



May 31, 2017

It began for us in an unusual way.

May peace be upon you, dear friends! Please accept my heartfelt greetings from sunny Moldova!



The sixth month of our life in Chisinau has passed. May is a special month for our family. Nina's birthday is in May. And in May, we had our wedding. Two of our sons entered into a marriage union also in May. This year, May was particularly special for us since on the 2nd of May Nina marked a special, "round" number of her birthday. And we also celebrated another "round" number - the 40th year anniversary of our life together, on the 22nd of May. Usually these dates have been celebrated throughout the year in the circle of our family. However, this time we thought that because of our remoteness from the family, we will not see any of our children and grandchildren on these special days. And we were wrong! Our sons and daughters delighted us with a surprise. They sent one of our sons, Andrei, on a long journey across the ocean, so that he would come to Nina's birthday in Chisinau, congratulate her personally on behalf of all the children and grandchildren, and bring gifts from them. This was a surprise for Nina and a great joy for both of us. Also, all the other children and grandchildren gathered together on May 2nd in Fresno to celebrate Mom's birthday, and they joined us in Chisinau via Skype. So, the celebration, as always, included the participation of all family members. We are very grateful to the Lord and to our children for this wonderful gift to us.



For us, it was a great blessing and encouragement at the beginning of this new month of our life away from children and grandchildren.



Forty years later, as you can see, we almost did not change 😊.

Well, now about some events in our ministry.



On May 7, Sunday, we observed the rite of communion in our local church, “Bethany”. At the end of the service, three people responded to the pastor's call for repentance and, having come forward to the front of the church, prayed to the Lord for the repentance of their sins. Repentance during the service is not uncommon in this church, or in other churches. More than once, we witnessed this while visiting different churches. As always, to see this is both touching and joyful.

On May 13, Saturday, Nina and I crossed the Moldovan border for the first time and came to the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic (PMR) or, as they say, *Transnistria*. The reason for this visit was to participate in a youth gathering of the Baptist churches of Transnistria. I was invited to preach in this service. As is well known, Transnistria was part of Moldova until 1990. Due to the growth of nationalist sentiments in Moldova in those years and the negative attitude toward the Russian-speaking population, Transnistria was formed into a separate state, which to this day has not been recognized by many in the world. We were a bit nervous crossing the border of this state with American passports. However, we did not encounter any problems, and we were able to take part in the youth service and to return safely to Chisinau on the same day.

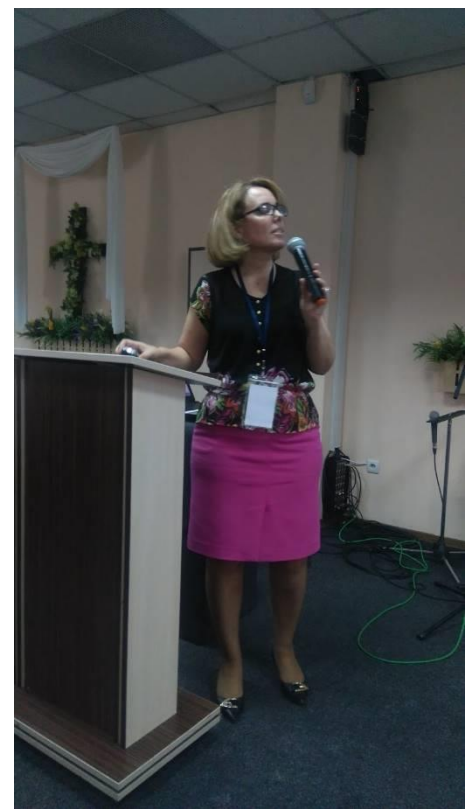


On May 16, I took part in the meeting of presbyters of the Chisinau region. There were more than twenty ministers. The main task of the meeting was to prepare for the forthcoming congress and nomination of candidates for various positions in the ministry of the Baptist Union. The congress, which occurs every four years, will take place in a little more than three months from today. The churches and the administration of the Baptist Union are working hard to prepare for this important event in the life of the brotherhood of Moldova.



On May 18 - 20, in the church of “Light to the World”, in Chisinau, a conference entitled “A Holistic Mission and Shalom” took place. It was organized by the Micah Movement. The conference was comprised of speakers such as Vladimir Ubeyvolk, Johannes Reimer, Peter Kuzmich, Esther Petrenko, Fedor Raichinets, Mark Sandberg, and Cheryl Howe. I knew some of the speakers and participants before the

conference, and others I met during that conference. It was particularly interesting to meet Esther Petrenko who is the Academic Dean of the Latvian Bible Center. Esther is the wife of Viktor Ivanovich Petrenko, the Director of this Center. Nina and I are acquainted with Victor from our youth during which we lived in Riga, and therefore it was interesting for us to meet with Esther and hear about her and Victor’s life and ministry in Riga.



