

# PARTNERS IN MISSIONS

July 2017

*"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*

## Odessa in July

Pam and I are staying in Odessa over the summer. Even though classes are out, it is still a busy summer. There was a marriage conference on our campus this past week and this week there is a large group of youth utilizing our dormitories and facilities. Many Ukrainian teachers are "off" for the summer, but the reality is they are often around working on course materials or involved in summary ministry activities.



I was supposed to be working in church camp this week with others from our church in Odessa. But church camp had to be postponed for a month because of an outbreak of chickenpox among the adult camp workers. That certainly was a first for us. Chickenpox is rare among adults in the US, but seems to be a lot more common here. Because we had already rented the camp facility for 100 children, it was announced that any church members who wanted to use the campgrounds could do so, and the men of the church met one evening for a cookout and fellowship.

As usual, Sasha is spending each week from May until September in a different church camp. Regina has spent part of that time with him, while Pam and I have been keeping Evelyn, who is 2½. (Actually it is Pam who has been keeping Evelyn.) On the last day of a week-long stay at our house, she fell and broke her collarbone. She has had her shoulder immobilized and in a soft cast for the past couple of weeks. The second round of X-rays shows that it has healed slower than expected. These kinds of events occur in any culture, but remember us and Evelyn in your prayers.



Regina and Sasha had a six member visiting team to help with a week of church camp. (This was when Evelyn broke her collarbone.) One of the team members was Pam's brother, Chuck Hassell, who is the minister in Corinth MS. Most of their time was spent at camp and in two churches outside Odessa, but we



enjoyed the two times we had them over to our house and when they lead a Bible study for our small group.



**Ray and Pam Trantham:**

Missionaries in Odessa, Ukraine for the past 22 years

**Preparing classes for this fall;**

I have spent most of my summer developing materials for the Mission Program. We look forward to a new group of students beginning this fall. The question is, "How do you get a mission student from point "A" to point "B"? You need a "map." I have spent most of the past several months working on a "map" or guide plan that will shape the course of study and preparation for our mission students. We will call a new student, "point A." And we will call the end result that we hope students achieves, "point B."

When a student enters our program at point "A," they are an average age of 22, and already have some Bible college education. Most have not completed a degree, but have had some courses. They already have the ability to do some level of ministry and are actively involved in their local church. New mission students are normally slightly more mature and responsible than beginning students, because after all, we plan to send them to another country for six months. I remind them of the story of the Prodigal Son, and tell them this is a biblical story that we do not want them to repeat when they go away to a far country.

At the end of their time of training and internship, we want them to be at point "B". We describe point "B" as having a written plan for their future missionary activity. They should be able to speak with confidence about the future place they wish to serve and describe how they will work. We expect our graduates to be able to stand in front of a local Ukrainian church and give a presentation where they ask for the local church to share with them in ministry. We also expect our graduates to have developed a system for giving financial and progress reports to those who support them in their ministry. Finally, we know that all of our graduates will not feel called to continue in long-term mission activity. In the New Testament, Paul had many churches as well as individuals who "helped" make his mission work possible, so we want our graduates to be able to teach the value of missions in the local church, so the churches of Ukraine can increase support of their own missionaries.

Getting from point "A" to point "B" is not an easy process. This is why we have developed a five pronged approach for moving students along the process. The first aspect of this approach is a course called "MAP". It is just that, a map that students work through over the course of a year. This is the broad outline that all other parts of our program are built around. I teach this course and it meets for two lectures each week. The second part of our program is twelve, week-long classes that focus on some aspect of world mission activity. The MAP class helps tie all the week-long classes together. Third is reading. Students will receive all their reading assignments in electronic format for the first time this year. This will allow them to continue reading during their extended internship outside of Ukraine. The fourth component is their internship. This includes weekend practice in area churches in Odessa, a short trip outside of Ukraine during their study time, a period of fundraising before going for six months to a mission field outside Ukraine. Finally there are 40 assignments. Students have a series of assignments that must be submitted electronically by 10:00 pm every Sunday night.

The end goal, or point "B" is what the Apostle Paul talked about in 2 Timothy 2:2, *"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."* We want to see people prepared to carry the gospel to those who have not heard it. Our task as your missionaries is to prepare the people of Ukraine, to serve as missionaries, so that they can take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Pray for this work, as well as join with us through your financial support.

*"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."  
2 Timothy 2:2,*



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