

# Let Nationals build



Pastor Sasha Dudik and Lloyd Cenaiko

## Child-care Center



## Bakery



## Learning/training Center



## Youth Center



**D**ear friends, I clearly recall the first time I met with Pastor Sasha. Although I'd become accustomed to meeting talented, competent Ukrainian ministry leaders over the years, I came away from that first meeting convinced that if he was doing half of what he had described to us, I'd be impressed with this man's ministry.

A couple of weeks later I visited Sasha in Novovolinsk (pop 50,000), a city in North Western Ukraine, only to discover he was accomplishing even more than what he'd initially shared with us.

He and his church operate an orphanage and are building a second one. They own a bakery; manage 4 rehabilitation farms; and are building a Child-care center, a Youth Center, a drug & alcohol Preventive center, a Learning Center for technical training, and a 2,000 seat church.

Remarkably, no one in leadership including Pastor Sasha, are receiving a salary from the Church. Pastor Sasha relies upon relatives in the USA who provide him with \$100/mo for his family to live on.

When I asked him about his vision for this ministry, he answered it was to "transform Novovolinsk into a Christian city."

The statistics were not very encouraging, however. This former mining town had the dubious distinction of having the highest rate of alcoholism, suicide and unemployment in all of Ukraine.

How does he intend to accomplish this goal? By replicating the strategy HART has employed for 10 years in Eastern Europe — providing practical financial, social and spiritual assistance in a variety of ventures designed to relieve poverty & suffering, create employment, grow new Christian leaders and instill in people a rare commodity in Ukraine - HOPE.

HART's partnership has been an enormous help to Sasha's ministry, assisting him to complete his building projects and providing him with Micro Credit loans for free enterprise projects such as a sewing factory, bakery, and agriculture and livestock production projects to name just a few.

Thousands of people in Novovolinsk will be impacted through these projects/ventures.

### REFORM IN MISSIONS NEEDED

Sasha is a typical example of the competent, hardworking visionary leaders that HART has been working alongside and supporting since our inception over 10 years

ago. It's because of ministries like this one, we have been tenaciously calling for reform in the way North Americans have been doing missions in Eastern Europe.

Our objective has been to convince people in the West, to shift their support to National (meaning: local or indigenous) workers instead of sending missionaries from North America. It is by far the most fruitful and cost-effective strategy for this part of the world.

A cursory look at the history of missions in the former Soviet Union bears this out as well.

### HISTORY OF MISSIONS IN E.EUROPE

As the Communist system began to collapse in country after country, Christians everywhere began holding large evangelistic meetings. Thousands volunteered to go as missionaries to reach every people group wherever the Russian language was spoken and understood.

The entire populace, experiencing freedom of thought, speech and religion for the first time were eager to explore new ideas. Their openness to the gospel was an opportunity without parallel in all of Russian history.

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but something went  
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However, along with the end of state socialism and the artificial props that supported its economic structure, came a total collapse of the economy throughout Eastern Europe.

As the Russian "Ruble" became almost worthless; widespread unemployment resulted in mass poverty. And those with jobs were paid next to nothing, if they were paid at all.

Christians were unable to contribute towards the support of their churches or missionary outreaches.

Thousands of prospective missionaries were stranded in the "starting gates", without resources for transportation, food, lodging, Bibles, literature or teaching tools.

All they needed was about US \$50/month and they could have gone almost anywhere throughout the former USSR to share the Word of God and plant churches.

It was at this critical juncture that Christians

# their own churches

in the USA and Canada could have been instrumental in sending out thousands of Russian speaking native missionaries to 300 million unreached people who were prepared and ready to respond to the gospel.

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The harvest was ripe...the laborers were ready...but something went terribly wrong.

The large traditional Mission agencies in the West chose to ignore the economics and effectiveness of supporting Nationals.

Instead we witnessed the travesty of wave after wave of American and Canadian would-be "missionaries" arriving in Eastern Europe without language skills, cultural training or a bone fide strategy.

## **ECONOMIC DISPARITY**

Mission agencies chose to spend \$60,000/year per missionary of God's money knowing it was enough to provide full support for 100 native missionaries who already knew the language and culture.

Bob Finley, in his book Reformation in Foreign Missions states the following:

"In all my 60 years of serving our Saviour I have never seen anything more ridiculous than the way we botched our opportunity to help God's servants in Russia, Ukraine and other Soviet countries reap the gospel harvest while it was ripe.

We are custodians of God's treasury. May He forgive us for squandering His resources on the frightfully expensive process of sending Americans over there, when He had already prepared tens of thousands of laborers who could do the job ten times better at one percent of the cost."

Pretty strong words! But sadly, this pattern of financial disparity continues to the present day. Recently I spoke with a National leader/pastor from Ukraine, who was concluding three years of study at Dallas Theological Seminary.

He mentioned to me that he had just met an American who was in the process of moving to Ukraine as a "missionary."

That he didn't speak the language wasn't a surprise to me, however, what shocked me to learn his budget for moving he and his wife to Ukraine was US \$47,000!

This Ukrainian Pastor's budget for moving his wife and three children back to Ukraine was a couple of hundred dollars given by personal friends.

Considering the fact that this young man is also one of the finest young spiritual leaders Ukraine has today, makes this story even more tragic.