Dr. Esther Petrenko reveals the role of the plan of reconciliation as it applies to the Church.



Dr. Johannes Reimer is describing Jesus Christ as Prince of Peace.



Peter Kuzmich calls for the Church to carry the Gospel into society with an understanding of the needs and problems of the people living in this society. That's why Christians should keep the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other.

During the period of three days, **May 19 - 21**, American evangelist Sammy Tippit conducted several



evangelistic services organized by the youth department of the Union of Baptist Churches of Moldova. These services took place in the city of Balti, in the church "The Ark", and in the city of Chisinau, in the National Palace. More than 4,000 young people attended these services. About 500 of them went forward and prayed for the repentance of their sins. Sammy also visited our university (which university?) and spoke to students on May 20.

For more information on evangelistic ministries with Sammy Tippit, visit the website: <http://baptist.org.md/ru/?p=10307>.

On May 21, Sunday, the dedication of the house of prayer called "Gethsemane" in Chisinau took place. The senior pastor of this church is Alexander Mikhailovich Goncharuk. This house of prayer was built not far from the place where the first church in Chisinau was located in the beginning of 20th century. The solemn service was



attended by guests from different regions of Moldova. Ten pastors took part in worship and in the dedication prayer. A detailed description of this worship service can be found on the website of the Baptist Union Of Moldova, <http://baptist.org.md/ru/?p=10295>.



Prayer of dedication

On May 26, Friday night, I again met with the youth of the church "Bethany". This time I was asked to speak about how young people should approach the issue of marriage. After I talked on this topic for almost an hour to a group of young people, the young men surrounded me with questions, and the girls closely surrounded Nina and did not want to let her go home, asking her about how she addressed this issue forty years ago 😊.





The house of prayer "Bethany" in Bendery.

On May 28, Sunday, we again found ourselves in Transnistria. This time we visited the morning service in the church "Good News" in the city of Bendery. A few years ago, the pastor of this church died. Since then, the congregation has not had a senior pastor. The congregation is governed by three deacons who are leading the church in turn - each one for one year. I took part in that Sunday service by delivering the sermon.



At the end of the service, a prayer was offered for the blessing of children who had finished their Sunday school classes and now are starting their summer vacation.



Near the house of prayer in Bendery there is a family-type orphanage, which the church takes care of. Eight children from the age of three to thirteen are being raised in this orphanage. While I had a meeting with the church leaders after the morning service, Nina went to this orphanage and met with parents and children. The work that the husband and wife are doing at this orphanage is not easy. It requires deep dedication, patience, and sacrifice. But this is very noble work. Nina was very touched by what she saw. These parents deserve special gratitude and need both moral and financial support.





In the evening of the same day, we went to a church service in Tiraspol. It is a few kilometers from the city of Bendery. Here we were greeted very warmly. Just two weeks ago, we were in this church at a youth gathering and now we met with the church congregation. This church left a great impression upon me. As in the church in Bendery, there is no

senior pastor here. The brother who is entrusted with this ministry is in charge of the church. However, there is a need for a senior pastor. The house of prayer of this church was built in the 70's of the 20th century. At that time in the community most of the members were of German nationality. Later they immigrated to Germany. Now the congregation consists of mostly Russian-speaking people. There is also a group of people with hearing impairment in the church. A special translation is made for them during the service.



The committed ministry of Peter Yakovlevich Kuzminsky, who is the regional presbyter for Transnistria, has lasted for many years.

After a morning service and a meeting with the leaders in the church of Bendery, Peter Yakovlevich took us through the center of Tiraspol, the capital of Transnistria. We had a chance to look back into the Soviet past. For example, we saw a monument to Lenin. Much here reminds us of that distant time.



Until now, I have shared with you about my ministry in the churches of Chisinau and the vicinity. I also want to say a few words about the ministry at the university (which university?). On the 15th of May, I had a final meeting with the students in my class. It was hard to part with them - for these few months of my teaching they became close to my heart. Now they are completing work on the written assignment and handing it over to me. I will need to check all their work and submit the overall grades for the course. Thus, my first semester at the university came to an end. I am very grateful to God for giving me an opportunity to teach at this institution. Both the interaction with the students in the classroom and with the teachers brought me great satisfaction. Now, during the summer, I need to prepare for new courses that I will teach in the next academic year.



With this I will finish my letter. Nina and I sincerely thank everyone who prays for us. God bless every one of you! **"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you"** (Rom 16:20)

Your co-workers in the field of the Lord in Chisinau,

Vyacheslav and Nina Tsvirinko!

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P.S. May is the month when spring in Moldova has fully entered its rights. The city has changed. It is covered in an ocean of greenery. Blossom trees, shrubs, flowers. Below are just a few glimpses of May.

