

January 31, 2017.

Grace and peace to you, dear friends!

The first month of the new year has passed. I hope this month was marked by rich blessings of God in your life.

For Nina and I it was a blessed month. It began with more holiday festivities. In Moldova, both Christmas and New Year's are celebrated twice—per the Julian calendar and the Gregorian calendar. So we enjoyed a prolonged celebration of these holidays.

I spent most of January preparing the Cross-Cultural Communication course. Although I have taught



that course already in Sacramento, I still needed to make some adjustments to the new teaching format—15-week long semester instead of a weekend. Also, I made some additions to the course. So, it took some time. On January 23, I began teaching that course. I am teaching four groups of freshmen students. Two of these groups are Romanian-speaking students. I get to teach through

translation. This provides me with certain challenges, but it also provides a real “cross-cultural communication” environment. The two other groups are Russian-speaking.

I am very glad to meet with students in person. All of them are young people 18-20 years old. Only few are older. Most of them are not residents of Moldova.

There are students from Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and other republics of the former Soviet Union. One girl came even from Pennsylvania, USA! A real international group. It is very interesting



to meet the youth of the 21st century face-to-face. I represent for them a very distant past. Many

things that we as Christians who lived in the Soviet Union experienced in life are completely foreign for these young people. They are interested to learn about that life from a person who lived at that time. Also, they are interested to learn from me about life in America. I really enjoy working with them.

During January, we continued visiting different churches, learning about the life and ministry of Baptist churches in Chisinau and its vicinity.



January 8. On Sunday morning, Nina and I visited the church called Bethel. The pastor of this church is Anton Plachinta. This is a unique church. It was the only congregation belonging to the Baptist Union of Moldova 25 years ago. At that time, the membership of this church was around 1,500. Today, there are 25 churches in town belonging to that Union. Half of those churches conduct their services in Romanian. Today, membership of Bethel is

around 400. There are several reasons for this drop in membership. On the one hand, many believers moved to the United States, Western Europe, and Russia. On the other hand, many former members of Bethel became founding members of 24 new congregations in the city of Chisinau. Membership of these new churches varies from 60 to 200 and more members. There are Baptist congregations in different areas of town. They have their own facilities. From an evangelistic stand point, it is much more effective having all of these smaller congregations across town than having only one large congregation in one part of town as it used to be in the past. During that visit I was given an

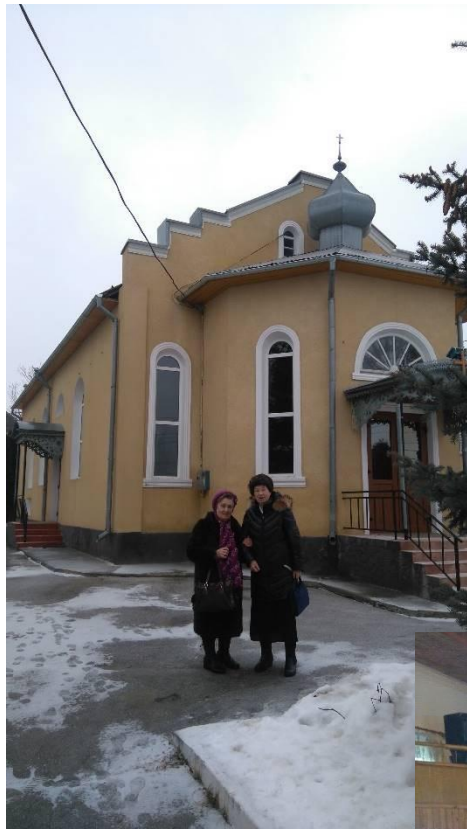
opportunity to preach. We were still celebrating Christmas at the church.



January 15. On Sunday morning, Nina and I visited a church called Emmanuel. The pastor here is Nikolay Plukchi. This church was planted in 1990s. It owns a nice building located in a strategic area of city.



There are about 60 members in that church. Pastor Plukchi is leading a very important ministry. He is overseeing efforts of Baptist churches in Moldova to establish orphanages within families. A family would take a group of orphans (3-10 children) and provide care for them. There are quite a few families involved in this ministry in Moldova. I preached while visiting that church.



January 22. On Sunday morning, we visited a church called Nadezhda (Hope), located in the village Chorezku, not far from Chisinau. Uyriy Groshin is the pastor. This church has been planted by Brother Michael Mokan about 20 years ago. Before that time, there were no Baptist church in that village. Brother Mokan encouraged the newly established small congregation to start the building project. They did not have any funds to do that. However, they trusted that God will provide the needed money. And He provided. Today, there is a congregation of about 60 members in this village. It meets in a cozy house of prayer. Unfortunately, Brother Mokan unexpectedly died two years ago. However, the result of his work serves to many people today. While visiting that congregation, we were pleasantly surprised to meet Olga Mokan, the wife of Michael Mokan. She is a founder of Mothers in Prayer

ministry in Moldova. Despite her age, she continues her ministry. We knew Olga, because not once she was invited to the US to speak at Slavic immigrant churches about that ministry. It helped in starting Mothers in Prayer ministry at immigrant churches.





