

Ponomar Konstantin,
Son of David

The path of my life

Life memories

Memories about the life experience.

The path of my Life.

At the insistence of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and I had to plunge into my memories and tell them what came before them. The path of my life has been a hard and difficult one since it is been taking place for almost a century on the rocky road of life.

All that is recorded in this book, is written for you, my dears, so that you know your roots, so that you remember those to whom you owe your life here on earth. However, it says here not only about the past, but also about the future.

My future is my God and it is you, my family. I love all of you, pray for all of you, and I want to make you happy. And happiness happens only with God. Send your feedback by email:
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Once Moses in his prayer said:

“Our days may come to seventy years,
or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble
and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.” (Ps. 90: 10).

The truth was told by the leader of Israel. Only I already, by the will of our Creator, have stepped much further the marked line of "greater strength." Apparently it's for me personally to see and share with job pleasant life of many of my descendants.

There were the “best days” in my life: work, -sometimes bitter, debilitating; there were diseases, sometimes serious, that was when the helping hand of our Savior was especially visible. And looking from the high numbers of my years – they passed very quickly, like one day. And we are flying. We fly in time, approaching promised to us by Christ, eternal life.

I would really like to be able to at least mention all my beloved descendants, but then it will be no longer memories of my life, not my long biography, but a long list of the dear ones. Those who are close to me. And I am afraid to offend someone, forgetting to mention their names in these memories. Therefore, please forgive me not because I forgot about you, but because intentionally did not feature anyone especially, and thereby offend others about whom involuntarily kept silent, and who also love me as I do them.

The Father's Parents

"There is a time for everything... a time to be born and a time to die," Eccl 3:1-2

My father's father (my grandfather) Philip Ivanovich Ponomarenko was born in 1859, in the Kiev province -now Cherkasy region Sagunovka village. Grandmother Evdokia was born in 1861. At the beginning of 1880, their family moved to new not populated lands in the Yekaterinoslav province (Now Dnepropetrovsk region). About 40 families with children, farms and cattle on a barge sailed to Zaporizhzhya, there they were dropped off, and the property was sent along the Dnieper further through the rapids. Over the rapids we stopped near the riverbank called Dnieper - Bugai.

By winter, three kilometers from the river, near village Lomakovki, built mud houses and wintered in them. In the spring they bought a large plot of land from the landowners, shared it and built houses for themselves. A loan for land was taken in the Provincial Bank. A small village was organized, which was called Kievka.

The soil there was good - greasy black soil - it produced good harvest, but the villagers were disturbed by a cruel credit, which they were given at high interest. Therefore, at the end of the 90s of the 19th century, immigrants wrote a letter to Petersburg, in the hope that the government to facilitate their fate and save them from high interest rates. Since they didn't get the answer, they send the same request to the very Tsar and he evaluated the interest. In gratitude for this, the village of Kievka was renamed by the villagers in the village of "Tsar's Grace". Only after the October Revolution of 1917 did the village was renamed and the new name Novokievka was established.

Philip (my grandfather) and Evdokia had 8 children. Daughter Nastya and 7 sons: Ivan, Fedor, Jacob, Semyon, Kiril, David and Paul. The brothers were friendly, they built houses for themselves, did not quarrel, as it happens sometimes, and helped each other. Village grew, the number of inhabitants increased, and in 1914 they built a Zemsky school, in which later we all studied.

Moms Parents

Father, Vitko Erofei Ivanovich and Mother Daria, whom we called gently: grandmother Erofeyka, also arrived from Sagunovka, as part of those 40 families of immigrants. They had 11 children. The oldest was Lukerya. Then they had children: Kuzma, Semyon, my mother Sofia, Vasily, Daria, Ivan, Pavel, Natalia, Alexandra and Onoprius, whom everyone called - Onosh. Now, over time, the memory pops up only isolated moments. Alexandra died while still young.

Next to us lived the eldest of the children - Aunt Lukerya, a kind and wise woman, and all the younger ones always turned to her for an advice. We, as younger ones were friends with her children.

The time was hard. All hardworking families lived better than others. In 1932, during collectivization, announcing them - kulaks - prosperous villagers – Both the fathers and mother's parents lost their homes. Just taken away without compensation, like the bandits from the highway. Then it was an official government policy - not have the rich. Parents had more land than others, so they were not considered to be poor, despite the fact, that they had many children, they were considered kulaks, and their property should be taken away. Father's dad after that, lived with his son Kiril, and grandmother lived with us, where she died before the war in 1941.

