

October 30, 2017

I cordially greet you, dear friends and co-workers in the field of the Lord! Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!



The eleventh month of our ministry in Moldova is over. Autumn is upon us: Chilly in the daytime and cold at night; often cloudy and occasionally rainy; trees shedding their leaves—all creating a beautiful and a little sad time of the year.

Our life, as before, is divided between the service at the University and ministry at the church this month.

On the first Sunday of the month, **October 1**, in our church, Bethany, as in many Baptist churches, a service was held dedicated to the remembrance of the Calvary sufferings of Jesus Christ. Communion is led by the ministers in turn. This time this privilege was entrusted to me. As always, during such a service, the church recalled reverently and gratefully the price paid by Christ for our salvation.



The following Sunday, **October 8th**, was an ordinary worship service and I preached at Bethany Church.



As usual, after the service, Nina happily shares useful advice with young sister-students, whose parents are far beyond the borders of Moldova.

On October 15, Bethany Church celebrated Harvest Day. The service was full and solemn. Praise was lifted up to God for all His good deeds. I do not cease to be surprised at the creative abilities of believers in the churches, manifested in the design of the prayer houses for the



Harvest Festival. This year, Nina and I participated in this festival in four different churches and in each of them the decoration was original and beautiful in its own way. However, the decorations at Bethany Church exceeded all our expectations. I've never seen anything like it!

I was asked to preach the final sermon on the Feast of the Harvest.



The most significant event of this month for me and Nina was a trip to Riga, October 20-23. When we were in Riga in August, local brothers asked me to prepare a seminar for servants of Russian-speaking churches in Latvia. And so, two months later, we again went to Riga. Here we were greeted by sunny, yet frosty, weather.

We settled in the "House of Fetler" - the building of the Latvian Bible Center. This historic building has been under construction for four and a half years under the leadership of Victor Petrenko. The building is now restored. This is a beautiful building, in which there are excellent classrooms for classes, offices for employees, good dorm rooms for guest lecturers.





The seminar was held in the same building. We arrived on Friday after lunch; the first seminar was that evening. It lasted the next day, on Saturday, all day long. The audience was not numerous - about 20 people, because only pastors and deacons of churches were invited.

In Latvia, there are currently 22 Russian-speaking Baptist congregations. And there are about 90 Baptist churches in this country, with about 6,000 members. A small brotherhood.



In the seminar, I touched upon topics such as the mission of the Church, the role of the pastor in the congregation, the personal characteristics of pastors and the family of the pastor, and others. Among those present at the seminar were some brothers with whom we worked 30 years ago, when we were still living in Riga. It was nice to meet old friends. And also, there were those who accepted the Lord and became ministers of the church after we immigrated to America. For me, this opportunity to serve fellow-ministers in Latvia is very special. Fourteen special years of my life were spent here. Spiritual maturation after baptism (in Brest), marriage, birth of all our children, receiving and accepting the call for ministry—all this took place in this beautiful city of Riga. Many warm memories are associated with this place.

In breaks and after the seminar, I had the opportunity to talk with fellow pastors. All of them testify to the main problem that they are facing: the departure of people from Latvia and their

churches. Many left for America after the collapse of the Soviet Union; now, mainly, they leave for Western Europe in search of work. The number of believers in the churches are thinning out and this affects the morale of those who stay. Pray for the Church in Latvia.

On Sunday, October 22, we visited a congregation in which we were members before leaving for America in 1989 and in which I served as one of its pastors. Now it is called "Balto-Slavic Society". The last time we visited this church with Nina and all our children was 13 years ago, in 2004.



We are together with the senior pastor Pavel Kornienko and his wife, Vera.

I took part in the service by preaching the Word of God.



Participation in the service of children.



Young people participate in the service by singing.





After the service, we had the opportunity to talk with the few members of the church who were in this church during those distant Soviet times. One of them, Alexander Kovalchuk, reminded me that I was his first teacher in Sunday school. Now he is over 40 and has five children! In the photo he and his wife Angela are in the center.

And to the right of them their eldest son and wife.



Meeting old friends reminded us again of the song lyrics: "time changes our faces". However, our hearts have not changed—we still love the Lord and each other. Although we have not seen each other for many years, when we meet, we experience the same feeling of kinship in Christ.

Farewell dinner at the house of Victor Petrenko, Director of the Latvian Bible Center, and his wife Esther.

For me and Nina, this trip was a great blessing and brought spiritual encouragement.



From the 23rd to the 27th of October, a meeting of the eldership took place at Bethany Church with those who expressed a desire to be baptized and attended classes in preparation for this important step in their life. Eight people received approval from the elders and were presented on Sunday, **October 29th**, at the membership meeting of the congregation as candidates for baptism. This special service is scheduled to be held in the church on November 5th.



Service at the University continues its course—regular meetings with students during lessons, preparation for classes, personal meetings with students. My heart is filled with joy when I hear students' testimonies about how they participated in missionary service last summer. These testimonies are shared at the beginning of each lesson—all students, in turn, briefly talk about their ministry in the summer and pray for the needs associated with this ministry. It gives me special pleasure to hear about how the Lord uses these young people and how they themselves grow spiritually through serving others. With the end of October, the first half of the fall semester is completed. Less than two months remains before the end of this semester. Time goes fast!

Nina and I sincerely thank all those who keep us in their prayers. Please continue to pray for us. Our desire is to bring abundant fruit to the Lord through our ministry in Moldova.

May God's blessing be on each of you, our dear friends! As a wish, accept this text of the Scripture: "***The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock.***" (Isaiah 26: 3-4).

With love and prayer,
Your co-workers in God's Kingdom,

Vyacheslav and Nina Tsvirinko



This is what we saw from the windows of our room on the fourth floor of the Latvian Bible Center:



Morning frosty patterns on the window glass of our room.

