



Stella Gorbani, Coordinator-Translator, Moldova Team

I was educated in a family of honest but unfortunately, non Christian people in the communist times in the USSR. This implies that I was subjected to communist education in school and in society which denied the existence of God. My father, though, was always telling that God exists and that we are Christians. Neither he nor anybody else in my family could explain what it meant to be a Christian. The only thing we knew was that Christ died and that he was risen. Even Christmas was celebrated because everybody said it was a great holiday, that was all we could say about being a Christian. I had never had the chance of keeping a Bible in my hand before I became 32. I was

always curious to read at least a line from it. But it was a forbidden book in former USSR and there was no way of having one.

I married a non Christian man and for 6 years we lived in the world, joining all the possible Communist organizations but we felt a void in our hearts. Besides, life seemed so boring in a country where there was nothing but work and the struggle for surviving in the nightmares of the long lines for providing elementary food or clothing. Life seemed aimless and horrible without any hope or way out. Once I thought that I shall die if it would go on like that.

Our marriage seemed to have reached the point of collapse because when everything around is twisted in the thoughts of people, people start to find faults with one another. Me and my husband decided to separate, thinking that divorce would make us happy and we did so. In this separation a very curious thing happened.

It was in 1992, when many Christian crusades were organized and people like us, former Communists, could finally hear the Word of God. One day my husband came to visit our son and he told me that he received Christ. I did not know what it meant and I thought it was just a new trick of his to get his family back. Of course, I did not want to hear anything. But looking at him, I saw something unusual – he was as if radiating light. He looked different than before. At that point I understood nothing and cut him short saying that none of his tricks would help him anymore. I did not know that God was already working in the life of my husband and in my life. I did not know that he was praying for our family and that very soon God was ready to offer me Salvation.

Once my husband invited me to join him at church. He said: "I know you will like it!" I could not believe that my husband, the man who once liked noisy parties with drinks and stupid talk was now inviting me to church. I decided to go because of curiosity but great was my surprise to discover the Bethany Baptist Church situated right downtown of Balti - a beautiful building, full of light, with crowds of people, who were so very kind and so welcoming. I never thought that in my city there was such a nice place, and that it was a Baptist Church because I had always been told that the Baptist Churches had the most ignorant and unworthy people.

The music started playing and the whole congregation started singing absolutely amazing melodies about God's Love. When the Pastor, Ivan Yurchak, read the first passage from the Bible and the first words about God were pronounced my heart started beating fast. It seemed that it started absorbing the vigor of life, like a drying flower is drinking water after a long period of dry. My heart was absorbing the energy from every word I heard in church, be it preaching, singing, poems, anything. It started regaining its normal rhythm after a long time of disorderly beating. I liked every minute of being in Church. We started visiting any possible meetings in Bethany Church at that time the only Baptist Church in the city. Soon we discovered that love started returning to us. We became more understanding and more tolerant to one another. Joy returned into my life and my marriage became a lovely thing. No more hatred or revenge haunted me. We got many friends, brothers and sisters, who loved us and helped us understand what every person in our condition was supposed to do.

My husband matured much sooner than I did. He was the first to repent and to get baptized. I was just learning things. During his baptism in June 1992, in the village Sverdiak, the same Pastor of Bethany Church, Ivan Yurchak, made the invitation and even offered to people to receive Christ and be baptized right on the spot.

This was a time I shall never forget. My heart and all my being was longing to step forward and join the church. I wanted it so much. But an inner voice was stopping me, telling that it was not yet the time, that I had to be more organized and to have the necessary clothes, that the rest of the people would laugh at me, for being so thoughtless, etc, It was the greatest struggle I had ever had in my life and I was defeated. I did not move an inch but after the service I felt a terrible pain in my heart which was bitterly crying for the missed chance. I could not forgive myself for being such a coward. I felt as if I had missed the most important thing in my life...

In a week the same ceremony of Baptism of the Bethany Church in Balti was supposed to take place at the central lake of the city. These were the first years of freedom after the fall of communism. Churches came out from behind the curtain and organized such services in the open air for all the city to watch and see the baptism of the Baptists.

Preparing myself for this service at home, I told myself that it was my day. I promised myself that I should give my life into the hands of Christ that day. Coming to the lake I examined all the crowd and saw even some of my students among the visitors. This did not stop me. Nothing could stop me, any more. Christ was waiting for me and during the invitation I stepped forward and joined the front when Pastor, Ivan Yurchak, made the invitation. It was so simple. I felt as if a heavy burden was removed from my shoulders. Joy filled my heart. I was so happy that I had made it!

After this I started my journey with Christ. It was the time when many Americans started visiting Bethany Church and I was the only Christian interpreter in the City of Balti. At the beginning, when I knew very little from the Bible it was pretty scary to interpret preaching, because I understood the responsibility of doing it for Lord. But God was with me all the time, keeping me by my right hand.

Now, after 22 years of being a Christian, I understand that God had His plan for my life ready long before I agreed to join Him. He called me to translate for His people, giving me this wonderful skill which made my life so meaningful. Now my life is never boring as before.

God brought into my life many extraordinary people, men and women of God, from whom I learned to value Christian service. I am very grateful to my dear brothers: Bill Davis and his wife, Mary, Ted Lindwall and his wife, Susan, who became examples of devotion and self-sacrifice in Lord's Ministry. It is the greatest privilege one can have – to serve Lord.

Now I have many brothers and sisters around the world and around Moldova. God showed me numerous times that "With God all things are possible".

Mihail Gorbani, Field Representative, Moldova Team

Mihail Gorbani, the Missionary worker who has been working in Chepariya church for 15 years uses the program with about 100 people, 54 of which received Christ. He said that this program helped save several families who were ready to divorce, because the husbands were drinking and dissipating. When Mihail was teaching the lessons from **People Who Knew Jesus** the wives of these men were surprised that their husbands were not drunk and waited impatiently for the night when the meetings were taking place.