## **WHY NOT SUPPORT NATIONALS?**

So—why aren't Western Mission agencies supporting Nationals? I believe the principal reasons can be summarized as follows...

Firstly, tradition. The present system of sending people from Western industrialized countries is a tradition left over from the 19th Century. In many countries of the world it should have been faded out 50 years ago.

Secondly, it could be that modern "missions" has simply become an "industry" more interested in perpetuating itself than it is to responding to the needs of the countries they are "serving" in.

The primary function of these agencies is to recruit, train and send; which requires legions of recruiters, teachers, trainers and administrators, not to mention office buildings and training facilities.

Given the failure rate of today's missionaries, it is an immense and very costly undertaking.

## **Abraham Bible**

Are there any exceptions to the rule? Certainly, but not many. One man who definitely fits into this category of an effective North American missionary is Abraham Bible.

A Canadian (though born in Holland), he started the BEE (Bible Education through Extension) program in Ukraine in 1991. It is the most successful discipleship and church planting movement in Eastern Europe.

He is considered a "living legend" among evangelicals in Ukraine; having impacted thousands of lives and trained a whole generation of young leaders.

**Rehabilitation Farm**



Tony Campolo acknowledges this in his book Carpe Diem: "**More than half of those who go to the mission field fail to serve more than two years.** The enormous waste and poor stewardship are obvious when one considers the financial resources that are required to place a Christian worker in another country."

## **SHORT TERM MISSIONS**

What role does short term missions have in this part of the world? In many cases it can prove to be beneficial to Nationals; especially if those coming from the West have specific skills or training that can be useful to the National churches and ministries.

Others such as businesspeople, or church leaders, who go on short term missions trips to "observe and learn" where God wants them or their congregations to be involved financially/prayerfully are also a great benefit.

However, most short term mission trips are of no benefit to the National Churches.

In spite of their good intentions, youth groups from American or Canadian churches who go on short-term mission trips often end up doing more harm than good.

They don't realize that when they build schools and churches in Third World villages and hamlets, they often are taking construction jobs away from indigenous people who desperately need the work.

As Tony Campolo states in his book, Speaking My Mind: "These short-term mission groups usually arrive with a well-devised plan, the financial resources to buy building materials, and the tools that will enable them to construct a school or a church with a degree of efficiency that appears almost miraculous to those they want to help.

The local people are awed but are also left with an increased sense of inferiority. These well-meaning young people may actually have contributed to disempowering the very people they wanted to help by leaving them

# Why support Nationals (cont'd)

with a sense that outsiders are the only ones who can meet their needs or solve their problems.”

Leonid Mulych, Pastor of the only “Hearing Impaired” church in Ukraine (and a HART partner) shared with me some thoughts about their recently completed church construction project.

He shared many stories of the sacrifices his congregation was required to make in order to complete the church. But he also talked of the satisfaction they received, knowing it was because of their hard work the building was completed.

He explained to me this is why Westerners should let Nationals build their own churches. “Help us with resources if possible,” he explained, “but don’t send people from the West to do what Nationals can do.”

## CONCLUSION

Eastern Europe today is in spiritual decline. Worldly influences are pulling young people from churches at an alarming rate. Where there was once a tremendous hunger for things spiritual, today that has been supplanted by indifference or skepticism.

Clearly not the entire fault for this can be laid at the feet of Western Mission agencies. However, when one considers how little has been accomplished since 1991, despite the massive financial resources they’ve spent; it’s fair to say they certainly share in the responsibility for the deteriorating spiritual situation in the former Soviet Union.

What is the solution then? One of the best approaches to the challenges facing Eastern Europe today is addressed in HART’s mission statement: “..**identify physical and spiritual needs in Eastern Europe and partner with National workers; EMPOWERING THEM to effectively address the needs in their own countries.**”

I’m convinced if more Western Missions agencies followed the simple principles that have guided

HART all these years, we’d be witnessing a far different outcome in countries like Ukraine.

Can you imagine how many hundreds of Pastor Sasha Dudiks could have been supported over the past 15 years? And how their efforts would be transforming countries throughout Eastern Europe?

Let me challenge and encourage you with this: If we choose to - we in North America can ALL be “effective” missionaries.

And it doesn’t require us to travel to foreign soil. What it does mean however, is that we can all become “SENDERS.”

That is, to provide support for competent National (local) ministries going into their world to make disciples; look after widows and orphans; feeding those who are hungry; providing clothing for the poor; looking after the sick and visiting those in prison.

HART has over 200 National partners in Ukraine, Romania, Moldova and Russia. Of these, only about 25% of them are partnered with individuals, families, Bible study groups or churches in the West.

Here is a great opportunity to Sponsor your own missionary. On average the cost to support a National worker is between CA\$75-125/mo. Please consider how you might get involved.

Admittedly, we’ve lost some battles in Eastern Europe. But we will not lose the war, especially with the determined efforts of people like you - who share the same vision as HART and choose to mobilize our resources to be used effectively, efficiently and economically, serving alongside National Ministries in this part of the world.

Our sincere and grateful thanks to all of you who are faithfully standing by this ministry. Rich blessings friends.

Lloyd Cenaiko  
President