After all this, grandfather Erofei and grandmother lived near the city of Manganets, next door to their daughter Daria. Surnames of people changed at the time depending on who in which region lived. In middle Ukraine, sunames had ending as "... enko", in the western - "... chuk, ...shuk", in Russia "... ov." Despite the number of grandfather's sons, only my father's last name was "Ponomar". Apparently one of my relatives served in church, so the surname got the church related feel. When father was forced to enter the collective farm, because it was hard to live alone, then he reserved the last name that the family carries today. And the father's brother Pavel and his children remained on the old surname - Ponomarenko.

My Parents

(Translated by Margaret Dyachenko)

My parents, David and Sofia, married in 1918 and moved into the house of my father's brother, my deceased uncle Ivan, on Green Street in the village of Novokievka. When the country introduced a new economic policy (NEP), my parents received an allotment of land. This land gave my parents an opportunity to gain wealth and with hard work and toil on that land, my parents sufficiently increased their household. New buildings were built in our yard and we acquired livestock: cows, horses, and sheep. In our yard there were stacks of hay for our cattle and piles of crops from the field. On the field we grew watermelons, from which we made jam. My parents were considered well-off so when the 1930s came with the new policy of collectivization (this is when, like thieves on the main road, wealthy villagers were robbed of their homes and livestock for community use), our horses, cows, livestock, and generally our wealth was taken away. It's a good thing my father did not cover the roof with iron, which he was planning to do in the near future. The families that did have iron roofs were considered to be the wealthiest of the villagers, or "fists", like we called them, and they were evicted from their homes, had all their rights taken away, and were sent to live in the sparsely occupied region of cold Siberia to the furthestmost Northern area.

At first, my father did not go to the collective farm but got a job in forestry not far from the river Dnieper. For this reason, for our individuality, our land was taken away for collective farming. Without our land it was very difficult, and my parents, with the goal to give us a better life, decided to join the collective farm. A famine began, since collective farming worked poorly and, in 1933, during the famine that gripped the nation, my father began to work in a mine in the city of Marhanets. My father had to walk to work by foot every day, 12 km (7.45 miles) one way. One day, in a blizzard, he roze his legs, became seriously ill, and after being ill for a long time, he recovered and decided to return to work at the collective farm. In this disastrous year, many died from hunger during the famine. We also experienced a very difficult time during 1933. Our dairy cows were taken away from us. Our means of living too. To survive somehow, I pastured the neighbors pigs at the edge of the village, for which I received from my neighbors half a liter of milk per day. But even with this we were glad.

The Lord saved our entire family in these terrible years. My father finished 2 grades of school when he was young and was able to read. My mother, in the 30s, went to LIKBEZ (Elimination of Illiteracy) school. Both were able to read and write. In those years, many went through these types of schools.

In 1937, people, or fellow citizens, experienced severe oppression. The administration of the country looked at its people as if they were enemies. Millions of our fellow citizens ended up in prisons or jails, or Siberian camps, from which many never returned. Not only did the leaders of the country suffer, directors of enterprises, generals and officers, and priests, who were labeled enemies of the people, but ordinary citizens too, who had no associations with politics whatsoever. Three of my mother's brothers were taken away by the government. Simon and Vasiliy were shot immediately, and Kuzma could not bear the weight of his imprisonment and died imprisoned. My father's brother was imprisoned for 10 years and returned home, alive. Although in Kruschew's time almost everyone was amnestied and rehabilitated, did anyone feel better after that?

It was a very difficult time.

Although I was born in 1926 on April 29th, my birth year was officially recorded as 1927 during the war, a year younger. This fact, this intentional typo, played a significant role in my subsequent life. I was born the fourth child in my family, the long-awaited son in my family. My elder sisters were Nadezhda (b. 1920), Alexandra (b.1922), and Maria (b. 1924). After me came my three younger sisters, Zoya (b. 1929), Olga (b. 1937), and Galina (b. 1941).

My Childhood

(Translated by Margaret Dyachenko)

As a child, I was often sick. On my face and head, I had symptoms of scrofula, which is tuberculosis of the skin. Small red patches form on the skin in the shape of yellow crusts. These patches localized behind the ears, on the face, and other parts of the body. I would constantly have a temperature. The disease affected my hearing and to this day, I don't hear with my right ear. When I was 8 years old, scrofula affected my eyesight. I couldn't look at the light so whenever it was day, we would close the windows in the house. On both of my eyes I developed cataracts, after which I could not see anything. My parents sought help from the village nurse, who treated all diseases.