These men discovered the Biblical truths by themselves and this was so very encouraging for them. What they concluded was: "It is not difficult to read the Bible. All is very clear...". Some of these men received Christ and joined the church. Many children have studied the **Bible Stories for All Ages** and started coming to the Sunday school. Now in the Chepariya church there are about 15 kids who come on a regular basis to church and in summer-time they gather about 70 kids for Summer Vacation Bible School.

The great thing is to have the CSI materials which are clear and easy to be studied by unbelievers and even the new converts can teach them easily. We are grateful to our Lord for Bro Bill Davis who brought this program into Moldova, to Bro Ted Lindwall who wrote all of these variety of books, which are available in both Russian and Romanian languages used in Moldova.

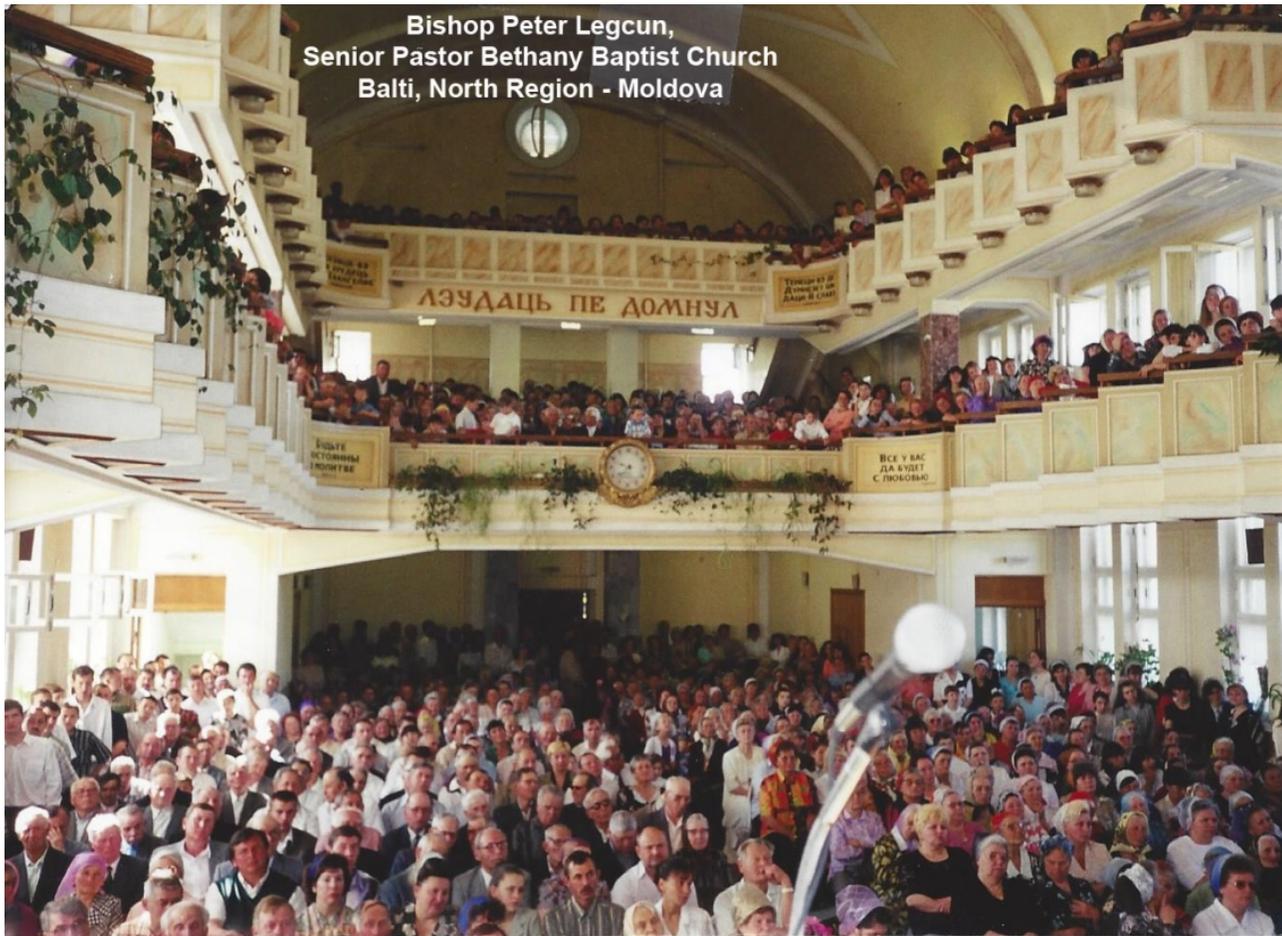


Sister Nadejda of the North Region, Moldova

Sister Nadejda is the Main Sister of the North Region of Moldova under the direction of Bishop Peter Legcun, she coordinates with all the women in the North Region of Moldova.

Bishop Peter Legcun, North Region of Moldova

“CSI and Bill Davis were sent by God Himself to Moldova, because God knew the need of the pastors who at that time had neither special preparation, nor the required education for leading a church, for spreading the Word of God in a world where it had been forbidden for so long. They interpreted the Bible and taught the people just the way they understood it. We had no other Christian literature at hand at the time. “CSI’s strategy and materials was just the thing the Christians of Moldova needed. Many churches could learn how to evangelize people, how to do personal evangelism. Many pastors found out how to preach and how to teach the church to be active, to go into the world and teach the lost, just as Jesus taught. Since then the number of churches has considerably increased in the North of Moldova from 59 churches to 146. The CSI strategy and materials has tremendously contributed to this evident growth.” In Christ, Peter Legcun, Bishop of the Baptist Union of the Northern Region of Moldova.



