

# Ratomka Bible Baptist Church

## U.S. Coordinator's Field Report "Belarus or Bust" Spring 2005

JoAnn Brindle

Things were as they usually are for me... very hectic and very weird! I finally got all my luggage one week to the day from the Wednesday I arrived!

I got to Belarus in time to be with my son Joseph for his 4th occasion of becoming "homeless" since he arrived in Ratomka in Sept. 2004. When the building was closed in January he lost his apartment in the Dorm, and since February had made home an apartment between Minsk and Ratomka, But the landlord decided he did not want to rent to an American, so he had to be out by Saturday. Praise God we were able to rent the house that the Whiteside's will occupy when they arrive in mid-June. Joseph became quit the "social butterfly" now that he had a home (*even if it is temporary*). He invited folks over for supper about every night, had dinner guests, and even a cook out! I haven't had this much of a social life in years! He really enjoyed returning the hospitality he has experienced at the homes of the other missionaries. It was a blessing to see him enjoying himself in fellowship after having been



Joseph, Pastor Sergei and Maxim

isolated a 20 min. train ride away from the others for most of the winter. He was enjoying life here.

Pastor Sergei and I had a great meeting with the Fire Safety official in Minsk. He gave us caps and I gave him an old "Fire-Police" patch from Winston-Salem. He invited us to an exhibition and then came to Ratomka to bring me some journals and a letter asking for Fire Departments in the USA that would be interested in helping supply "prizes" for the children that will be coming to the Fire Safety camps this summer. We presented him with some new sports equipment for the camp and he was genuinely surprised and grateful. He pledged to help us get the building open and to call off all the "nickel and dime" offenses the local guys keep finding. Please pray this will be a relationship that continues to develop.



The Fire Marshals asked a lot of questions about our Church and our faith. Pray God uses this to save these men.



Ladies Meeting

As always, we had a special ladies meeting, and as always it was a blessing. Because of the fear of meeting in the Church, we did not advertise or expect a large number to come, but we had 25 ladies present with 3 professions. Praise God!

Please earnestly pray that all the work necessary to reopen the building will be completed by the June 21st deadline. Praise God that the Church auditorium was allowed to open the Sunday after I left. Pastor Sergei reported 80 in attendance.

**"Kids for Kids"** - the Children's Church of Gospel Light Baptist Church, Walkertown, NC raised \$300

for the Virtual Orphan Kids. The money was used to purchase food and clothes for special kids, and to help provide colostomy bags for this little guy who had major internal reconstructive surgery. He also faces additional treatment for the tumor on his face. **Thanks also** to a very special couple in my Church for the funds for Joseph to buy the rest of the electrical supplies needed, and to a dear brother who donated the funds that allowed me to purchase a new computer, printer/scanner the Church so badly needed, and meet several other urgent needs as well. The saints of the Ratomka Bible Baptist Church are so grateful to their American brothers and sisters for their continued support.



**Sister Churches needed!** The Ratomka Bible Baptist Church is working hard to be autonomous and financially independent, but the majority of members are poor, and although they give sacrificially, it is hard to make ends meet. Pastor Sergei has been giving back his small salary and living in a room in the home of a Church family. The yellow Church van has finally "given up the ghost", and the sanctuary floor has to be torn up and replaced... so how about it? Are there any Churches that would like to help this great Church? What a blessing and encouragement that would be to Pastor Sergei and the saints in Ratomka.

Interested? Contact me at number or email below.

# Ratomka Bible Baptist Church



## From Pastor Sergei's Desk:

The Church in Ratomka thanks all our brothers and sisters in America who know of our Church, and by the newsletter have become our friends. We feel your love and your prayers, and we thank all of you.

We are now gathering all together in the Church building. It is a necessary risk, although any minute they can punish me and give many problems for the Church. But for the sake of the Lord we are ready to face all dangers which attack us. Joseph is a big help and good assistant to me. He has released me from the daily concerns of the work and management of the building and laborers, and allowed me to take care of the more urgent problems with the government and the ministry to the people. God has prepared his heart for great sacrificial service to the Lord, and to His ministers. When all problems with the building pass, we can praise the Lord for the trials and lessons of faith He has taught us.

