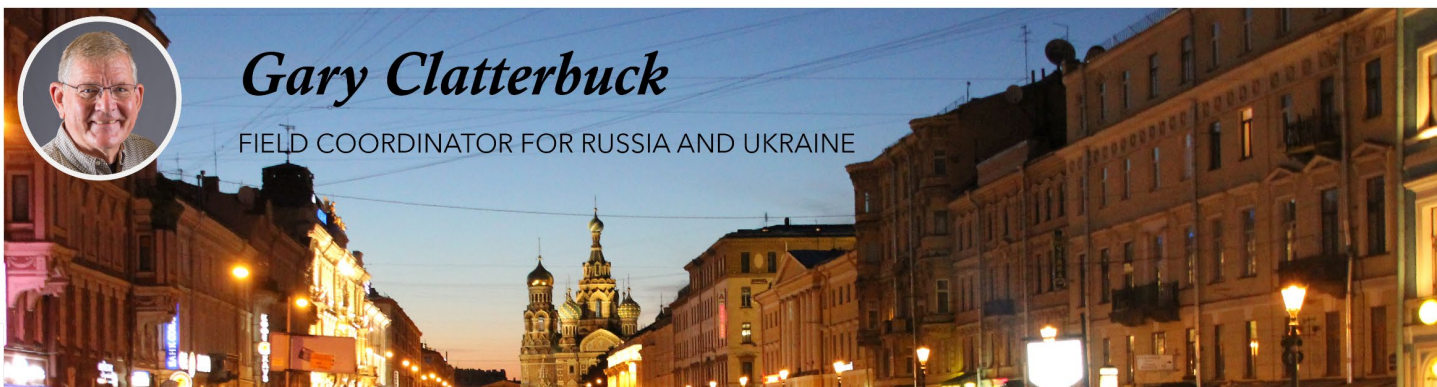




# Gary Clatterbuck

FIELD COORDINATOR FOR RUSSIA AND UKRAINE



MAY 2023

## UPDATE ON UKRAINE AND RUSSIA MINISTRY

*We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.*

2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-11 (NIV)

I hope to soon be meeting with the head of Odesa Seminary. He is hoping to visit in the USA in May. At that time, we hope to see when we can safely encourage teachers to go to Ukraine. We hope that will be possible. As soon as the hostilities cease, we should be able to return. Kerry Bender and I will try to travel later in the summer or early fall.

When we meet with Oleksandr, we will carry funds for the school from the gifts that have continued being sent. They currently have community electricity, in addition to standby generators. However, the standby generators cost about \$500 a day for fuel.

When we are able, we will visit in person, and I also will take funds to Istanbul for the learning center in Novokuznetsk. The director will fly and meet me in Turkey. Both places miss our direct ministry greatly. Your regular gifts make this possible.

I talk regularly to both schools, as well as with students who are out serving the Lord in places we

normally cannot go. The former from Eastern Russia still goes into North Korea; Cino, the student in Tajikistan, is heavily involved in doing youth evangelism in the main city. Truly our work continues when our travel and personal involvement is limited. That was the reason for starting this ministry in the first place: to train leaders who will serve even when we cannot go.

These pictures remind me of better times . . . but also the future.



Cino, our friend and new leader of students in Tajikistan.



A praise team in the seminary.



A student preview time for potential students.



I would love to share in our churches in the coming months. Contact me, and we can work out the details. It was so good to be in Canada in many churches who have faithfully supported the ministry.

On a personal note, I have been blessed with good health and no limits due to any current issues. However, I had been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation. I am scheduled to have some procedures to correct the problem. My brother went through this a few years ago, as did my wife, Joy. The first will be done in four weeks, then if the easy things don't work, we will move to the next one. The biggest hassle is the blood thinner drugs, which cost a small fortune.

A month ago, I was talking with Oleksandr, the head of Odesa seminary. He was going through what I have called war weariness. When the NAB office called asking for prayer requests, I wrote the following in response to the request. It is hard to imagine living under the current conditions. I hope this is helpful for you as you pray for our fellow servants in Ukraine and Russia.

The war in Ukraine is so crazy and devastating to all there. So I thought through your request in light of recent discussions with the seminary. The president of the seminary in Odesa had expressed his total exhaustion during this time. I was reminded of 2 Corinthians 1:8–11.

So I suggest for today after you share those verses that we pray for the many pressures felt by those living and working in the middle of a war that is almost 400 days long.

Here are some regular things that result from this war:

Daily living is very complicated for the seminary, both the staff and students.

1. Electricity can be off without notice. When the school uses generators, the fuel costs can

approach \$500 a day. Electricity powers the heating system, the lights, etc.

2. At any time sirens can go off indicating missile coming, get into a safe place, and pray it does not hit your building.

3. Water can be off with little notice.

4. Every person in every class or seminar has likely had a person near to them killed or wounded or had their homes damaged or destroyed.

5. Over 400 churches have been destroyed.

6. Ukraine is the grain capital of Europe. Most of North Africa is dependent on the grain grown in Ukraine. Now the fields have been mined and cannot be cultivated. What happens to the supply of grain needed by the entire world?

7. Most involved with the seminary have relatives or friends fighting in the war, facing horrible conditions.

8. Finances are difficult but have to be raised to house, feed, and teach the students.

9. Many students cannot be in the seminary as they live in other countries and entry is limited. A student I met on my last visit is from Tajikistan. Cino is his name. Instead of being at the seminary, he is serving several churches as a youth counselor and director. All churches are small, but Christians escaping Afghanistan come to this country. He is an example of a student we know serving where most of us cannot go.

So knowing this, pray for Oleksandr the president, Slava the New Testament professor, Oleksandr Abralimov, Fedir (the dean), Timothy Kondor, Andry, Vitalii, and Ray, an American missionary teaching in the missions program. Pray the war ends, pray every teacher will remain safe and the school able to continue.

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