, ... even though it often does not prompt a change in behavior. When a missile or drone flies overhead, ... this cannot be ignored. When you hear the explosion, ... you know it was far enough away and that you are all right. But, when it destroys a place that you know, ... then there is a feeling of, "what next?" In Matthew's gospel, Jesus tells us that he will be with us today and tomorrow, and in all situations.



**Four reasons NOT to go to Bible college:** Our mission work centers around training national leaders for ministry through the first Bible college in the former Soviet Union. The war is reshaping Ukrainian culture and how mission work is carried out. Sometimes I hear that there is a shortage of good preachers for American churches, but I suspect that the reasons for the shortage are different in Ukraine. First, there is a draft, and being a preacher or being in Bible college, does not exempt you from military service. Second, there is a general shortage of men. Sasha has reported that sometimes during a week of church camp, only women will be available to help with church activities, ... because men are in such high demand. Third, most people feel that their hometown is the "safest" place, and that traveling away to Bible college is a great risk. Finally, people fear the draft, and traveling or being in college exposes you to a greater likelihood of being drafted into military service. All of these are real reasons for not attending Bible college, but there is one reason to do so. 2 Timothy 2:2 tells us, *"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."* The need remains. The need remains to study to be a minister and the need remains to train national leaders for ministry. The need remains for missions in Ukraine. Thank you for helping to meet that need.

Ray and Pam Trantham  
Missionaries in Odessa, Ukraine since 1995.  
ray@partnersinmissions.org <http://partnersinmissions.org>  
Phone: 662-872-0748 662-286-2502

Tax-deductible contributions:  
**PARTNERS IN MISSIONS**  
P.O. Box 212  
Fulton, MS 38843





**Ray's mother** went to her eternal glory this past month. Modern life often separates us from our family members, but this is especially true as a missionary. Modern technology allowed us to talk with her from Ukraine each Wednesday and Friday, and she would often tell us she was praying for us. The delay of returning to Ukraine because of the war, has allowed us to spend extra time with her in her last months. It has always been our practice to stay with Ray's parents in Corinth when visiting the States, and this continues to be our American home. Without question, our journey to Ukraine would have never happened without parents who fully backed and encouraged our mission work. From birth, church was a part of regular life. My mother taught Sunday School and encouraged church activities to meet at our house. When it was time to choose college and a future, my parents fully supported Bible college and a major in World Missions. When I traveled to central Africa for a six-month mission internship, my mother gave me a book marker that said, "A ship in the harbor is safe, but that is not what ships were built for." My mother was certainly a "partner" in our ministry.

**Bible College:** Classes are not taking place during the summer but are scheduled to resume the beginning of September. I have in-person classes scheduled for later in the semester and will purchase tickets after we know the full class schedule. There is a real possibility of a smaller enrolment, especially of men, this semester. We will continue to offer on-line classes and in-person classes whenever possible. It is predicted that this winter will be more difficult than last winter with more power and heating outages expected. Our Bible college has switched to only offering courses in week-long formats, which allows us to adjust for safety concerns more easily. I will be on our campus when I have in-person classes, and our Ukrainian teachers will also follow a similar schedule for safety reasons.

**Text message during church:** (This occurred when I was in Odessa a few months ago, but did not have space to share.) This past Sunday morning, during the worship service, I received a text message from the "Ministry of Reintegration." So you say, ... your local church doesn't have a "ministry" of reintegration? The message was not from the church, ... it was from the Ukrainian government and it said, *"The Ministry of Reintegration reminds! Contact with land mines and unexploded ammunition is dangerous. Do not ignore warning signs and do not touch suspicious objects. Do not take photos near military equipment. If you find something by accident, call 101 or 102."*

A few days before, I had seen a drone explode and fall from the sky. It was within sight of our house, and about the same distance as the walk to the Bible college. The week before, a government official was scheduled to hold a meeting on our Bible college campus, on "How to avoid stepping on land mines." The college sent out a reminder to all faculty saying that your attendance is "almost mandatory." Area churches and members of the community were invited, but the meeting was canceled at the last minute.

A news article two days ago reads: "A mine has killed five civilians aged 27 to 68 in the Kherson region, said Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff. Russian forces left behind the mine, causing the "tragedy" in the village of Myrolyubivka. Approximately 30% of Ukraine is affected by land mines, according to the Ministry of Defense. The cleanup in some areas of Ukraine is estimated to take ten years."

This is just one of the problems in areas that have been occupied by Russian forces. This problem remains long after liberation. The area of Odessa has not been occupied, so as long as you don't swim in the sea, you are relatively safe from mines.

