

January 31, 2018

Peace to you, dear fellow workers in the field of God, relatives and friends!

Not too long ago we sent a letter recapping the end of 2017; now, the first month of 2018 has already passed. We hope that for each of you the entry into the new year was joyful, full of expectations of new blessings from the Lord.



I will begin with an event from December, something that happened after I had already written the newsletter.



Pastors of the Chisinau region of the Baptist Union of Moldova have a good long-term tradition - to gather together with their wives to fellowship at the end of the year. Such a meeting took place at the end of 2017. **On Friday evening, December 29**, about 30 pastors and wives gathered in the church of *Gethsemane* (Pastor A. M. Goncharuk). All of them were from Chisinau and the surrounding cities and villages. First, a service was held in which the men's choir of the local

church took part and leaders of the Union of Baptists shared the word of greeting. Then there was an informal part of the meeting during which a meal offered.

A bright personality, who participated in this service, was Andrei Zakharovich Oselsky. At 77 years old, he talked about his visits the northern regions of Russia to witness to people about Christ. He played the guitar and sang. He encouraged fellow servants to pay attention in their missionary activities to remote northern regions of Russia. The fellowship ended with a prayer in small groups—husbands and wives. It was unique and touching, and many lingered after the



meeting. It was clear that such meetings are very important for strengthening the mutual ties between the ministers of different churches, helping to deepen the unity between them.



The last Sunday service in our church of the outgoing year on **December 31** was marked by the announcement of a young couple who are getting married and were anxious to share the news before the new year. Our guest was in this service A. Z. Oselsky.

After participating in the evening service on **December 31**, Nina and I, like many others in the church, welcomed the new

year at home. This is our second New Year away from our children, grandchildren and relatives. It is a little sad, but our hearts were grateful to God for allowing us to live another year. Most importantly, this year was lived in the service of Him.

Like last year, the arrival of the New Year was marked in the city with numerous fireworks. I do not cease to be surprised at the commitment of people in this city to fireworks. Often, during the year (not only on New Year's Eve!), the multicolored fireworks can be seen against the background of the night sky from the windows of our apartment. On New Year's Eve, they illuminated the night sky from 11:00pm to 3:00am! By the way, this year, unlike last year, we met the New Year without snow; it was quite warm.



On **January 5**, the Lord pleased me with a meeting with one of the pastors of the *Grace Family Church* in Sacramento, Vasily Zavorotniy, and the president of *Mission Eurasia*, Sergei Rahuba. Together with a large group of young people, they flew from America to take part in the "Give Hope" project, whose goal was to bring Christmas presents to children in Moldovan villages. 1,500 gifts were prepared for distribution. For several days during the Christmas celebration in accordance with the tradition of the

Orthodox Church (January 7), these young people visited a number of villages, giving away presents and witnessing about Christ. I was glad to meet with my brothers and pray together for the blessing of this project.

A similar project was also carried out by the youth of our church *Bethany*. Forty young people, led by several older brothers, visited three villages with Christmas carols and gifts on the 6th and 7th of January. The leaders of these villages responded positively to our youth. At Sunday evening service on the **14th of January**, the participants of this project shared their experience. From their testimonies, it was clear that for young people participating in such a real ministry of evangelism was a very useful experience. They met both people who welcomed them warmly and those who weren't as warm; either way, it inspired them to share about Christ. Praise God for the freedom to preach the gospel in Moldova today!



The university students had the opportunity to rest for a bit during the Christmas holidays. However, this is not always the case for teachers. For me it was a busy time working on preparing a new course for me—*Theology of Marriage and Family*. I am very pleased to be able to teach this important subject. Although I did not have much opportunity to relax during the holidays because of it, I'm still glad that I can talk with students about such an important topic as marriage and family.

**On January 22**, the spring semester began at the university. In this semester I teach two subjects—*Intercultural Relations* and *Theology of Marriage and Family*—to four groups of freshmen. As I meet new students, I do my best to try to memorize new names (sometimes quite difficult to pronounce!) and learn where they come from. Among my students there are representatives of such countries as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russia, the USA, and Moldova, among others. It is really a multicultural society!



A joyful news for us in January was that the residence permit was extended for Nina and I for another two years—until March 2020. Thank God! Thank you for your prayers for this need.

Another joyful event for us was the arrival of our son Michael with his wife Irina. We have not seen them in 14 months! We were very glad that they could stay with us for a couple of days—January 29 and 30.



Irina was born in Chisinau. When she was seven years old, her family immigrated to America. And here for the first time since then she came to her homeland. It was very interesting for her to see the house where her family lived, the church they visited and in which she recited poems as a small child.



Particularly touching was the meeting with neighbors who loved her as a child and had lost hope to ever see her. So this visit to Chisinau was especially pleasant for Irina.

There was also a pleasant meeting with the Bishop of the Union of Baptist Churches of Moldova Nikolay Voziyan. He asked Mikhail and Irina about their plans in the ministry and prayed for them.

For us and Nina, every visit of one of our children is a source of heartfelt joy and encouragement in the ministry.



Unfortunately, in our life here there are not always only joys. Sometime we experience difficulties as well. Over the past two months, Nina and I have discovered certain problems with our health. We had to get acquainted with local medical institutions and doctors. By the grace of God, we continue to serve Him, but we ask you to pray for our health. We believe that our health, like our life, is in His hand. Therefore, we seek restoration to our health from Him. We pray for this ourselves and ask that you would also.

Another unhappy phenomenon is the fall of the dollar. When we arrived here at the end of 2016, the dollar cost 20 lei (this is the local currency). Now its price has fallen to 16.65 lei. This means that the purchasing power of the dollar declined in Moldova by more than 15%. Of course, this is reflected in our budget.



In the second half of January, winter came to Moldova. Snow fell, frost hit. The roads and sidewalks were covered with ice. Many are happy with the arrival of winter. However, there are enough people for whom frost is a difficult test. These are the beggars, which can often be found in crowded places in the city.

I want to end my letter on a positive note. **On January 28**, in the biggest Baptist church (Romanian-speaking) of the city of *Isus Salvador*—about 1,500 members (Pastor Vitaly Fedula), there was a baptism. About 30 people made a covenant with the Lord. Most of them are young people. Thanks be to God for continuing to add the rescued to the Church!



Thank you very much to all those who remember us in their prayers before the Lord! In response to your prayers, God gives us the strength and inspiration to continue working here, away from our children and grandchildren. We do this with joy, thanks to God for the privilege of influencing the spiritual formation of the younger generation of Christian workers, most of whom have come to study at the university from places where Christians are being persecuted today.

We pray for God's blessing for each one of you in all that you do in His name and for His glory.

Let the following text of the Scripture be an encouragement for you: ***"But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless... but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."*** (2 Pet 3:13, 14, 18).

Best wishes to all of you,  
Your co-workers in God's field in Moldova,

*Vyacheslav and Nina Tsvirinko*



Below are some winter sketches. I hope you like them.







