



GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

Church Planting in Chervona Sloboda

4th Quarter 2010 Report

October 2010

Normally, our church celebrates Harvest Holiday in October, and this year was no exception. On October 17, Grace Baptist Church in Chervonf Sloboda gathered for the celebration of the harvest. The church youth choir from the Temple of Salvation church came to sing. Local children who attend our Sunday school came, and there were some other local villagers (who generally do not attend church). Four men from the rehab center also visited. I wrote recently that men from the nearest men's rehab center in the neighboring village of Sytnik have begun attending our services. Since that time, a Women's Rehabilitation Center has been opened in Sloboda has been opened, plus two more other villages nearby. Now, so for several weeks four rehabilitation centers have been visiting our Sunday services.

The service went wonderfully well. The terrific youth choir sang, and the children also prepared a short program, including two poems. The pastor of the church that organized the rehabilitation centers urged the brothers and sisters to give God the little that we have, like the boy who had 5 loaves



and 2 fish. When we look at the world, we tend to think, what can we do? We're so small; how can we influence this world and change it? But if we dedicate ourselves to God, He uses what little we have and multiplies it, and it will be a blessing to others. Pastor Maxim thanked our local church, because we show love and provide a place of worship for the men of the rehabilitation centers. They are very grateful for our hospitality, and they said that they feel at home in our church. We thank God that we can serve these people.

Vladimir, one of reabilitants, told of his plight: Since childhood, Volodya had heard about God. His grandmother was a devout believer and always prayed for him when he was little. She told him Bible stories. But it so happened that at age 16 Volodya was convicted of a crime. Despite his godless life, Volodya always prayed, even when committing crimes. While serving his prison a sentence, he committed another crime, and they added to his term. When Volodya was released from prison, he became a member of a gang that committed heinous offenses. Drugs became his safety net; he got so hooked on them that he could not live without drugs. Once, when Volodya and his friends were under the influence of drugs, the police raided their apartment, and Volodya got thrown from the third floor. An ambulance rushed him to intensive care with a fractured spine. On the third day they sent Volodya home from the hospital. He was lying helpless at home, and he lost all interest and zest for life. The

pastor of one local church and a few believers visited Volodya. They prayed much for him, since Volodya was in very bad physical condition. Volodya had 8 serious diseases, one of them “blood poisoning.” He did not expect to live for long, since death stood at his doorway. But thanks to the prayers of the church, Volodya soon rose to his feet, and his health slowly began to recover. Before long, Volodya returned to his former way of life. Before he took drugs, Volodya always prayed. He believed that prayer would protect him. One time one man dared to disagree with Volodya, so Volodya then inflicted several hammer blows on that man’s head. Back in prison again, Volodya began reading the Bible, and he attended meetings of believers. A miracle happened, and Volodya got released early. Volodya decided to take what was perhaps his last chance, so he checked into the rehab center, where God changed his life. Now, Volodya himself serves drug addicts and helps them to break free and learn the truth. Everyone who knew before Volodya can’t believe how much he’s changed. Praise God! At the end of the Harvest celebration we prayed and expressed thanks for physical bread and for bread spiritual. The church thanked God for the harvest, and for His mercy to us.

After the service we had fellowship around the table [a meal]. Eighty people attended the service and at the dinner. We thank God for this wonderful service, and fellowship.

Thanks also to all the brothers and sisters in America, for your prayers and financial support, that you remain faithful in the ministry. Thanks to you, God’s work is being done in our country. Thank you, and God bless you.

November 2010

This month, our church was visited by a missionary who goes on missionary trips to Tajikistan. Each year Roman goes with a group of believers to Tajikistan and helps local churches. They conduct camps for children and participate in various projects; they help to conduct services, and have visited poor families and support them.

