

PARTNERS IN MISSIONS

"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your **partnership** in the gospel from the first day until now." **Philippians 1:4-5**



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Ray and Pam Trantham Serving as Missionaries in Ukraine
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Greetings from Ray and Pam,

Today we return to Ukraine. We have been in the States over the winter holidays visiting and updating churches about the ministry in Ukraine. We have chosen to come during the winter instead of the summer because our Bible college continues to take a long winter break to save on heating cost. By coming during the winter we are only able to visit part of our supporters each year. We look forward to visiting with others who partner with us in this work next year.

We want you to know that we are still committed to what we began in 1995 when we left Mississippi and moved to Ukraine. For many years you have been partners with us in the process of "*Training national leaders for ministry*" in Ukraine. We are truly thankful for your faithfulness over the years.

During this past year, we have spent much of our time working with a new group of Ukrainian students who are preparing to work outside of their Ukrainian culture as "missionaries." In the past, Ukrainian churches saw themselves as "receivers" of foreign missionaries. They still need foreign missionaries for specialized task like teaching in the Bible college, but Ukrainians are beginning to realize that they can send their own people to reach parts of the former Soviet Union which are closed to western missionaries. Just as American missionaries are sometimes able to meet a need that Ukrainians are not yet able to meet, ... Ukrainians are able to work as missionaries in areas that are closed to American missionaries.

During the past two years the mission training program of our Bible college in Ukraine has undergone changes and taken on new urgency as we prepare local people to serve as missionaries to other parts of the former Soviet Union. We have chosen to use the name "**Odessa Missions**" when describing and promoting the training of Ukrainians as missionaries. This choice was made to help shield our Bible college and students from unwanted political attention. (We are often sending workers into parts of the world where Christian missionaries are not welcome.)

This month, in place of a regular newsletter from PARTNERS IN MISSIONS, we are including an introductory brochure about Odessa Missions.

Tax-deductible contributions:

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We need to make a distinction between **PARTNERS IN MISSIONS** and **Odessa Missions**:

- **PARTNERS IN MISSIONS** is the ongoing mission work of Ray and Pam Trantham, which began twenty-one years ago.
- **Odessa Missions** is the name used to describe the new work of training Ukrainians to serve as missionaries. Ray and Pam play a vital role in planning and overseeing this work.
- **PARTNERS IN MISSIONS** refers only to Ray and Pam, while **Odessa Missions** is the mission training program of the Bible college where Ray and Pam serve as missionaries.
- **PARTNERS IN MISSIONS** is only Ray and Pam. **Odessa Missions** is larger and includes Ukrainian workers who are working with us to train and send their own people as missionaries.
- Funding for **PARTNERS IN MISSIONS** continues to be handled as it always has, and is for the ministry of Ray and Pam. Funding for **Odessa Missions** is used for training and sending Ukrainians as missionaries, and is handled through a separate tax-deductible account.

This month we are including an introductory brochure to introduce the idea of and plans for Ukrainians to train and send their own people as missionaries. They need your prayers as well as financial support. Information about this work will normally be communicated through the web site: www.OdessaMissions.org It is possible to give online to support this ministry.

Sincerely serving Him,

Ray and Pam Trantham

We have recently redesigned and simplified our PARTNERS IN MISSIONS web site.

www.partnersinmissions.org



We have also updated options for on-line giving. If you prefer to support our work in Ukraine through on-line contributions, that is great. If you prefer to send a paper check, that is still a great option. We urge you to "partner" with us in the ministry of training national leaders for ministry in Ukraine.

Budget and Finances:

We want the numbers that are given to be credible and represent reality. Too often miscommunication has resulted in misunderstanding, which has led to mistrust. Why do we need foreign support for this project? In short, we need foreign help because the Ukrainian church does not have a history of training and sending cross-cultural missionaries. The Ukrainian churches' increasing desire to train and send its own missionaries, represents a need that the American church can help to meet.

Preparing for cross cultural missionaries represents a unique type of expense that exceeds the usual cost of training leaders for ministry within Ukraine. Much of the cost of such a training program is spent on travel and supervised experience in a different culture. Based on our past expense, it cost \$4815 to prepare one Ukrainian to server as a foreign missionary, and about the same amount for each additional year of service. The Ukrainian church is doing its best to meet these needs, but still falls far short.

**You can give online or subscribe to
our E-newsletter by visiting:
www.odessamissions.org**



vitshem@mail.ru Russian
ray@partnersinmissions.org English

If you prefer to give by paper check, it can be made out and mailed to American-Ukrainian Evangelical Fellowship:

American-Ukrainian Evangelical Fellowship
Attn: Odessa Missions
1526 – 14th Avenue
Franklinton, LA 70438

Greetings from Odessa Theological Seminary, where our task remains training national leaders for ministry,

Jesus tells his Church that the harvest is both plentiful and ripe. Now is the time, ...

today is the day. Christians throughout the world are striving to obey the Great Commission and take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Some, like the Apostle Paul, were trained and able to effectively carry out cross-cultural missionary service. While others, like the church in Philippi, were able to provide the financial resources needed for ministry in a foreign culture.

During the past 25 years, Odessa Theological Seminary has trained well over a thousand workers for God's Kingdom. As an educational institution, most of these efforts have been focused on training national leaders for ministry within traditional Slavic culture. But the question remains, ***"What about the millions of non-Russians in the former Soviet Union?"*** Doesn't the phrase, "for God so loved the world," include them as well? Are they not also part of Jesus's Great Commission for his global church?

The Seminary in Odessa prioritizes the opportunity of training cross-cultural missionaries because it recognized that ethnic Russians and Ukrainians are free to travel into "restricted" parts of the former Soviet Union. A growing awareness by Ukrainian churches for the need to send their own missionaries brings us to a crossroads and a strategic opportunity.



During the past two years the Mission Program of the Seminary in Odessa has undergone changes and taken on new urgency. We have chosen to use the name **"Odessa Missions"** when describing and promoting the training of Ukrainians as missionaries. This choice was made to help shield Odessa Theological Seminary from any unwanted political attention.

During the Soviet period, one method of restricting Christianity was to not allow missionary activity outside the walls of existing congregations, to not allow the training of workers for missionary activity, and to not allow the creation of mission organizations for sending missionaries. As a result of the Soviet experience, when the churches of Ukraine and Russia emerged with new religious freedoms in the early 1990's, they did so without missionaries, mission organizations, or theological schools for training missionaries. The idea of sending "foreign," or cross-cultural missionaries was simply absent in the churches of Russia and Ukraine.

During the past 25 years a number of factors have changed within Russia and Ukraine. New churches have been planted, so there is a larger internal base for the sending of national missionaries. Although western missionaries are still welcome and needed, especially in Ukraine, there are fewer westerners than in the past, which has caused local Christians to reexamine their own responsibility in reaching the non-Slavic areas of the former Soviet Union. In the past the outside world was often "closed" to those within the Soviet Union, but with the internet, international trade, and travel, there is a growing awareness by Christians within Ukraine of the needs and lostness of the peoples of the world.



Imagine a world where the Ukrainian church is raising funds from its own members to send its own people into cultures that are closed to western missionaries. They are already developing organizations and plans because they have the vision for reaching lost people for God's glory. The two areas where most help is needed are the areas of promoting the idea of world missions within the local church and the training of willing Ukrainians to serve as cross-cultural missionaries.



You can play a part by,
"Working with Odessa Theological Seminary to help Ukrainians train and send their own people as Missionaries."