Karina Cerempei, Youth and Younger, Moldova Team



*Karina Cerempei,
Youth and Younger Associate*

I was born in the family of Valentine and Lidia Sandu. I grew up with my 6 brothers in a large Christian family and we have got the most wonderful education having the great example of my Dad, Valentine Sandu and my Mom who devoted all their life to serve Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Since my dad was a Pastor and was busy with Church work, we kids, had to do a lot of physical work on the farm together with our mother. It was a hard life but as I understand now, it has built a healthy spiritual and moral characters in me and my brothers, who faithfully serve Lord in His vineyard.

Dad and Mom have always been a great example of love for Christ and sacrifice for the Glory of God for me and my brothers. I grew witnessing the ministry my parents had in Church and in the world, showing me love and compassion for the lost people and a great desire to bring them to Christ. My Dad and Mom regularly visited many lost families from our village and the surrounding villages. They spent hours and hours talking to people about God and His salvation. I was supposed to join them for babysitting the kids from those families while my parents witnessed to them, read from the Word of God and explained the Bible

truths to these people. I saw many of these families, young and old come to Christ and join church after this ministry. This is how I started loving and learning how to do the children's work.

At the age of 13, during a Christian camp from Vatici, Moldova, I received Christ as my Saviour and Lord. It was the time when I became conscious of the fact that I did not simply work with kids and help my Dad, but it was my calling and my ministry for Christ. At that age I began assisting the teacher in the Sunday school, and gradually grew up to teach the Bible truths to kids on my own.

In September 2008, when I was 19, I was baptised and became a member of the Biruintsa Baptist Church. Another important stage in my Christian formation and ministry was in 2004 when my elder brother, started a new ministry in our village – the work with the Street Kids (kids from vulnerable families who were left without any care by their parents during daytime). He was the leading teacher and I was assisting him in any possible way to make this time interesting and valuable for kids. Later I assisted my sister who has been serving Lord with her husband in the neighbouring village, Maiskoye, where I started teaching 5 kids. This ministry lasted for 2 years and many kids could find out about. While teaching the Sunday school classes in my church, I felt a calling from God to take up teaching the Street Kids. I feel a special blessing to be a part of this ministry. God is answering my prayers and I am so happy to be a part of this ministry together with my family. I think that only now, when I have a baby, I fully realize the importance of kids ministry, though it was a blessing for me along all these years. It helped me grow spiritually and find my service in the Lord's vine. It is such a blessing to see kids discover God and His love because of your effort. Sometimes it takes years for a child to start joining Church services, receive Christ, or bring his parents into Church. But there is no more joy for me than to see the love of Christ starting growing and working in a child's heart. It is a great blessing for me to become a part of CSI which is having such a great strategy for Children's evangelism. Now that I have discovered the CSI materials "Bible stories for all ages". I think that my ministry with kids in Biruintsa and around Moldova will become more effective and interesting.

Tanea Legcun, Youth and Younger Associate, Photographer, Moldova Team

I am 19 years old. I like to do many things, but my favorite occupation is to read Bible. I like to study Bible. My favorite verse from Bible is: "Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked" Psalms 37:16. Also I like very much to help people in difficult situations or to do something for them. I love communicable and friendly people.

I have good parents and grandparents that are example for me. Also I love very much my family.

I gave my heart to God in the last night at December in 2011 and I will be baptized in December, 2016.

I visit a youth group at our church "The Word of Life". We often visit different churches in villages, read together Bible and discuss it.

This autumn I've had a great opportunity to know about Church Starts International, I was very happy and it was great joy to help in the preparation of the CSI conference and to participate in this conference as well.

I am very thankful to my God that He loves me and gives me opportunities to serve him with all that I am and with all that I have. I wanted to live my life for God, with God and to praise his name every day and every time.



*Tanea Legcun,
Youth and Younger Associate*

Olga Kirsanova, Coordinator-Translator,

Far East Russia Team



I have always been emotionally dependent. In the childhood I felt dependent on my mother`s mood, in the adolescence I hardly felt safe being concentrated on what other people thought of me, in the adulthood I was still paying too much attention to my parents` health and feelings. Therefore, the predominant emotion I felt was insecurity. I was constantly torn by doubt and remorse.

Having been an obedient child in my childhood, I plunged into “pleasures of youth culture” while studying at the Institute. After graduation, I put the work first, devoting all my time and all my strength to it. Even the marriage and my daughter`s birth could not move the job into the background. Like all people, having grown up in the Soviet time, I was sure that the purpose of life was serving the country and its people. That is why I was very diligent at work and active in different spheres of social life, participating in Komsomol and Communist organization activities. It, though, brought only temporary satisfaction.

It was in the early 90s, when Russia opened its doors to the Word of God and to the foreign preachers. I had sent some letters to various foreign magazines in order to get the reply to the questions I was thinking of. The answer came in the international envelope a few years later. The unknown mission leader asked me whether I would like to discuss all the issues I was wondering about with an American pen-pal. This was how my correspondence with Robin Moore, a Christian from Ohio, began. Robin was a person who told me about Jesus, the role of the Church and about other aspects of Christian life. At that time I started reading the Bible, involving my husband and my daughter into the process.

In those years the Lord brought to the road of my life some believers from the Baptist Church. They were very nice people, but the possibility to become a member of a Baptist church seemed absolutely weird to us at that period. I remember my Dad, after years of accusations and reproaches, finally giving up and proclaiming his command to me: “If you are so stubborn and stupid to stop reading the Bible, please NEVER, NEVER go to the Baptist church”. At that time I easily accepted his request, as the image of the Baptist church formed by the Soviet propaganda was extremely negative and appalling.

Because of all those reasons my relationship with God was quite formal and lukewarm within a few years. Anyway, some of the notes my dairy indicate that I did turn to God with words of confession and gratitude in 1995 - 1997. I should say that in 1990s it became fashionable in our country to participate the ritual of Orthodox baptism. Unlike most of my acquaintances, wearing crosses on their necks, I did not get baptized, as I was convinced that being baptized meant much more than just getting the cross.

