



# GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

## Church Planting in Chervona Sloboda

### *4th Quarter 2011 Report*

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#### October 2011

On the eve of the Feast of Harvest, I was chatting with the locals in the village. As a rule, they all asked the same question: Have you already celebrated the Harvest Festival? I said no, but next Sunday we would celebrate this holiday together in our church. People for some reason love this festival, probably because the youth choir comes from the Temple of Salvation. In Sloboda, people love to hear this youth choir.

On Sunday, October 23, that day arrived. As expected, there came the youth choir, which pleased the visitors with their singing. The children also prepared a short program and participated in the festive celebration. There were people from the rehabilitation center. Tanya, a former drug addict, told us her story. When Tanya began to use drugs, her parents rejected her; they took her daughter. Not seeing the meaning in life, Tanya wanted to commit suicide, but God had other plans for her life. Tanya came to the rehab center, where she found freedom from her terrible addiction. After a time, she established relationships with her parents. Soon Tanya will conclude her time of rehabilitation, and she wants to return to the center, not as a patient, but as a servant of Christ to help others gain freedom in Christ. We heard a sermon, which explained the meaning behind the harvest holiday. That God is the Lord on earth, that the law of sowing and reaping is, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," and how we should thank God for everything. And of course at the harvest of the earth, God will gather the wheat into the granary of His own, but the chaff and weeds will burn with fire. The audience was asked an important question: In which of those two descriptions are you? Among the weeds, or wheat? This determines our future.

We use the Feast of the Harvest in order to evangelize. We invited people living in the village. We rejoiced when we saw former church members, who came to worship as a family. Pray that they come back to God and the church. Everyone received a gift of the Bible, and although it seems that everyone has a Bible, we handed out about ten Bibles. The children received a children's Bible. At the end of the meeting was a dinner to which everyone was invited. It turned out to be a wonderful conversation. We were particularly pleased to see non-believers; they stayed for dinner and socializing, so our relationship grew stronger.

We thank God, that He blessed this holiday, and for the fact that non-believers came and heard the word of God. Some of them promised to attend services. Thank you to the mission BIEM for financial support and the Bibles. We thank all who donated and prayed for us. God bless you!

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#### November 2011

Recently, a group of doctors came to visit the rehabilitation centers, with whom we have connections. Vladimir, the leader of one rehab center, suggested meeting with the physicians in our church so that we could use yet another opportunity to witness to people about Christ. The doctors performed examinations on the inhabitants of Sloboda right in the prayer house. They measured people's blood pressure, checked eyes, distributed glasses and medications. People of all ages came, from children to seniors.





Everyone received attention. Many picked out new eyeglasses, got the necessary medications plus a gift of spiritual literature.

Before inviting the doctors to our church, we got permission for their visit from the mayor and the town council of the village. We were allowed the opportunity to invite the village leadership to the church, not only to see the doctors, but also invited them to church services. However, experience shows that people hurry to receive treatment of the flesh and are not in such a hurry to get healing for their

soul. We pray for these people to the Lord, that He will open their eyes to their spiritual poverty. But we rejoice that we had another opportunity to get to know people better. We believe that the time will come when these same people will feel the need of a physician who can heal their hearts and rekindle their spirit.

Pray please for the inhabitants of Chervona Sloboda. Many of them heard the Word of God; many were given a Bible. Many have visited our church at least once. The seed has been sown; we pray that it will germinate and yield fruit.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support. Thanks to you, God's work continues in our village.



## December 2011

Yesterday, in Sloboda we held a regular Sunday service. As always, the service was attended by people from the nearby rehabilitation center and by our church members. But the unusual thing was that Anatoly, a resident of Chervona Sloboda, was completely sober at the service. Yesterday I saw Anatoly sober for the first time for as long as I've known him, which is three years. I cannot say that we met often, but whenever I saw him he was never sober; even at the services he always came drunk. Anatoly spent nearly 20 years in prison. He is ugly and leads a senseless way of life, finding pleasure only in alcohol. He has no job. Anatoly recently came to a Bible study group completely drunk. He tried to behave decently, but often interrupted me and asked many questions. Everyone patiently tolerated his presence. At the end of that meeting, I told Anatoly that he should come to meetings sober. Still, I said that we will pray for him and that he needed to repent. We got up and prayed about it right there at the meeting. After this incident, we all began to pray fervently for Anatoly. Yesterday I ran into Anatoly near the church perfectly sober. He said that he had stopped drinking and wanted to attend services. He also began attending the services of the rehabilitation centers. He stated that they are like him, that with them it was easier, the guys from the center understood him. Thank God for change in the life of Anatoly. God hears our prayers. We ask that you pray for the Lord to save Anatoly.

Recently, a girl named Ira had spent time in one of the rehabilitation centers. For disobedience to its leaders, Ira was expelled from the center. She did not stay until the end of her rehabilitation time. Ira stayed in Sloboda, but she continued to attend services of our church. Yesterday Ira walked forward and prayed the prayer of repentance; she asked Jesus into her heart. We also had prayed for Ira for a long time, and we will continue to pray. We hope that God will change her life and that Ira becomes a new person. Please pray as well for Ira.

I thank God for His mercy to us, because He changes people's lives, releases from various addictions. Thank you, dear brothers and sisters, for your prayers for us, and material support. Thanks to you, God's work is being done here in Ukraine. Thank you and God bless you.