

### Mission despite obstacles

**The repressive religious law in Belarus hinders the work of Baptist churches although they manage to continue carrying out the gospel ministry.**

#### Baptists in Belarus

Belarus is inhabited by approximately 10 million people. The Baptist Union is comprised of nearly 13 000 members who worship in about 300 local Baptist churches and church plants..

Rev. Leonid Mikhovich, the president of Baptist Union says: *“According to the bylaws of our union we can preach the gospel to all people and care for the spiritual growth of believers. Our work concentrates mainly in large cities, as we notice a tendency among young people to leave villages and towns in order to move over to biggest cities and particularly Minsk.”*

Starting a new church legally is very hard in Belarus. Renting a public space or even inviting people to private houses for worship is restricted by law. However it is possible to organize some public events under an umbrella of the registered churches or recognized by the state institutions. Several churches in the Minsk region can't get an official registration and they must be covered by the Baptist Seminary. Currently the union supervises about 20 mission stations that aspire to become churches in future.



#### Church planting in Grodno

One of the church planting projects being currently aided by EBF is in the city of Grodno, located on the border with Poland.

Grodno has the population of 350 thousand and is the 2nd largest city in the country. The Baptist Church „Nadezhda” (Hope), with the joint efforts of the regional association and the national union, has been the mother church for the 2nd Baptist congregation named „Svet Mira” (Light of the world) since October 2015. There are about 50 people who meet regularly on Sundays in a rented facility that is located in another part of the city. Their leader is Vasily who has moved over from Kobryn.

Here are a few extracts from the mission reports of Vasily that illustrate the process:



**2017**

*The most important evangelistic activity was a gospel drama show to celebrate the 500 anniversary of the Reformation. It took place in November in the Drama Theater in Grodno and was organized together with the church "Nadezhda". This occasion provided also an opportunity for the publication of the new Belarusian Bible. Thanks to this several new people joined our fellowship.*

*This year we also started a „kids’ club” where the majority of children are from non-Baptist homes. The children meet weekly and enjoy spending part of the time in different interest groups, like: sport games, music, crafts; later they also meet with leaders for a short bible lesson and finally they come together for worship.*

**2018**

*We organized a summer camp for about 40 children and 30 adults. Some of them were new believers. This camp provided an opportunity to grow in faith for Christians and explained the way of salvation as well. After the summer, we again started new groups of Bible study. There are three leaders and additionally three assistants were appointed in these groups.*



*In June 2018 our church celebrated the baptism of three people and the first marriage. One of the newly baptized members is Dmitry who started sport activity and mobilized people from the church to play football with non-Christians. This is good way to make contacts with new people. Six people with disabilities visit our church and they would like to evangelize others.*



## **2019**

*Our church has 39 members, 20 men and 19 women. On Sunday there are between 30 and 50 people in services. Most of them are young people. We are trying to grow them spiritually in groups of Bible studies. There 4 groups that are supervised by 4 leaders.*

*You may know that Belarus is closed for evangelization in public space. But in April we organized an evangelistic meeting in one university. One man from Belarus had emigrated several years ago to the USA. He is a man with disability but can write poems and others wrote music to make songs. Sergey asked the University in Grodno to organize for him a meeting with students. Eventually about 350 students and teachers attended this meeting when Sergey shared his story and the testimony of his faith in God.*

*We are planning in September to start one more Bible group. So, we will have five Bible groups with five leaders. Now the greatest need of our church is our own building. We are collecting money and praying for a particular building to become our facility.*

## **Prayer requests**

1. Pray for the good continuation of this project under leadership of the church planter Vasily.
2. Pray for a building that this new planted and well growing congregation may have its own facility.
3. Pray for more indigenous missionaries who will start more churches and a possibility to register new planted churches.

In Christ,  
**Daniel Trusiewicz**  
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**Planting new churches together!**  
**For the glory of God!**