I did not feel like joining the church until the year 2003, when I took the chance to go to the USA as the winner of the educational program. One of my personal goals while staying in America, apart from studying the educational system of the country, was visiting churches. The Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania impressed me most of all. I liked the people, the way they worshiped, and their desire to serve people with real deeds. I decided to find the church similar to that in my home town on coming back to Russia. My family did not object to attend the service, and a few months we started going to the "Good news" Church, where we “were repented”. In 2004 we went to "Revival" Baptists Church - and since that time we have been the members of this brotherhood.

Andrey Kirsanova

Olga's Husband, Far East Russia Team

I was born in the very northern part of Russia – Magadan. My father worked as a director of gold mining and believed that if a person gets money, he can “rule the world”. Work and money were the most important things in most people lives. Anyway, in my adulthood I moved to the Amur region and was going to have “quiet and peaceful life” with my wife and daughter.

During Perestroika years the communist ideology that we had been raised on, crashed, and the new aims appeared: live the life “at its full”, take what does not belong to you, do what you want. That tendency touched me as well.

I remember how I upset my wife coming home drunk and lazy. But what brought the most pain to her was the fact that I could easily tell lies to other people.

When Olga started reading the Bible in the 1990s, it did not touch me. Until the late autumn evening when I realized the deadlock of my life and cried to God, asking to help me to get rid of alcohol and other bad habits. I felt something different in my heart after I had cried to God.

I joined my wife in reading the Bible, but did not go to any church. We started going to the Good News church in the spring of 2003, and in 2004 came to the Baptist church. All three of us got baptized in January of 2005 and since that time we are the members of the Revival Baptist church. I work for the church library and lead one of the home Bible groups.



Sasha Kirsanova, Secretary, Translator, Journalist, Siberia, Russia Team

I have known about God since I was a child. My mum told me about God and she used to read the Bible stories when I was a small girl. In the year 2001 we moved from a town Novosibirsk to Blagoveshchensk, the main city of the Amur region. In 2003 we started to attend the church. In 2005 all three of us (my mother, my dad and me) got baptized. Since that time we have been the members of Revival Bible church.



Sasha Kirsanova
CSI Secretary - Translator
Serves as Journalist at
OM Discipleship Center
Novosibirsk, Russia

In 2009 I fell ill. My sickness lasted for several months. Nobody could help me. It was a tough time. I thought that the Lord didn't hear me and He ignored my prayers. I was wondering why He didn't help me. I had different thoughts. During reflections I made up my mind to stick to the Lord despite all the difficulties. At that time I realized that the life without God would be meaningless. I felt that I attended church not under my parents' compulsion any more but it was my own choice.

After the graduation from the university I found a well-paid job and started working in an office. My life became routine because secular values didn't satisfy me. There was no peace in my heart. I was looking for the purpose of my life. With the lapse of time I became sure that I could be happy only while serving God. That's why I decided to get Christian education. Although my

unbelieving relatives were strongly confronting such a change in my life, with my mother's support, I quit the job and entered the OM mission discipleship center. I would like to be a missionary at the Logos Hope ship. Anyway, I am still seeking God's will in my life and I am ready to do what He calls me for.

Operation Mobilization Discipleship Center, Novosibirsk, Russia

Rich in beauty and culture, **Russia** is the largest country in the world. Yet the people still face the challenging effects of the past, including economic inequality and political strife. Russia is the biggest country in the world, stretching across 11 time zones and many changes in culture and climate.

As OMers we count it a huge privilege to live and work in this great country alongside many Russian team mates. After the tremendous social and political upheavals of the twentieth century, Russia is still undergoing a time of change and transformation. The horrors of World War II and seventy years of communism have left an indelible impression on the older generation, while social problems such as alcoholism, drug abuse, a rapidly increasing HIV rate, divorce and a growing contrast between the super rich and desperately poor are deeply affecting the daily life of Russians today. How to make the Gospel real and Christianity relevant in the middle of all these challenges? This is a big question facing the Russian church and OM today.

As OM Russia, we count it a privilege to partner with Russian churches in their lives, projects and outreaches, supporting them in many varied ways. Nearly half our team is made up of Russians; their fluency in both language and culture is a hugely positive influence on OM's ministry and effectiveness.

Our main ministry goals are:

- To co-operate with Russian churches and mission groups in discipling and church-planting ministries including leading Bible studies, teaching seminars, outreach and discipleship.
- Working with children, teenagers and young people - focusing on the generation which holds the key to Russia's future.
- Motivating the Russian church to world mission through prayer, giving and going. It's exciting to be involved with the first new generation of Russian missionaries both within the Russian Federation and further afield.

OM Russia today consists of around 15 people in Novosibirsk - a city of 2 million and the capital of Siberia.

We have a special one or two year Global Action training program for both non-Russian speakers and Russian Speakers. If you are studying, or have studied, Russian at university or can already speak Russian then why not consider this new program:

- 6 months of intensive, residential Biblical and missiological training in Russian, alongside Russian young people (with the option of writing assignments in English).
- Practical ministry experience as part of the training course.
- A high emphasis on team work - building close relationships with Russian colleagues and then serving local churches in these teams.
- After training, the opportunity to continue working in ministry alongside the full time OM team in Novosibirsk.

So many opportunities, such a big country, so few people!

Alexey and Julia Notkin

Siberia, Russia Team

What is broken is impossible to glue together...? What is this? True life or one of the human's prejudices? I would like to tell a story, which destroys a long-held assumption "What is broken impossible to glue together". It is a story about two people's fates in which nothing is whole; there are only small and sharp pieces that hurt constantly and insufferably. A pain, which defeated all spheres of the life, paralyzed any hope to positive changes and reminded in the mind that *What is broken is impossible to glue together*. It is impossible to glue relationships with nearest and dearest people, damaged by lie. It is impossible to rebuild trust. It is impossible to recover from the illnesses, caused by predilections. It is impossible to get rid of addictions, which demanded more and more investments day by day.

