

PARTNERS IN MISSIONS

Training National Leaders for "Ministry"

Supporting and Developing National Leaders in "Ministry"

Ray and Pam Trantham ... missionaries to Ukraine since 1995.



Ukraine Today Almost Five Years of War

How are things in Ukraine: Ukraine is not in the news as much as it was. This leads people to ask us, ... *"I don't see Ukraine in the news, ... things must be getting better?"*

The reality is, **"Ukraine is not winning, ... Russia is not winning, ... they are both losing."**

The war is worse today than at any point in history. The front line is at a stalemate, and both militaries are inflicting great suffering upon the other's population. Ukraine has been able to damage the fragile Russian economy, so Russia has begun to target Ukrainian civilians throughout the country. The Bible college and our home is in the southern city of Odessa, which is a hundred miles away from the front line. In the past, this distance provided some degree of safety, with only occasional explosions from drones or missiles near our home. Over the past year, explosions from drones and missiles in our area have become a daily occurrence. There are multiple air-raids each day, which close the grocery store, empty trains, and cancel school. This has become so common that public schools, except first and second grades, must now only be taught on-line for safety reasons. (First and second grades will now meet permanently in the basement.)

A growing humanitarian crisis: In recent weeks Russia has targeted food warehouses and grocery distribution centers. In our area we have seen large building supply stores and other civilian infrastructure targeted. The electrical grid continues to be a common target for Russian drones and missiles. The loss of electricity, results in the loss of water. This means there is a growing loss of electricity, water, groceries, heat, transportation, and building supplies in our area.

An approaching winter: As winter approaches, many expect this to be the most difficult, not because of the cold, but because of the shortage of natural gas and electricity needed for heating. We are currently buying firewood and coal for thirty rural families. We are also stocking up on bulk dry goods, because some grocery shelves are already empty. We are buying supplies now, so we will have them to distribute later in the winter.

We need your prayers and your help.

Almost five years ago, on the morning of February 24th, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The "Special Military Operation" was expected to be over in a few days, ... but after nearly five years, and some two million combined casualties, the war continues.

Pray for an end to this war.

But also pray for the humanitarian suffering.

There is currently a need for:

- Electricity
- Water
- Groceries
- Heat
- Transportation
- Medical supplies
- Building supplies

Your special gift during this holiday season to either **Partners In Missions** or **Hearts 4 Ukraine** will help minister to the needy in Ukraine.

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Who is where: We continue to be involved in, and committed to, our original calling of "Training National Leaders for Ministry". However, the events of the past four-and-a-half years, have forced us to adopt new ministry strategies. **Ray and Pam** are living in Corinth, Mississippi. Pam's health and recovery from cancer surgery, continues to improve, but is closely tied to regular doctor's care. Ray was scheduled for classes this Fall, but had to push those to the Spring semester.

Sasha continues to travel throughout Ukraine, working alongside churches to lead trainings, retreats, and camps. The war has taken a heavy toll on church leadership. Many middle-aged church workers have left the country, while others have been drafted. As a result, churches are facing a serious shortage of workers and volunteers, and Sasha is focused on training the next generation of Kingdom workers. He also teaches physics, IT, algebra, and geometry at a local school, which exempts him from the draft and gives him freedom to travel. Many lessons at school are interrupted by air raids, the class is taken to shelter to wait for safe time to resume classes. This has become routine and safety is a priority as several schools have been targeted.

Although **Regina** is currently in the United States, she continues to serve in an administrative and teaching role at the pregnancy care center in Odessa. The center has seen a growing number of internally displaced people seeking help and shelter. Each month, the center provides clients with food packages, diapers, and other humanitarian aid. To keep its doors open through the winter, the center is now stocking up on fuel for its generator and supplies that will be needed to continue ministry to the community.

Rural areas: Russia is targeting civilians in large cities, ... but life in rural areas is more difficult. These areas are cut-off from the rest of the country because of damage to roads and bridges. There is a greater shortage of food, heating fuel, and electricity in these areas. The southern region of Odessa is nearly cut off from the rest of the country due to logistical challenges. This is where Sasha's parents live and continue to serve in a small village church. They are helping to provide heat and food to families that the church has identified as having the greatest need.

Regina writes, "Beyond that region, we are helping other families refill their propane tanks and supplying diesel and gasoline for their generators and heaters. We also help them buy wood and coal for heating. In partnership with the local church, we are coordinating food packages and basic necessities as an outreach to both the church and the wider community. This allows the church to continue caring for families, widows, and those with loved ones serving in the army. Many of these projects began in faith that God would provide. Thank you for prayerfully considering partnering with us to support the families and children of Ukraine."



Buying humanitarian supplies



The generator for the Pregnancy Care Center in Odessa.



The current ministry opportunity: In 1995, our family moved to Ukraine to teach and work in a national Bible college. Today, men age 18-60 are subject to the draft, and recruiting students to study in the college is difficult. Conducting face-to-face classes is difficult but still possible. I have fewer classes than before, but I continue to travel to Ukraine for in-person classes. Although the war has decreased some ministry opportunities, it has created other opportunities to serve God. Many of my students are finding new ways to serve God, in the context of war. The Apostle Paul told Timothy that the things that he had been taught, he should, *"entrust to reliable people, who will also be qualified to teach others."* (2 Timothy 2:2) We feel this is also our obligation, ... so we are working to transfer ministry to the next generation.

Bridging the distance: We continue to carry out and be involved with many of the ministry projects that have been a part of our work over the years. But the practical issues of security, health, and how to be most effective, ... often separate Pam and I from the country of Ukraine. We are able to use technology and work on-line to bridge this gap, but during this past year we have found it increasingly effective to rely on a partnership with Regina and Sasha to help bridge the gap. Because Sasha is Ukrainian, he remains unable to leave Ukraine. Our daughter Regina, and their two children, are in Ukraine whenever possible. The war has brought our ministry **"PARTNERS IN MISSIONS,"** and their work, referred to as **"Hearts 4 Ukraine"** closer together. There has always been some degree of overlap and corporation between the two ministries, but that has increased significantly over the past four years. Fifteen years ago, Regina and Sasha set up **Hearts 4 Ukraine**, as a separately registered 501c3 organization committed to ministering to the people of Ukraine.

The future of our ministry in Ukraine: For Pam and I, our commitment remains to the same mission work that we began over 30 years ago. We anticipate that Regina and Sasha will continue in the work in Ukraine, long after we are gone. With this future in mind, we encourage individuals and congregations who have been supporting **PARTNERS IN MISSIONS**, to eventually redirect their support to **Hearts 4 Ukraine**, as a way to see the same ministry activities continue.



Students gather in school basement for class during air-raid.



On the left, heating fuel was delivered to rural families in need.