But he couldn't help. My parents drove me to a private doctor and he couldn't help either. Then my father drove me to an optometrist in the city of Zaporozhiye and asked if he could leave me in the hospital since he could not stay with me. My father needed to work. But the doctor did not allow me to stay in the hospital.

During this time, there was a famine in the land and many parents, so that their children would not die from starvation, would bring their children to the hospital for treatment and would leave them there. Those children, after treatment, would then be sent to the orphanage and in this way, parents would save their children from starvation.

The doctor did not allow me to remain in the hospital because he believed that my father wanted to change my fate and save me from hunger. My father, with tears in his eyes, pleaded with the doctor, telling him that he had only one son and that he treasures me very much. But the doctor did not believe my father and only prescribed me an ointment for my eyes and eyedrops. I felt a little better. On the way back home, we stopped by Aunt Natasha's house in the village of Krutoy Yar. We stayed as guests in her home for a few days. For us, it felt like a holiday. We ate well and I remember, we had vareniki. At home, we did not have dairy cows which could provide us with additional income or food, so the vareniki we had made it feel like a holiday. I remember that from the river bank, we needed to climb up the steep bank, but since the road was covered with thorny bushes (we called these thorns 'kavuntsi'), and I had canvas shoes on that

quickly ripped, it hurt for me to walk. My father picked me up and carried me on his shoulders along with his bag. My father was very upset and cried on the road home – he had one son who couldn't even see. But I was feeling better. I began to see. When we arrived home, I saw the flowers in the garden and said "What beautiful flowers". My sisters heard and ran outside, exclaiming "Kostya can see! Kostya can see!". I could already be outside without a blindfold for my eyes. Praise the Lord, my eyesight returned. When I was in the first grade, the other boys would bully me and call me "Blind Artem". In the village lived a man named Artem who had lost his vision in both of his eyes. This nickname bothered and hurt me. However, I transferred to a different school where I met new friends that did not bully or tease me. I studied well, possibly because my sisters helped me, especially Maria. She was a straight-A student in all of her classes. From the fourth grade to the seventh grade, I was an exceptional student. I loved to read books from the library and books I borrowed from my friends. I remember moments from my childhood in which I especially felt the protection and grace of God. Once, when I was with the boys, we went swimming on the river. In this part of the river there was a small creek merging, not wide, but deep. I was nine years old and I did not know how to swim yet. So I decided to walk across the creek through the deep. When I started running out of breath in the deepest part of the creek,

I realized I could drown and my short life flashed before my eyes. This moment shook me up so much that I remembered this moment for the rest of my life. When I was in sixth grade, we drove on a horse-drawn cart to the cliff next to the river for clay. At that time this was a building material and the best clay was found in the deepest part of the dug up tunnel. We would fill up buckets with the clay and after we had enough, I climbed out of the tunnel to rest. Just when I had climbed out of the tunnel, the tunnel collapsed. At this age, I didn't yet understand that I could have been buried alive in the tunnel. Instead, I was upset that I forgot my shovel. When people ran up to the tunnel and saw me crying outside about my shovel, they calmed me down.

Only later in life I understood that it was the Lord that protected me from certain death. I had many of these situations in my life.

The War Time

Shortly before the 1941 war, my sister Nadia finished la pedagogical school and went to work as a teacher in Pavlogradsky area. My sister Maria studied at the same school in the 2nd year.

My sister Alexandra worked as an accountant at that time. 2months before the war, she married a young guy from a neighboring village. In those days when the country lacked workers, recruiters traveled to the settlements and recruited workers for the construction of large projects. They gave good starting money, and my father, in this period, enrolled at a construction site in Nikopol and came home for weekends and holidays only.

By this time, I had finished grade 7 and enrolled in the 8th grade. At that time, it was considered the initial seven-years as compulsory education and those who graduated from it were already considered educated. They had a choice: to go to work or to continue learning. To study further until the tenth grade, it was necessary to apply once again to continue the education.

I enrolled in the neighboring village of Tarasovka, where there was a 10year school. I had to walk 7km (4miles) to school. My Father said: "Although I am bald, let my last hair fall out, but I will give Kostya the education. It's easier to live with it." He wanted to give education to all his children.

Before the war, we, like all the boys always, loved to play war games. And here, on June 22, 1941, the real war, with its dashing, misfortune, with its bombing, deaths, blood, with grief outburst. This trouble did not pass by our family. Everyone was determined that our country could not be defeated. Even such songs were composed. But, meanwhile, the disturbing news were coming to us. The Germans confidently moved to the East. They announced the mobilization of all men from 18 to 40 years old. There was a lot of crying when parting. My father returned home from the construction sites at Nikopol and worked on the farm. My mom, on June 30, 1941, gave

birth to a daughter, named Galya. In late August, the collective farm was evacuated.