January 29. On Sunday morning, Nina and I visited a church with the unusual name – “*Valley of Blessings*”. It is located in a village called Valley, 10 kilometers from Chisinau. The pastor is Sergey Zastavitskiy. There are about 60 members in the church. The congregation owns a nice-looking church building that was built during the 1990s. Unfortunately, the congregation cannot conduct its services in the sanctuary of this building. This is due to the churches’ inability to provide heat at the sanctuary. Gas and electricity is very expensive here. Because of this, services are



conducted in the basement of that nice building that looks very much like an Orthodox church building. In spring, when the weather will get warmer, church services will be moved from the basement to the sanctuary.

The Zastavitskiy family has an interesting story. In 2007 they immigrated from the village of Valley to America. They settled in Tacoma, WA. They attended the church that was part of PCSBA. Brother Sergey was not satisfied with life in America. In his heart, he always felt guilt for leaving his church in Valley where there was lack of ministers. Eventually, they came back to Moldova, to the village Valley, in 2009. Since that time, Sergey serves as the pastor of the church here. Half-a-year ago Sergey got seriously sick. His kidneys stopped functioning. Twice a week he goes through dialysis. In spite of this, he has not left the pastoral ministry. His dedication is worth following. Please pray for Brother Sergey.

Pastors who are ministering in churches located in the suburbs of Chisinau and villages not far from Chisinau shared with me their concerns. Due to lack of jobs in their areas people are moving to Chisinau. This especially true for the youth. They transfer their church membership to churches in Chisinau. Also, many Christians move to Western Europe and Russia looking for work. Because of this, membership in churches located near Chisinau is getting lower every year.



January 27-28. The leadership of the Baptist Union of Moldova organized a conference on the subject of discipleship. It took place at the church Bethel. The goal of the conference was to provide participants with practical tools for practicing discipleship ministry within the local congregation. The speaker of the conference was Billy Dyker from Germany. He introduced very useful material that is

designed for discipling new believers. More than 200 people attended the conference.

In addition, I wanted to share the following.

- **January 13.** Nina and I have had an interesting meeting. We met with Kevin, an American. He arrived to Chisinau from LA in October with an intention to serve God here. He is single. Three years he served as a missionary in China teaching English. Now he has felt a call from God to serve in Moldova. It was a pleasure for us to meet somebody who came from California. That meeting provided us with an opportunity to practice our English. Unfortunately, we have already started losing it because we are not using it. Also, meeting with Kevin provided us with confidence in our decision to move to Moldova. Since other Americans are coming here to serve it proves that Moldova is a good place. By the way, there is an English-speaking congregation in Chisinau.
- **January 15.** After the morning service, on Sunday, Nina and I were invited to visit the Cherniy family. This couple, Anatoly and Mila, distribute the newspaper *Our Days* in Moldova, which is published by Pacific Coast Slavic Baptist Association. For 50 years, this newspaper serves as a herald of the Gospel. They do it with great dedication. And their efforts are producing good fruit. Almost in all the churches we visited, we observed copies of *Our Days* in the foyer. While speaking in churches I asked people present if they subscribe and read *Our Days*? There were always those who subscribed to that newspaper. It is very popular here.





This newspaper is a good evangelistic tool. To establish connection with people on the market or in other places, we present them with a copy of *Our Days* and recommend reading a column with practical advises (each issue has such column on the last page). After reading this section, people read other articles devoted to explaining the Scripture. It raises questions and next time when we meet with them we have conversation related to Christianity and eternity.

➤ While living far away from all of you and from our children and grandchildren, we realized the usefulness of modern means of communication. We can watch Sunday services in Slavic churches in Sacramento via Internet. We can communicate with children and grandkids via Skype and Viber. It helps to avoid feeling lonely. We are very grateful to God for all of these ways of communication available to us today.

➤ We purchased a good study guide for learning Romanian. Also, we obtained a Russian-Romanian dictionary. We began studying Romanian. It reminds us of a time when almost 27 years ago we started studying English in America. Now we are going through a new

beginning in our lives.

- We are very grateful to the Lord for providing us with good health. Despite cold weather we have not gotten a cold or the flu.
- In February, we are looking forward to participating in an important event. From February 21-24, a summit of Russian-speaking churches of Western Europe will take place in Warsaw, Poland. We will be able to meet many Slavic immigrants, living now in countries of Western Europe (Italy, Portugal, France, England, and others). This meeting is designed for fellowship, for sharing needs and vision, for discussing common tasks in ministry for next year. Please pray for God's blessing of that event.

In conclusion, I wanted to express my great appreciation for your prayers for us. We need it and we feel God's blessings in response to your prayers.

We are praying for God's blessings for you in your ministry to Him.

With love and appreciation,

Vyacheslav & Nina Tsvirinko