It is a story about us, our family.

Present: We married 4 years ago and God blessed us by giving birth to two wonderful daughters: Margarita (2.5 years), Mariya (8 months).



We got acquainted 6 years ago on the Thanksgiving service at the church. This service was organized as a token of appreciation to the Lord for the lives, to which He gave freedom (the people, who were addicted to drugs or alcohol). Our communication and friendship began from that day. We both got education at the OM Discipleship center (me at first and Julia a year later). We both serve at the Discipleship center of OM mission. We work as mentors and we lead small Bible study groups. Besides, I teach some subjects. We continue to study. I study at the Novosibirsk Biblical Theological Seminary, Julia studies at Moscow Theological Seminary. We will complete our studies next year. We were invited to the church which

is called "Rassvet" (the Dawn), where we are involved in follow-up and develop this ministry. Before that we participated in a planting of a new church and served there for 5 years. I preached and was involved in the prison ministry. We had small Bible study group in a city not very far from Novosibirsk.

Past: Alexey It would be nothing amazing in our life but for our past, particularly how God created our present life. It is commonly said that such people as we used to be are losers and social misfits.

I was born in a non-Christian family. But during the time, that I lived with my parents, I was hedged round with care and attention. My parents put all good in me, motivated to success in studies, sports, music. I got good education. When I became a teenager, I had friends who were successful in life by not working. They committed crimes such as games of chance and racket. I liked their way of life and admired how they enjoyed life to the full. My parents had strong values and convictions: diligence, honesty. I knew that they wouldn't like how I lived. I thoroughly concealed my connections to such friends and had double life. I was an obedient son and hard-working pupil and had the pursuit of criminals at the same time. My double life lasted for several years. I tried different sinful amenities: alcohol, drugs, etc.

It was revealed suddenly and became shock for my relatives. I was caught by police and criminal case was initiated. My parents learnt about my bad life in police. The police was keeping watch for me for long time. It all came to nothing. I was put in prison and kicked out from the university. Everyone, from whom I screened faults, found out the truth. Many of them turned back on me, but not my parents. They cared for me, even when I was in the prison. I was put in the prison 3 times and spent 7 years in prisons. All the time I was on drugs, destroying my health, and couldn't get rid of addiction. I tried different methods and clinics. I began to put up with it and lost hope for healing. Drugs and crimes destroyed my first marriage. My daughter Kate was brought up by my parents. Now she is 19. Everything was broken. Eventually, my parents and daughter cut ties with me. Hopelessness made me plunged into drugs and sinful way of life. I tried to fill the inner emptiness, which was in my soul. I was dying slowly but steadily. I am sure, if God didn't step into my life, my life would finish quickly and tragically.

But Once God sent into my life a person the same as I was. But that man didn't have any addictions, he had found hope and his eyes were full of joy. He told me what God had done in his life.

Sinful life had discernable imprint on that man, but his eyes were clear and bright. The hope could be seen in it. His words were different. I had never heard such words. I saw that he had a strong belief in what he said. I believed that God could also change everything in my life.

My new life began. I went to the rehabilitation center and after two weeks of being there, reading the New Testament, listening to the testimonies of Gods miracles in the lives of people as me, I repented. God broke bonds of addictions. I began to breathe freely. It was my birth – May of 2005.

Julia A wonderful girl was born in 1983. Loving parents lavished attention and love on her. She grew and brought joy to her parents. She liked singing, dancing, declaiming poems. It was good and kind time, time of family harmony. Although Julia read about Jesus when she was 7, she did some things that shocked her relatives. She stole money from her grandmother. It was a big amount of money. The loss was found quickly and Julia was accused.

She couldn't conceal it. Her father gave a book about Jesus Christ and asked her to read it. She cried bitter tears, while reading about what Jesus Christ had done. He was crucified for her sin. Julia knew that she had committed a sin. She got down on her knees and asked God for forgiveness. Then she owned up to her family and asked to forgive her. After that she used to read again this amazing story after school. As she was growing, her interests began to change. Nobody was with her, who could participate in her joy of knowing the story of Jesus. Soon the tragedy happened in her life. Loving father left her mother, her and her little sister. The father, who Julia loved most, betrayed his wife and chose another woman. The pain and grudge influenced her. A cheerful and open-hearted girl became withdrawn in her grief. It was a serious shock for her family. Joy, fun left their home. Shortly before she had learnt that her father was taking drugs. All these events destroyed her heart. A little later Julia tried drugs. Her "adult life" began. She had drugs addiction. Her life turned into nightmare. Lies, thefts, cheating were a way to get drugs. Drugs enfeathered her more and more. She committed crime and could be sentenced to long length of punishment. During judicial scrutiny, she went to a rehabilitation center in Divnogorsk. She saw true love of Christians in that church and heard the Gospel. A story about Jesus Christ from her childhood revived for a new life. Julia repented. Christian life began from not only freeing from sinful pleasures, but also with a pain. She was called to Novosibirsk, where she would be judged. She understood that she should bear responsibility for her crime and was ready to it. But a tragedy, which came to her home, dashed assurance and expectations. She went home with a great joy and desire to share the Gospel with her relatives, mother, sister, father, who came back. She was filled with hope that the life of her parents would change and that they would forgive each other and enjoy life after listening to the Good News. But everything went go off course. While waiting for judgment, her father died because of heart attack. She loved him and Jesus gave an ability to forgive him. She wanted him to be saved. Pain at her heart destroyed her faith. She was crying to the Lord: "Why did it happen like this? Why was it so unjust? Why was the finish so tragic?" A disappointment led her to looking for comfort in drugs. God didn't leave her. One day she regained and conscience realized all horror, in which she lived. She began to pray with tears in her eyes. She didn't pray that the Lord would solve her problems and give freedom from punishment. She asked God to give her freedom from drugs horror and that she was ready to be put into prison. She was put in the prison, where she spent 3 years. She stayed there not only as an inmate. She was as a witness of Jesus Christ. She worked in a club, where brothers organized evangelization meetings. They gave a lot of books to her and she started a Bible study group. During her ministry in the prisons, many women repented. About 40 women, convicted for different crimes, participated in this group.