He related to us a lot of interesting facts from Tajikistan: about the life of the Tajiks, their way of life and religion, and about the persecuted church in this country, the difficulties that believers in Jesus Christ are going through. We prayed together about this Muslim country, and at the end of the service we gave donations for it. This is a small mite, which our church was able to gather to thus support the work of ministry in Muslim countries.

As usual, the men from the rehabilitation center visit our services. Each of their testimonies is a sad story of life, full of fear, frustration, hopelessness. One named Anton told the story of his life. From the age of 14 Anton smoked marijuana, and by 16 moved on to hard drugs, including ecstasy. He read Psalm. 114:3: “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.” He said, “I felt what is written in this psalm.” Anton went through several rehabilitation centers, where he was unable to endure the conditions in which the rehabilitants were kept. They are very poorly fed, and their cold concrete walls are like a prison. All this did not help. After leaving a rehab center, Anton returned to drugs. He was angry at the world, had lost all interest in life, and he saw no way out. “One day my mother advised me to go to the Christian rehab center for help.” Given the negative experiences of treatment in such centers, Anton resolutely refused that suggestion. But his Mother was able to convince Anton, and he had nothing to lose, so Anton decided to try. Ps. 116:4-9 says, “Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.” Anton says, “So the Lord saved my soul from death. For the past 9 months I have been free and enjoying a full life with God.” Together we rejoiced with him and thanked God for this miraculous change of life and for His grace.

We continue to conduct Bible studies in our church. We've begun to hold them in the so-called "Sunday school" We want it to be cozy, with a family-like atmosphere. But a lot needs to be done that would create a cozy atmosphere. The only portion that is completely finished is the toilet. There you can actually feel comfortable. Recently another Christian brother visited us. When, after the meeting, he set out to find the restroom, one woman told him that we have a very good modern toilet. But somehow this man took a wrong turn and ended up at the old outhouse, which is out back. When he returned, he was surprised and said, "What's so special about your toilet? It's just a plain, old rustic outhouse with nothing modern at all." When I showed him our new bathroom, we had a long laugh.

Right now, we need funds to finish our Sunday school part of the building. Then we would have not only an attractive toilet, but also a kitchen and a large room for lessons. Please pray about this, and if it would be possible to render financial assistance, we would be very grateful.

We are very grateful to God for His help and support, and for that He has put upon your heart to pray for us and to sacrifice for us. Thank you for that. Pray for us.

December 2010

Unfortunately, our church has not grown this year, and we are very sad. The brothers and sisters continue to tell people about Christ, but people do not go to church. Today, few people think about God. There are members of our church who attend church less frequently. No persuasions or exhortation help. They say their reason is the fact that they are very busy; there's a lot of work, that even on Sunday there's no time to attend church. We pray for these, and ask that you pray for cooled-off brothers and sisters.

However, there is much to rejoice about in the church. It's wonderful to see how God changes people. This is a great blessing, to observe spiritual growth in believers and to see changes in my life. You know that the men in a rehabilitation center attend our church. And, although the church has not grown in the sense of the villagers coming, it is multiplied by the rehabilitants who come. At each service we are happy to people who until recently have been alcoholics and drug addicts, and now they praise God, sing, and testify about life changes. In rehabilitation centers, they learn to play various musical instruments, then go to services and singing they can. Please pray for these people; it is not easy for them to deal with sin, there are often failures, and they have to start all over again.

We are also grateful to the mission BIEM and to all those who participated in the construction of our house of prayer. We're grateful for the response to our request for funds; we were able to buy heaters, so now it's warm even in Sunday school, and we can use the restroom. Thank you for that.

We have 3 elderly ladies who have very zealously attended meetings, but now due to various diseases of old age, they are forced to stay home. We visit their homes, but they yearn for the church. Pray for them, that the Lord will strengthen and give more opportunities to be in meetings. Sometimes we drive them to church when they feel better.

Thank you very much for your prayers and support. We really appreciate your help and prayer requests to our Lord. God bless you!

Sincerely,
Vitaly Yurchenko