

Tony's Testimony



I was born in a strong Orthodox family in 1979. My parents were not just regular orthodox people but they belonged to a special group of Orthodox people that called themselves as 'Warriors of Christ'. Such group of people existed only in Northern Romania and our southwestern part of Ukraine.

Seeing that these people are looking for the real Gospel truth, the Orthodox priest casted them away from the Orthodox church. My parents joined an underground Baptist church. That was long before 'perestroika' and I remember all the persecution of God's people by the communists. I remember how we had our services in the open fields and forests, sometimes at night.

My family was involved in underground book printing. If you want to know more about this illegal activity during the time of the USSR, please, watch ***The Printing*** movie by Bob Jones University. As a child, I would sew the pages together to make little page bundles that were glued or sown together by hand to make a book. Then my grandpa would make the covers and cut three sides of every book to make them nice and smooth.

KGB agents searched my home for the Bibles or any other Christian literature several times. But they found nothing.

I remember a night when we had an illegal meeting of brothers in our house. Our pastor was just released from prison and all the brothers wanted to meet him and hear his story. So, they gathered in one of our rooms at about 11 pm. We, the children, went to bed, while a dozen brothers were fellowshiping in our corner room. All of a sudden, there was a knock at the door. KGB agents came and started looking around as they got information that we had an illegal meeting in our home. They entered the house and started searching... They entered every room but somehow they didn't see the door that was lit by light though about 2/3 of the door was made of glass. God made them blind and they didn't see what was just in front of their eyes. They asked for an apology for disturbing us and left. Our God is really GREAT!

After 'perestroika' our unregistered church was able to build our church building. I went to music school, so I played the piano in our church. Later on I went to a Christian school to learn how to direct a choir. So, when I was 15 years old I became a choir director of the youth choir.

When I turned 17, my family started going to the Carpathian Mountains as a result of our library ministry. My dad and I would go out every Friday and Saturday to the busy streets or squares of our city with a huge table and hundreds of Christian books in banana boxes. My dad was the first to start that kind of ministry in our city. Because of this ministry many people got saved and became church members. Now their children are the age I was at that time and serve the Lord.

So, one day a young girl came to our table with literature and asked if we had a book how to get married successfully. My dad answered that we didn't have that kind of books but we have books how to get eternal life. She said that her mother in the Carpathian Mountains is interested to meet real Christians and one Sunday we went there for first time in our life. That was just the beginning of something great as we started going there every Sunday. We had our meetings and services in private homes, school libraries and even in village stores. That way my dad became a missionary and a pastor there. After almost 20 years of ministry 4 churches were started and grow every year. I was helping my dad for the first 5 years and preached 2-3 times every Sunday in different places in the heart of the mountains. This is where I got my starting experience as a preacher.

We call the Carpathian Mountains – Ukrainian Jungles as it's an isolated area and very hard-hearted people live there. They are the ancestors of the former prisoners that were sent to the mountains by Russian tsars and queens. So, those people are very cruel and are involved in four major sins – idolatry, witchcraft, alcoholism and adultery.

But we were able to help those people with the Word of God and humanitarian aid. So, local people saw the light of Christ in their life and many of them got converted. I visited them last weekend and preached in the main church that we started with my dad about 19 years ago. It was exciting and a little bit weird to see that people that I met 15-20 years ago are completely different. I remember their red noses because of heavy drinking and blemish faces. Now some of them are deacons and pastors of those four churches and their children are also ministers of the Lord who serve the local people. Isn't it what we were called for?

Seeing our success in the Carpathian mountains one of the local pastors in our city decided to start a new church in a highly populated area of Chernivtsi as he was a middle man for getting the humanitarian aid for our ministry in the mountains. He invited me to help him and we two started that church from scratch. I am laughing that it was the smallest church in my personal history – just the pastor and me as a church member. So, I helped him as a secretary and translator, preacher and a youth leader. I worked with a very active group of young people from non-Christian families. One of the young people from that youth group is now the Head of Religious Affairs in our city and the other one is the pastor of that church right now. Praise the Lord!

I got married in 2001 and I joined Mary's church in 2002. I continued as a preacher and a choir director. Every month our choir goes to different areas of our region to encourage local churches to serve more effectively. We love going to the missionary fields and have crusades for unbelievers in faraway villages, including the ones in the Carpathian mountains where my dad continues his ministry.

My main concern is unsaved folks. I love working with people who do not know Christ as their personal Savior and win them for Christ. I think this is what God has called us to do – go and preach around the globe and make people disciples. As a result, more churches need to be started and I am all in for that! That's why I've been doing it for over 20 years now and will continue until Jesus comes or takes me home. Amen.