

YOU WILL BE A BLESSING

Genesis 12:1.2

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.’”

I. Life Testimony Matthew Gerus
(Odessa UBF, Ukraine)

Hello, my name is Matthew Gerus. I was born in Ukraine in 1979 in the town of Nikolaev. As the first child of my family I received much love from my parents and grandparents. But after the Soviet Union collapsed the loving atmosphere was destroyed because my father lost his job. My family became poor, my parents began to abuse one another and my father started to drink a lot of alcohol. I began to watch dirty movies and also read erotic magazines for seeking to satisfy my empty soul. I even tried to commit sin with my classmate girl student. I couldn’t control myself and keep real peace in my soul for even one day. I dreamed of becoming president of the Ukraine, because I wanted to get rid of all drug addicts of my town. Therefore I wanted to study Internal Affairs at the University of Kharkov. But I flunked and was desperate. So I decided to go to the University of Odessa first and try it again one year later. But in this time God involved in my life and began to help me. Before my first lesson at the university I was invited to Bible study by Missionary John Lee. Through Genesis God taught me that He leads my life according to His great plan. Several times I wanted to quit Bible study because I wanted to live for my sinful desire, not according to the word of God. But John Lee was always patient and I experienced father’s love from him and always returned to Bible study. In spring 1997 I confessed my terrible lustful desires and decided to quit them according to John 4:13-14. In 1999 at the spring conference the message about the call of Matthew (“Follow me!”) touched my heart. At that time I received the new name Matthew and God began to change my life.

I was a weak student because I could not study normally because of lustful desires. But when I accepted God’s vision through one word of God, “you will be a blessing,” I was freed from the terrible lustful desire and I could study well and graduate with “A” as the one and only of my group. God gave me a well-paid job. When I held on to this one word, “you will be a blessing,” an inconceivable thing happened in my life. In January 2005 he established my beautiful house church with a great Korean woman of faith, Rebecca Kwon from Korea UBF. And in 2006 God blessed us with a wonderful son, Samuel. All such wonderful things became true when I held firmly on to one promise of God, “you will be a blessing.”

I thank God who preciously uses our lives as Bible teachers and house church for salvation history at Odessa UBF. I am sure, that God will make me into a great nation. God gave me a vision to open a

Bible Club at Odessa State University in order to raise 12 Bible teachers and bless all other universities of Odessa. God also gave me a vision for my family to go to North Korea and be a blessing as missionaries for North Korean people in God's time.

I pray that God may use my family as a blessing for many wandering students in Ukraine and send them to North Korea in God's time.

II. Mission Report on CIS

CIS Mission began through the brother missionaries Cyril and Method, who developed Slavic script and brought the gospel to the Slavic people. In 988 the Grand Duke Vladimir of Kiev was baptized and declared Christianity to be the official religion. After Constantinople was conquered by the Turks in 1453 Russia led the Orthodox Church. After the 1917 October Revolution the Communists destroyed Churches, burnt Bibles and persecuted the believers until freedom of religion was reestablished by Gorbachev in 1990. The post communistic society was like a spiritual wilderness. Along with many political, economical and social problems such as total corruption, poverty, violating of human rights, and immorality, CIS people suffered the most from the lack of spiritual leaders, good stewards and shepherds. CIS students have had no hope and life direction because of their sins. They have suffered from meaninglessness, laziness, poverty and lust and because of that have lived super selfish and pleasure-seeking life. More than 100 Million of people are nominally considered Orthodox Christians. Because of more than 450 mafia gangs, people suffer from murder, prostitution, human trafficking and drug trafficking. In the 21st century, more than 40% in Kazakhstan and 90% in Uzbekistan are Muslims.

1985 Dr. Samuel Lee gave the prayer topic to send out missionaries to Russia within 10 years. Because of the cold war this was impossible. God answered the world-wide prayer of all co-workers and tore down the iron curtain through Gorbachev. M. James Hwang gave up his excellent job at Samsung and decided for Russia mission. He became the first Korean to earn a PhD in physics from Moscow University. M. Abraham and M. Sarah Han gave up their medical carrier in Korea and cared for the health of the missionaries and served students through bible study in their 18 m² student apartment. This way disciple making ministry began in the CIS.

First, disciple making through early morning prayer and intensive bible study.

Missionaries opened their homes and helped students through early morning prayer to overcome their laziness and fatalism and through bible study to receive God's hope and vision for their own life and for all CIS countries. In this way miracles happened even though the ministry was not older than two years. In 1991 on the very day of the attempted coup d'état against Jelzin, the first historical Russian Summer Bible Conference was held with 102 attendants.

Sh. Serezha gave up the opportunity to work as a professor and decided according to Hebrews 11:6 to live as a disciple of Jesus and became the first intern shepherd with CIS UBF. Sh. Lena was an able student of physics at Moscow University. She grew up in a broken family and was looking for men's love. Through Bible Study she accepted John 4:14 personally and decided to follow Jesus. God is using her as a mother of faith and a mother of prayer, who supports all chapters in the CIS by attending their conferences and by taking care of Russian shepherds. M. Stephan and M. Elisabeth Kim held on to early morning prayer at 4.00 a.m. and gain spiritual strength through three hours of prayer and daily bread studies. By inviting students and studying the Bible they raised 70 native shepherds and leaders.