We still have many needs before we see an end to the present problems, and can legally open the building, but the Lord knows all this, and will provide our need. By gathering all the saints together we make protest to satan, showing our faith, with the hope other believers that know our situation, and also non-believers who see our difficulty, will ask how we conduct our services without fear.

We live during a very interesting time of change in our country. Many believers in Evangelical Churches now face persecution and difficult times, and I believe this shows that the time is near for the Lord to return. May the Lord bless you and your Churches.

Pastor Sergei Kozliuk  
Ratomka Bible Baptist Church



## From Senior Missionary Jeff Christian's Desk:

The past two years of study have proven to be very beneficial. Helen, John and I are conversationally competent, and able to share the Gospel, although still on a limited basis. This is a giant step forward considering that just two years ago we didn't speak a word of Russian. We are

thankful for God's help, and give him the glory. Now that Graduation has passed, we will remain here in Belarus for the last 2 years of our first term. I have had the management responsibilities of the day to day operations here since Bro. Mark left in January, and now that he has decided to remain in the states on furlough, I will continue on with those responsibilities, which include oversight of the Sunday School, the Missionary Training School, and the Bible Institute which will start this fall. I will also continue with the alcoholic recovery ministry. The goal is to teach that God loves them, win them to Christ, help them overcome alcoholism through the power of the Holy Spirit and teach them to be faithful in the church. Alcohol here is cheap and readily available to anyone who wants it. Everybody drinks and those who don't are considered odd and outcasts. Those who participate in our ministry show great courage by stepping forward and seeking help with their addiction. Many of them live in homes where everyone drinks and temptation is enormous. The result is occasional relapses into drinking. These people need your prayers for strength and courage. Pray for me as I work to gain their confidence and trust.

For Souls in Russia,  
Jeff and Helen Christian

## From Joseph's Tool Box:

Thank you for all the prayers and support. God answer our prayers when we to lay them at His feet, and God has used many of you to answer my prayers. God has showed Himself to me in so many ways and through so many miracles. Every time it seemed like there was no way to move on, and I began to doubt my purpose here, God would use one of you to provide the way. God has miraculously provided for me every month, and I am truly blessed.

I have fallen in love with the people, but the language and lifestyle are very hard to adjust to. Please pray for me and for God to give me wisdom and direction about what to do about staying on here and starting Language School in September. The church has until June 21 to complete the Fire code requirements before they will approve us to completely reopen the building. Pray that the Lord will bless and we will complete all of the work in time. I will stay to see that through, then decide what to do next. So please pray for me. This is all very new to me, and I need to fully trust in God to work it all out.

I was in charge of the bus ministry and was in the process of expanding it to reach another village when the church closed. I ran our regular bus route but attendance dropped because the kids did not understand the home meetings and there was no place to have a children's Sunday school. Pastor Sergei decided to take the risk of having Sunday services in the Church building so we will not lose families with children, but then the yellow church van broken down, so many still can't come. The other missionary's pick up as many people as they can in their cars but that includes the elderly, so there is not much room left for a bunch of kids.

**My heart breaks for the children.** They loved to ride the van to Church. Please pray that God will provide another van. We can buy a used one for about \$7500, and I could make several trips and pick up the kids that want to come. Please pray about this. **I was a Gospel Light "bus kid" and I know how much it means to see the Church bus coming on Sunday morning.**

Now, for a progress report: repairs on the Vera-pai home with 6 kids completed; the **Krashovka house** with 7 kids just needs to be sided and the chimney extended; completed a 3 month remodeling job to the Kleim house, a virtual orphanage family. There are several more virtual orphan homes that I would like to take on this summer, but must put on hold until the church reopens. The Missions house, that was the Rose's house, still has a lot of work that needs to be done. I keep asking mom what happened to all the good help she always told me about! **I sure could us a good crew** to help me finish up these projects. I have to come on home by mid-July to have any chance of raising support to return in September!

The work here is very fulfilling, but it is very difficult. Satan tries and temps you constantly, but it's worth it all to see the look on the faces of the people after we complete a project for them. They are not used to someone who will help them and love them unconditionally, and that is when we can present the gospel to them.

Your brother in Christ,  
Joseph McCarthy

*"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" Col. 4:5*