Julia was released. This group continues to be till today.

Alex, Julia, Margarita and Maria.

Stas Efimov, Coordinator-Translator, Yakutia, Russia Team

When I was a child my grandma told me that somewhere "above" there is Somebody who will punish me in case of overindulgence, disobedience, etc. That's all I knew about God.

When I was 11 years old, my parents divorced. That became a first push to start to think. Having started asking questions such as "why people get divorce?" I've got to questions like "why there in our world is so much the evil? Isn't there a better variant how to live?" And then I've got a conclusion (I believe that actually God gave me that conclusion): all people, all of us live incorrectly, it's not how everything has to be actually. But how we need to live?

In the 1990, a year before disorder of the USSR, it became possible to watch a Christian TV programs on the central TV channels. I was 13 that time. My sister and I loved to watch that programs. Almost at the intuitive level, I understood that it isn't simple words and the answer to the question I will find in Christianity. They sent the New Testament so, for the first time in life, I started to read the Word of God. I read it all and, the most interesting thing was happened – I began to believe that the Bible says true things. I believed that Christ really lived on the earth and that He is not "the mythological founder of Christianity" as that was learned at school in Soviet time.

And then I've decided to pray to God of Bible. I came into the room and prayed. Soon after that we, very unexpectedly, received the apartment in the neighboring settlement, Mokhsogollokh. Having moved there, we found believers and began to come to church meetings. When I met believers and felt an "atmosphere" in the church, I understood for myself that this is what I look for - the answer of my question – how we need to live.

In the 1993rd, when I was 16, our family: mother, I and my sister were baptized in local church in Mokhsogollokh.



Nadia Efimov, Missionary, Yakutia, Russia Team



I was born and grew up in a Christian family, in Ukraine. Our parents taught us to believe in Jesus and to serve Him. My grandpa often seated all of us together and we sang in glory of the Lord.

I've been visiting local Baptist church with parents. I have 5 siblings: 3 sisters and 2 brothers. They all are believers, thank God.

Our dad died from brain cancer. That was happened in 1986, when I was 10 years old. So mom became a 36 years old widow with 6 children. That wasn't easy for her to grow us up without dad but we always saw the Lord's hand, His help and blessings.

I repented in 1990 when I was 14 and was baptized in 1993 when I was 17. I taught at Sunday school, sang in our church choir and participated in various youth services as well. So proceeded till 2000. That year I heard the Lord's appeal to my heart to go far away, to Yakutia, the Yakut settlement of Nyurba to teach at Sunday school. My mom and whole family gave me a blessing to go to ministry. So, young 24 years old lady, I arrived to Yakutsk, far in Siberia, in about 7-8 thousand km from my home. That was September. I stayed in Yakutsk for 2 months in reason of adaptation to local culture and then departed to Nyurba. Nyurba church met me very warmly and they took care of me all the time I stayed there. I started Sunday school at the church house and generally tried to be helpful in any ministry. Then, in January of 2001 Stas came to Nyurba to visit the church. We found a common language very quickly and had a great time serving the church and visiting several schools with Christian lessons. Then we got married in the same year and serving the Lord together until this day. Stas is a coordinator for Sakha -speaking ministry in local Association of Evangelical Churches. *Nadia Efimov*

Ruben Cicai, Coordinator, Translator, Romania Team

My name is Ruben Cicai and I was born on April 10, 1983, in Bistrita, Romania. My great grandfather was an orthodox priest. My grandfather came to know Christ and became a Baptist. My great grandfather was so upset about him becoming a Baptist that he wanted to kill him. He was cast out of his home because of his belief. This is how the Baptist faith entered into our family.



I grew up on a small farm with a loving family with one brother and three sisters all younger than me. We were faithful attending our Baptist Church. Since a young age, my heart's desire was to be a doctor, a police man or a pastor.

When I was 14 years old, during a winter cold weather, my heart was fired by the blessed flame of the Holy Spirit. This happened during a great revival in our town led by a very well-known preacher named Iosif Ton, who was also the president of Baptist Theological Seminary from Oradea, Romania. Even though I was a good child, God revealed to me that I needed salvation and at this revival, I accepted Christ as my Savior.

As a member of the youth group of our church, we met at least two times per week and we had a ministry at the local nursing home, hospital, and orphanage. My pastor saw in me a potential pastor and groomed and prepared me for the ministry. Then he encouraged me to go to the Baptist Seminary in Bucharest.

But as a teenager I was a very shy individual and it was very hard for me to speak before people. But in a special church service where my grandfather was once a preacher, I heard the great God's calling to be a minister for His kingdom and through His grace I received His calling and 7 years ago I graduated at the Baptist Institute in Bucharest and I became a pastor in Bacau, Romania. Also for four years, I worked in the Rock of Ages Prison Ministry as a preacher and taught Bible courses. Then in May of 2015, I received my Theology Masters from University of Romania, Bucharest.