When M. Dr. Peter and M. Sarah Kim wanted to pioneer Kiev, Ukraine, many missionaries hesitated to be sent out to Kiev because of the aftermath of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster. M. Sarah suffered miscarriage three times in six years and had to go to the hospital several times because of enteritis. All their co-workers left Ukraine and they remained alone for seven years. Then God encouraged them with Mark 9:23: "Everything is possible him who believes." M. Dr. Peter Kim held early morning prayer faithfully. When he did this for 14 years, Kiev students were challenged to overcoming laziness and lust and to grow as independent Bible teachers through leadership training. The secret why one missionary family could serve 150-200 students with the word of God and bring them to their conference is daily common prayer in the morning and in intensive bible study.

Because Islam is very powerful in Astana, M. David, M. Pauline Byun and other missionaries were expelled from the University by the police. But God blessed their prayer of faith and raised Rustam as a father of faith. Sh. Rustam suffered from his father, who was an alcoholic, and from sexual desires, laziness and fatalism. Through 1:1 bible study he accepted the absolute father's love of God and was raised as an father of faith for Kazakhstan and founded a God and mission centered family with Sh. Maria. Sh. Liazzat was an orphan and a mafia member. Despite of beatings from the mafia he decided to follow Jesus and is used from God as a mother of faith for the students in Kazakhstan.

Second, self supporting life of laymen shepherds

Mission families in Moscow are mostly laymen shepherds. They work at the embassy, in travel agencies, restaurants etc. and the serve disciple making ministry. M. Dr. Peter Kim was an example for this. Because of his self-supporting life at Samsung company he had no time to raise disciples of Jesus, he decided to search God's kingdom and his righteousness according to Matthew 6,33. God allowed him to have his own company by working 2 to 4 hours per day, while selling goods worth 2-3 Million Dollars and this way serving the disciple making ministry. Most of the native shepherds followed his example as laymen shepherds for the work of God and in 2008 could build a wonderful church building, which can hold 300 people.

In May 2005, when the capitol moved from Almaty to Astana, M. David und M. Pauline Byun gave up their financial security and moved to Astana with Joshua 17:15-17, where the winter temperature

reaches -40 degrees Celsius and outside conditions are bad. God answered their persistent prayer and helped them to be self-supporting through their internet café. They overcame adverse situations and could support other mission families and serve the disciple making ministry victoriously.

Third, native gospel centered house churches

For a long time the establishing of shepherd families was an important prayer topic in the CIS. Most students grew up in broken families, lonely and fatalistically and had no idea about establishing a mission family. Through sacrificial missionary families they were encouraged and could establish shepherd families by faith. Sh. Matthew Gerus is 1.95 m tall and handsome and wanted to become president of Ukraine. After Genesis Bible study he realized that Ukraine needs shepherds and decided to be a shepherd for Ukraine.

He is a powerful messenger and a merciful shepherd and allowed him to establish a mission family for North Korea mission with a beautiful mother of faith M. Rebecca. So far 34 shepherd families have been established. They opened their houses, served students and obeyed the World Mission command and were sent out as mission families: in 2003 the house church of Josef and Sarah Malygin to Astana, after that to Karaganda, 2005 John and Sarah Mylyukov to Almaty and David and Maria Nikitin to Nizny Novgorod. The house church of Pavel and Maria Zakharov prepares for Cuba Mission and the house church of Artyom and Ruth Datsenko for Kazan mission, which is the largest Muslim city in Russia. M. Anastasia married Sh. Jason Perry, she was sent out to New Jersey for Princeton University pioneering, M. Ruth went to Chicago, M. Vladimir Point went to Turkey, Sh. Jacob and Joan of Arc Patriyuk to Kharkov. Through the native shepherds UBF could register officially and experienced God's mighty work, when 511 attended the Summer Bible Conference 2005. These days 86 missionaries and 114 native leaders serve the work of God in 20 chapters in 7 countries of the CIS.

God has great hope to change CIS wilderness into a fruitful blossoming land through the sacrificial lives of missionaries and native shepherds and prayers of our co-workers all over the world. God wants to raise CIS nations as good shepherds and Bible teachers for Muslim and communistic people.

First: We pray to double the ministry in CIS until 2010 and to pioneer 3 Baltic nations, the remaining 9 CIS countries and 683 colleges in CIS.

Second: We pray to send out 10,000 missionaries as lay shepherds to Muslim nations and communist nations such as China and North Korea.

Third: Orthodox Church holds a big influence for 1000 years. In order to plant gospel faith in the midst of deep-rooted tradition and ritual faith it is important to raise diligent gospel-centered Bible teachers.

Forth: Second generation missionaries are missionaries and native shepherds at the same time. They should be helped by intensive Bible study and Bible camps with Second Generation missionaries from other countries to meet Jesus personally and grow as good co-workers for their parents and for native shepherds.