



GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

Church Planting in Chervona Sloboda

3rd Quarter 2010 Report

July 2010

In the morning I looked into the bus that was parked near the house. Broken side window. That night we were visited by thieves. They stole some medical instruments and medicines. Some unpleasant feeling in the heart. It seems that someone got into your soul and it brought disorder. Mentally, prayed and asked God to forgive these people. Collected litter on the bus. I took the physicians to purchase drugs from a pharmacy in Fastov, where medical examinations took place on that day.

The next day the group went to Chervona Sloboda. Within a few minutes the prayer house turned into a mini clinic. In the courtyard are pews from the church building; the first visitors sat down there. A beautiful sunny day, people are looking for shade, shelter from the baking sun. The team gathered for prayer. Everyone feels responsible before God and man, mindful of the fact that we did not come here simply to provide people health care, but most importantly, to acquaint them with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is strong to save souls and heal the body.



People are always in need of assistance and physical and spiritual, and we are called to do good deeds: Eph.2: 10. For we - His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God ordained that we should. People do not need our holiness, they do not need our righteousness, and how they benefit from the fact that we do not sin, but they need our good works. To this end, we came to the village.

A woman approached me. She sincerely thanked for the free medical care, and said: "You know, I come to your church. Not because I think your faith is correct. I am very orthodox, but because you are the only church that I know that helps people. I do not forget your kindness when you helped me after the fire, when my house burned down. You are the only ones who came to help. Thank you, I will come to you. My heart swelled with joy listening to this woman. Once again, I realized that before we talk to people about God, we must show them that you care about them, help them, bless them. So did Christ.

Many people have spent the day at our house of prayer. Some visited us for the first time. I know that many people who have visited us will never fail us. It would seem, then why is all this necessary, these costs, but I believe that no good thing done in the name of God, is in vain. Even if we gave a man a glass of water, we have for this a reward. I will continue to do good.

Enemies also do not sleep. While you're doing good, someone at this time to do evil. A few days later the prosecutor called me and the district summoned to a meeting. Someone called the prosecutor's

office and said that the Church “Grace” in Sloboda was selling drugs and were treated directly in the church. I told the prosecutor that we have not done anything illegal, that the drugs that were distributed were only those that were on sale and that people were freely diagnosed, but not treated. He did not ask any more questions, just said that we are not Orthodox, and therefore, we will always be enemies and have troubles. I have invited the prosecutor to visit us in the church, and he promised to come, and we parted. So, thanks to some unknown person, I met the local prosecutor. I know that nothing happens by chance, and our meeting was scheduled by the Lord. You ask why? I do not know, but I believe that it will soon become clear. Great are the works of God and not understandable.

Blessed be the Lord who grants us life, and bless us in every good work. Blessed be God, urging his heart to serve children near and far across the ocean to people. Thank you for having responded to the call of God and go after him, sacrificing their health, finances, family, comfort. God bless you.

P.S. We made good friends with the team of doctors and students from the college “Maranatha”. We have become like family. They are gone, and we feel lonely. Give them a big hello. We love them and look forward to next year for us to Ukraine.

August 2010

On one Sunday morning a minibus stopped in front of the church in Chervona Sloboda. From the van stepped out a group of men. They stopped at the entrance to the church. None of them dared to cross the threshold. Meanwhile, from inside the church believers who had come to worship watched with interest.

The first impression of people who arrived was not very pleasant, since as a group the men didn't have a very pleasant appearance. The first thing that came to mind for many inside the church: “These guys are probably at the wrong address.” But soon, one by one, the men entered,



and they were greeted by everyone inside with words of Christian greeting: “Peace be with you!” The response that came back was not decisive. They replied, “In peace!”

Seeing the questions in the eyes of those present, one young man hurried to introduce himself and presented the whole group: “We are from the village Sytniki, from the rehabilitation center. They saw that in your village you have a church, and we decided to come to your worship service. My name is Vladimir, and these are my brothers in Christ.” He introduced the whole group.

Since that time, more than two months have passed, and the men from the rehabilitation center regularly attend our services. Many of them have changed. God has freed them from their drug and alcohol addictions. The men sing Christian hymns, and at every church service they go to the front with a guitar and sing to the glory of God, giving steadfast sound evidence of lives changed by Jesus Christ.

Here's one indication that we have heard in a service: Valera began by saying,

“I am 32 years old. I was born in Kiev in a wealthy family. I was permitted a lot. I was pampered and had virtually no controls; I was left to myself. What I was doing and the friends I was making didn't worry my parents. I was brought up mainly on the street, and I was very influenced by my

friends. At age 12, I started to drink alcohol and became addicted to cigarettes. By age 16 I started smoking soft drugs. In 1999, I began using hard drugs. My sister came to believe in Christ. She began to notice that I was living wrongly, and we would witness to me of Christ, but her convictions were empty to me.

“Once, my sister introduced me to her pastor. When I spoke with the pastor, I felt that from him came some unearthly light, an ethereal love. I was very attracted to that, but I thought that I’ll never be able to be like him, never be able to enjoy whatever the pastor had, because I really am a sinner, and God does not accept people like me. Soon after, I was arrested for drugs, but I narrowly escaped jail.

“At Easter, I visited a church service. At the end I had a strong desire to repent of my sins, but I never found the strength to do so, even though I wanted to. I was arrested again, this time they put me in jail. I was supposed to get a minimum sentence of at least 1 year, but my sister was praying for me, and God made sure that I got only six months. In prison, I often recalled the Easter service and my desire to be reconciled to God. I had a lot of time, and I have often thought about God. I decided that when I get out, I’d become a Christian and start a new life. When I was released from prison, I quickly forgot about my decision to become a Christian. Old friends, drugs, and sin did their work on me, I continued to live my old life. I was arrested again and this time I was sentenced to 3 years. I do not know why, but I spent only one and a half years there, then I was released.

“Some time later my father died. At the funeral my pastor-acquaintance preached, and he invited me to church. I never took advantage of his invitation. Soon, he called and invited me to accompany him to a conference. I thought: “Why not?” At the conference I met a woman, who was not a Christian. Once when we were sitting in the bus, the pastor talked with us about God, and at the end of the conversation the woman turned to God in a prayer of repentance. I also really wanted to pray, but could not bring myself to do it on the bus. I thought that this is somehow not serious repenting on a bus and not the right place. After much thought, I still decided and accepted Jesus Christ into my heart. God showed me His love through fellowship with believers. He began to change me. In Kiev, I started to attend church, but was not serious about prayer and God’s Word. Before long, I began to cool down and realized that I love this world more than God. I went back to the old, sinful life. I realized that I could not escape by myself, that I need rehab. I went to a rehabilitation center and stayed there. God has completely freed me from any dependence; He changed my life. Now I am in a rehabilitation center to help other people, the miserable drug addicts who are as I once was. Thank God for His mercy to me.”

The men from the rehabilitation center were for us like family. We constantly pray for them and do what we can to help. Many of men in the rehab center do not own their own Bible. Our church gave Bibles to those in need. The men were grateful to receive a gift of a brand new Bible. The men do not always have transportation to get to church. In those cases, I go in my car and drive them to worship services. Surprisingly, I did not even know that my car can hold eight men.

Please pray about this rehabilitation center that God uses to free people from their sinful addiction. Pray for us, that we have the wisdom of how to help and serve those people.

We welcome any opportunity to serve these people. Our capabilities would be very limited if we did not have help from you, dear brothers and sisters. Your loyalty and love for us expands our capabilities to serve even more. Your prayers and donations make it possible to serve more efficiently and productively. Thank you for your love and care about us. God bless you!