My heart's desire is to do the will of God and be obedient to whatever God puts before me and to trust in Him. *Florin Ruben Cicai*

Skills Summary: Preaching Bible, Church Ministry, Kids Camp

Professional Experience:

- 2008 – present – Pastoring “Adevar si Lumina” Bacau Baptist Church
- 2010 – present - Prison Ministry with “Rock of Ages”
- 2008 – present – working ministry with gypsy kids from Racova town
- 2014 -2015 – Pastoring 2 gypsy churches in Bacau Community

Theological Education& Certifications:

- 2004 – 2008 – Graduation Certificate of Theological Baptist Institute of Bucharest
- 2013 – 2015 – Master’s Degree of Bucharest Theological University

Tony (Webmaster) and Mary Nastas, Coordinator-Translator, Ukraine Team



Testimony of Mary Nastas- I was born in a large Christian family: 6 children, mom, dad, grandma, grandpa. My dad went to Jesus when I was 3 years old. My grandmother died when I was 6 years old. My mother worked a lot, so, I spent more time with my grandfather. My grandfather was a very good Christian. More than 40 people got saved because of his personal testimony. Ever since childhood he taught me how to love the Word of God and how to love God. We had sat down every night and had sang Christian songs that we knew. He always encouraged me to learn Bible verses. I thank God for my grandfather. I even prayed to have the faith like my grandfather.

I remember one night from my early childhood. When I was about 6-7 years my mother told me about my aunt, who worked in an orphanage with orphans. I cried that night because I was so sorry for those kids that have no parents. I felt sorry for those kids that nobody loved them. I think that God has already instilled love for other children in my little child's heart.

I learned English in a private Christian «School of tomorrow», I studied there from 1990 till 1998. When I was 12 years old a pastor from Australia came to our school. It was on April 29. He was preaching about the sufferings of Christ, God touched my heart and I opened my heart to Him, now He's my best Friend. In 2000 I was baptized. I was 17 then. When I was 14, I helped teach in our Sunday school. In 1999-2001- I entered the Christian Bible School. In 2000. I took a CEF (Child's Evangelism Fellowship) course level 1. I worked as a volunteer there. In summer 2000, I started gathering the neighborhood kids in the house of my sister, and taught them about God's love. In 2001 I went to the public schools of our city and taught Christian lesson. In 2005. I helped develop a program for Christian camps and we had five camps that summer in our region. In 2007, we conducted training for teachers of Sunday schools. And our team had Christmas and Easter classes for children in public schools. Our goal was to conduct training seminars for Sunday school teachers and volunteers working with children.

I personally participated in 9 camps in one summer. I worked as a volunteer, I was invited to become their employee, but I didn't feel God was calling to it and my husband Tony was against being on CEF payroll. I worked with CEF from 2000 till 2013. God blessed this time with them. When I was 14, my sister Nadia (Stas' wife from Yakutia) advised me to pray for my future husband. I started praying that God would give me a husband who would be a preacher. I remember that even I was in my 8th grade at school. I fasted and prayed for my future husband. And God miraculously answered my prayer.

When I was 16, it was 17th of June 1999, I met Tony in our church. In exactly 2 years on 17th of June 2001 we got married. I thank God for my husband. He is a Christian preacher, a choir director, a remarkable man, a wise father. He is very smart, speaks and translates easily between 3 languages - English, Russian and Ukrainian. We have 2 sons. The eldest Valentine is 14. When he was 10, he got saved. He graduated from a music school, plays guitar and piano, sometimes preaches in our church. Max is 5 and half. He started playing the piano when he was 4.5 years. He attends kindergarten. In September of 2016 he will go to school.

2001-2013 We lived in a one-room apartment in the downtown of Chernivtsi. In 2014 we moved into our own house. I prayed that God will send me a job, and this job will be for His glory. God gave me a view that I can teach children the English language. We, together with our family, prayed and God sent us our first students. More than 20 children come to my English lessons, and we thought it was time to tell them about God's love. So we invited the parents and children and told them a Christmas story. We also gave them The Bibles for children and Christian magazines.

I wanted to invite women and to conduct a Bible lesson on Mother's Day, but I had no program.

When Stas told me about you and your program I enjoyed it very much. These women often call me and want to talk and if I just invited them for tea and had some conversation, they would gladly come. Since they are not Christians, we can reach their hearts for Christ. Every Thursday from 6am till 7 am I attend prayer group at our church. Once a month I and my eldest son Valentine attend our night prayer group.

I want to tell you a story that recently occurred on such a night with our prayer group. When I was sitting there a woman of about 45 years old sat beside me. I had never seen her before. I asked her name, her name was Natalia. She came from one of the far villages to pray for her granddaughter, who is sick with an incurable disease. Natalia got saved a year ago but she is not a church member yet. She is an Ukrainian language teacher at the school where her husband is a school principal. She has a friend that supports her. This friend is a teacher of English, also from that school. This teacher is a young widow. She has 3 or 4 children. My pastor offered me to go to that village to support these women. So after that prayer I asked her where she would stay for the night, and she said that would sleep at the train station bench. I realized that God gave me this opportunity to ask her and I took her to my house at night. We had a good time together. So God uses us and our house to His glory.

I plan to start 2 groups in this summer. The first will consist of the neighbor women that are not Christians. The second would be a group of children and I am going to teach them Bible lessons. Through Stas God has introduced me to Bill Davis and now I will have a program for these two groups. Thank God!!!

I read the Bible every morning, God is really talking to me. Sometimes He clearly shows me His will for me and my life. I believe that God controls everything!!!! He is the strongest, most loving God. I know what He cares and know that He will never leave me alone !!!!

While He never left us when we were kids and growing up without a father in poverty, His hand was holding us all and comforted us. He is One Who gives me everything!!!! He is who makes my heart happy and my face shine. The One who controls my health and the health of my family, He keeps my children when they are at school. He kept in His strong hand my son when he rode a bike at high speed and crashed into a car and cut his leg severely a year ago. God changed his heart, so when he found 100 Hryvnas (Ukrainian money) in a bus he didn't take it to himself, but he gave that money to the driver. When the woman who lost the money came back to the driver, she said that it was her last money.

