

April 30, 2017

Dear Friends,

I want to greet you with the Easter greeting: ***Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hristos a înviat! Adevarat a înviat!***

Although the official celebration of Easter took place two weeks ago, people still greet each other with this Easter greeting in Moldova. And they do it not only in church, but also on the street, in the store or market. This goes on for 40 days after Easter, until the day of Christ's ascension. This is a local custom. It is doubtful that everyone who says that greeting believes in the resurrection and life after death. Still, it is nice to hear such proclamation of Christ's resurrection.

The month of April went by very fast. What helped was plenty of different events in life and ministry. Let me share some of them with you.



**On April 2**, Sunday, Nina and I were invited after a morning service by a young family to visit them. They wanted to learn a little bit more about us. For us it was an opportunity to learn how young people live in Moldova. Despite having three young children, Sergey and Galina are very active in the local church. Galina is a choir director and solo singer in the worship group. Both are involved in ministry with young families. They are helping them to meet different

challenges in life. Sergey works for the mission organization called *Beginning of Life*. This organization provides help with rehabilitation and reintegration to society for victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, helps girls who are orphans or social orphans, and works with teenagers.

*Beginning of Life* has developed an educational program "Preparation for Success" designed to inform young people about the existence and danger of human trafficking. Also, it helps young people to find their call and place in life and society. It was pleasant, educational and inspirational visit.

**On April 7<sup>th</sup>**, the University Senate met. This is a gathering of all faculty, administration and student representatives of the University. At that meeting, results of the first semesters and plans for the future were discussed. For me it was the first time to participate at such an event. It was interesting



for me to observe how work of this educational institution is planned and what challenges it is facing.



On the same day, in the evening, I met with the youth of Bethany church. The youth leader of the church invited me to come to their meeting and share a word of encouragement with the youth. I accepted that invitation with joy. It provided me with a good opportunity to meet the youth of the church that we are planning to join as members. I immediately noticed that they

spoke mostly Romanian. Although church worship on Sunday is conducted mostly in Russian, the youth feels much more comfortable with Romanian. That fact reminded me of the situation in Slavic churches in the States. In both countries, the youth adapts to the language of the surrounding society and speaks that language better than the language of their parents.

On Palm Sunday, **April 9<sup>th</sup>**, we visited the church *Valley of Blessings* that is located in the village of Dolinnoe. This was our second time visiting that church. This time Sunday service took place in the sanctuary, on the main floor of the building. When we were there last time



in winter, the congregation met in the basement due to lack of heating in the sanctuary. The meeting area is very spacious with high ceilings, and beautifully decorated. The church youth participated in the service. I was invited to deliver the sermon.

On Wednesday, **April 12**, a festive service was held at the University. Students, teachers and staff gathered to remember together the suffering of the Lord, to take part in communion and to congratulate each other on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As always, the student choir pleased the audience with beautiful singing.





The audience listened attentively to the sermon delivered by the Academic Dean of the University, Dmitry Sevastyan.



On Maundy Thursday, on **April 13**, in the local church of Bethany, as in many other churches on that evening, the Last Supper was observed. The pastor of the church asked me to deliver a sermon during that service.



On Easter, **April 16th**, Nina and I celebrated together with the church *Hope* in the village of Chiorescu, where we were invited by the Senior pastor. The adults, young people, and children participated in the service. I had the privilege to deliver the Easter sermon

during that service.



In addition to local residents, a group of guests from the United States attended the service. They came from Mississippi to conduct a Christian camp with the children of this village during spring break at school.

For a festive Easter dinner, we were invited to the family of Olga Fedorovna Moka. 25 years ago she started *Mothers in Prayer* ministry in Moldova. A long-time worker in the women's ministry, Olga Fyodorovna continues, whenever possible, to participate in the life of the churches. Two years ago, her husband died. She lives in the same house with her daughter Mariana Dubchak's family. We heard from sister Moka during this meeting a lot of interesting things about the life of believers in Moldova both in the distant past and during the last quarter of a century.



After the joyous celebration of Easter, the inhabitants of Chisinau and many cities and villages of Moldova suddenly experienced a natural disaster. While the cherry and apricot trees have already blossomed, from the **20th to the 22nd of April**, a large amount of snow (up to half a meter) fell onto the country—more than during the winter. The snow was wet. It was accompanied by strong wind. As a result, thousands of trees and branches fell. Electrical wires were cut off. Many settlements were

without electricity for several days. Traffic on the roads became impossible. The city transport did not work. Nina and I did not leave the apartment for two days.



This was the view from our window on the 21st of April.

By 22 April the city was in a snow captivity.

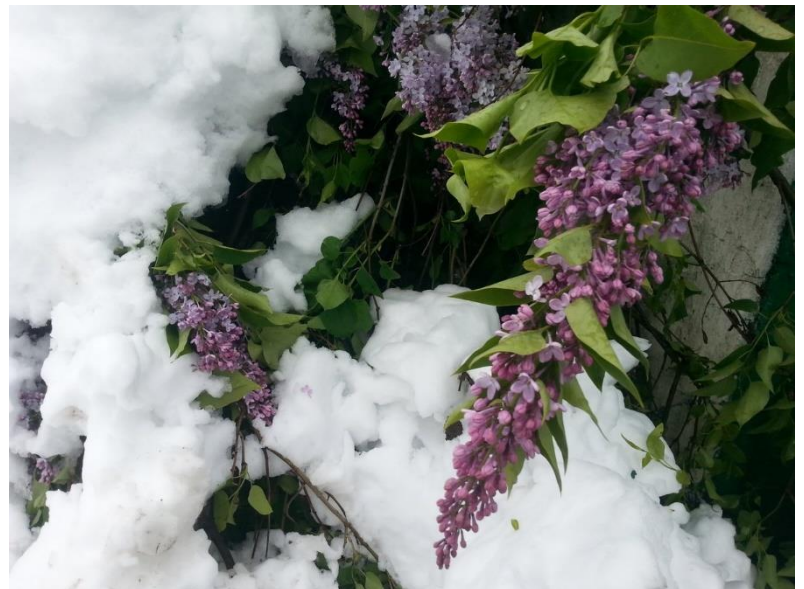




That's how many trees looked sad on April 23, after the storm.



Here's what happened to the trees next to our house as a result of the snowfall.



And these are the lilac flowers covered with a thick layer of snow.

A few days after the snowfall, the snow melted. However, the damage to Chisinau and the whole country was very great. Currently, extensive work is underway to clear the broken branches of trees and to remove fallen trees. It's hard to imagine how long this process will take.

Unfortunately, this natural disaster caused great damage to the church, which Nina and I visited on the 12th of March. The roof of the church with an unusual name—the *Church Without Walls*—could not stand the weight of a thick layer of wet snow and failed. Fortunately, this happened at night and there was no one in the building. Therefore, no one was hurt. However, now the congregation needs to look for ways to restore the destroyed building. At first, they will put a large tent and during the summer until the fall they will conduct their services in it. However, by winter they will need to have another building.



On April 23, Sunday, we visited the church called *The Source of Life*. This church is part of the autonomous Baptist brotherhood. Long-term pastor of this church was Ivan Petrovich Belev, whom we knew well. Having come to this church, we were amazed at the large

size of the church building. During the Soviet Union, this congregation gathered in a large tent and experienced much oppression. And now they have such a beautiful building! We were hospitably received, and I participated in the service by preaching the Word of God.



The service that day was led by the youth.

An interesting meeting was held recently. A couple of weeks ago I received an email from one of my former colleagues on the Board of Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary, Elaine Enns. She informed me that one of her students in the program *Masters in Ministry, Leadership and Culture*, moved with her husband to serve in Moldova, and she asked me to meet with them. On **April 27th**, Nina and I met with Sherry and Lance Nozick. A month and a half ago they moved to Chisinau to participate in the ministry of orphans. Sherry is from Louisiana, and her husband, Lance, from California (he lived in LA, Lodi, Sacramento). They recently lived in North Dakota. We had a wonderful fellowship together like fellow countrymen who met far from their native places. It was nice to hear that Sherry is very pleased with the master's program she is in offered by Fresno Pacific.







At the end of the month, **on April 28-29**, a conference was held in Chisinau for the ministers of the Union of Churches of the ECB of Moldova. The theme of the conference: "Israel and the Church in recent times." The conference was held by the American organization CJF Ministries. Over 200 presbyters from all over Moldova attended this conference. It was a great pleasure for me to attend that conference not only because of interesting speakers, but also because of the opportunity to meet with many ministers of Moldova. The conference was blessed. Many good responses I heard from its participants.



On the last Sunday of the month, **April 30th**, Nina and I were at the Bethany church. In the evening service, I preached about the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And in the morning service, one of the speakers of the conference, Dan Strall, from Chicago, preached at Bethany, our church. He is a Jew. He believed in Christ from the testimony of a Christian girl, who later became his wife. He has been serving the Lord for more than 40 years. Both at the conference and during the service, his sermons were very informative and instructive.

You probably noticed that this month we had several meetings with Americans. We get the impression that this is not an accident. It seems that they like Moldova. Well, for us, the great benefit of this is that we can practice our English in conversation with them.

On this I will finish this newsletter. Thank you very much for your prayers! Please, continue to pray for us. We need God's protection, His wisdom, and His assistance in our ministry.

Sincerely we wish all of you abundant blessings of God.

Your co-workers in the field of the Lord,

Vyacheslav and Nina Tsvirinko.



***“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:19, NASB)***

This tree looked like this at Easter, before the snow storm.