God can change the heart of every child and every woman in the world. I want to do everything I can for my Lord. I want Him to use me as much as He wants. He works every day with my heart to make me like his Son Jesus Christ. Thank God for everything !!!!

Testimony of Anatoliy (Tony) Nastasiichuk Born: Feb 17, 1979 in a very religious orthodox family. But God has called my parents and they got saved in 1981 and 1983 as true Christians. We joined an underground Baptist church in a local village as KGB wouldn't allow us to have services or any kind of Christian meetings. We didn't have a church then and we usually gathered at night in different private houses of the church members as well as in fields or forests. After "perestroika" we were able to build our small church building. Got saved: Jan 1, 1991 Baptized: July 1996 Started preaching when I was 9 years old for Christmas. In 2001 I graduated from Chernivtsi State University, department of foreign languages. Starting from 1997 I worked as an interpreter and translator for Slavic Baptist Institute in Ukraine. I worked there for 9 years I translated nine books from English into Russian. At present I work as an online marketer and web designer. When I was 15 I became a choir director in my church. There were about 35 young people in my choir. When I was 17 my family started a new church in the Carpathian mountains of Ukraine. There I polished my preaching as I had to preach 2-3 times every Sunday for different groups of people. That was 20 years ago and now there are 5 churches there and 7 groups in different villages that gather to listen to the Word of God on a regular basis. My dad is still a pastor of those churches and most of the time he lives in the mountains preaching the Gospel to the local people. In 2000 one of our local pastors and I started a new church in our city of Chernivtsi. I was a youth pastor there. In 2002 I became a church member in the church where I met my wife Mary. I became a preacher and a choir director there and I still work in that church. With our choir we visit the villages around our city, hold crusades and encourage local churches on a regular basis.

Linda & Michael Lin, China

This is **Linda Lin**. Linda and her husband Michael have joyfully become a part of the CSI family. As CSI Translators together they translate the CSI materials, format them with InDesign, put them into PDF, and send them to CSI ready for publication. Linda is a homemaker and Michael is a computer programmer. They have two sons; a 2 year old and a 9 year old. We are very excited about this beautiful young family becoming a part of CSI and soon hopefully they will become an Outreach Leadership Team.

Dear Bill Davis,

Thanks so much for your e-mail. Yes, Sister Sue Ann has told me earlier about translation of the Church Starts International materials. I'm so honored to be asked about this. And I have taken look at materials, those stories and questions are so meaningful and important for new believers. I browsed through CSI website this morning, what you have been doing is amazing. I'm touched by the God's calling is just as clear to you today as it was in 1994. I have added you in skype, I am very happy if we can talk in skype. Thank you.

Love in Jesus, Linda



From: Michael
Sent: Friday, August 25, 2017 2:20 AM
To: Bill Davis

Greetings Bro Bill:

*This is what I want to say from my heart, Thank GOD for sending you to my life! GOD planned everything. And thank you for teaching me so much!
Thank you again! GOD bless you!
In Jesus' love, Bro Michael.*

My testimony - GOD has his plan with everyone.

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'. For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6:31-34 [NIV]

My name is Michael. I am from China where majority of people have no faith. All of my relatives are atheist. There was no church in my hometown when I was young. We were educated that there was no God in this world. So it was least even no chance for me to know Christian in my hometown in Inner Mongolia. After finishing my Bachelor degree in my hometown, I moved to Beijing capital of China where I met my wife Linda and we married in 2006. Linda knows an old couple who are from United States and living in Beijing. Both of them are Christian and they sharing many positive things with us that opens the God's door to us. Their faith in Our Father is so strong and powerful that influences and guides their lives and we are shocked by their spirits. With curiosity and desired heart, I began to go to church on Sunday. The deeper I learned from Bible the more I wanted to be a Christian. At that time I thought I was not ready to be baptized, because I thought I was not good enough to get God's salvation. Moreover, I didn't want to be baptized in a church which was controlled by the Chinese government. In 2015, my family immigrated to Hungary, we went to International



Baptist Church of Budapest where I felt that this was the church we were searching for. Because I was working in China at that time, I kept traveling between Hungary and China.

Linda knew Pastor Bill Davis by his daughter who was visited IBCB in 2016, and Pastor Bill is living in America, they used skype for communication. On October 2016, I was in Budapest, and that was the first time I talked with Bill by skype. He answered my many questions about faith, He told me that Jesus had paid for you by his blood, salvation is a free gift which was given by GOD, and you deserved salvation. When I told him I was not good enough to get God's salvation, He asked me, "Now where do you think Jesus is". I answered, "In my heart". He asked, "Do you wish to be baptized? ". I said, "Yes". Regarding my flight back to China is tomorrow, I was thinking my baptism



should be next time. However Bill told me that I could be baptized next day. I was shocked and thinking it was impossible to prepare everything within 24 hours. Bill told me as long as your heart was ready, the other was not a problem at all. What is amazing, on next day early in the morning a sister Jacky from IBCB church told us everything was ready for my baptism. On Oct 5, 2016, I was baptized in a sister's house surrounded by pastor, witnesses and families. It was a perfect baptism for me, I was saved and born again! Thank GOD!

Bill has been guiding me by many great Bible truths, one of them is: **GOD has his plan with everyone, and always gives us the**

best! I thank GOD for giving us so much, thank GOD for sending such great people to us who help us to know Jesus and grow in Jesus. GOD has planned everything for us, what we should do is just believe in Him and pray.

From: Linda
Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2016 4:02 PM

Dear Bill and Tony,

What an amazing day is this morning. My husband Michael had a wonderful baptism this morning, we are still so excited about that beautiful moment.

Thanks so much for your arrangement and church elders who came far away from their house to support us. May All glory be to our Lord.

Holy Father, we are your body. When brothers and sisters work together, we will never imagine how this body can do. The answer is : everything.

Lord, we thank you for all of these amazing things and memories you have given us.

Love, Linda