And my father was sent to accompany the sheep. As soon as the evacuees managed to cross the Dnieper hydroelectric dam, they blew it up so that the Germans could not cross to the other side of Zaporozhye, so that later the Germans would not go east. Currently, many families with children, with all their property and cattle, were crossing (running away) from the Germans through the Dnieper hydroelectric dam. Despite this, without warning, without stopping the flow of refugees, the dam with people was blown up. Many people died. Dnieper water spilled heavily and flooded all the floodplains.

In the autumn, after the outbreak of war, the Germans were already in our village, therefore, the village was constantly bombarded by our troops. We moved to the village of Glukhoye, where our relatives lived. Only a month later, we were able to return home. Germans constantly robbed us. At first they were limited only to "milky and eggy" (milk and eggs), then they took away everything that they liked.

In the village, they appointed a German commandant, an elder, policemen, and forced all the villagers to work on a collective farm. I, too worked different jobs. Many prisoners returned home. My father was surrounded, and also returned home in December. He wanted to fish, but he was also forced to work in the collective farm.

In 1942, the Germans began to take youth away to be sent to Germany for forced labor. Many times my sister Maroussia was hiding from being stolen to Germany, but once, and it was in 1942, she didn't hide in time, and she was taken away from us. She worked at a factory in Cologne. In this period, we had a lot of difficulties to go through. In 1943, I also got on the lists for deployment to Germany.

The Way to God

(translated by Jennifer Diachenko)

My parents were Orthodox, and they prayed to God up until 1933. However, Grandmother was a devout believer her entire life and she lived her life accordingly. Every evening, we observed how Grandmother prayed to God. Of course, to a certain extent, this influenced us since we saw her way of life. But in school, we learned that God is nonexistent, that there was no being higher than man on this earth. And we believed the teachers more. We thought that they knew more because they were educated in universities. But at that time, the politics of the government, in the whole country, were focused on the complete annihilation of the faith of God in its fellow citizens. There was even a banner, "Religion: the opium of the nation" and many other such propaganda. Nonetheless, especially when grief and sorrow come, everyone looks for their comfort in God. Times were very difficult during the war; we worked hard. Schools were closed. There were no libraries. There was nothing to read. We had a few religious books at home in the Old Slavonic language, so I was forced to learn it.

On one of the Sundays in 1942, a priest came to the village. There was no Orthodox church in the village, so he performed the services in the school building. There were only a few distractions and diversions at the time, so these events were interesting for us young people. We stood with the whole village and listened. The service was led in Old Church Slavonic. Many came up to the priest and kissed his hand and the Bible. My father only kissed the Bible.

In a different school, evangelical Christians gathered for prayer. Their service ran for about an hour, which is why they were called "stundists," which is derived from the German word "stunde," meaning "hour." Many of the villagers attended the meetings. Father said that they lived by the gospel. But he himself sang in the Orthodox church choir. It seems like he needed a way to express himself. His voice was loud, operatic, with a beautiful timbre. When he sang, the light would go out in the room and the windows would shake. He was very strong, of medium height, broad shouldered, and big boned. He was offered to study in the conservatory when he was young, but he could not leave his family and village.

I was interested in seeing and hearing the service of the evangelists. The mother of my cousin Stephan (Styopa), Aunt Polina, the wife of my Uncle Vasilij, attended the services and described them in a fascinating way. Thus, Styopa suggested that we go there to the choir practice, to listen and investigate. We'd be ashamed if our friends discovered that we went to these "stundes" so we went in secret. I still remember the song they were learning that day. I sang along:

I love you Jesus most ardently,

You are more precious than life to me.

At that time, I only sang the words, but the thoughts seeped through my mind: "I should not be singing this, since this isn't true. He isn't more precious than my life." I only liked the words, "You will forgive me, if I stumble..." That suited me. In general, I really enjoyed their fellowship, so I regularly began attending their choir practices, and eventually their meetings (church services). They gave me a small gospel, with missing and ripped pages in the front and back, but I read it with great interest. However, much of what I read in the gospel was a mystery. It seemed like there were many contradictions, and I began writing them out for further clarification. God sent me new friends: Nickolai Razlyutski, Vanya Mirgorodski, and others. Styopa, my cousin (brother?), ran to party with our pals after choir practices, but I could not anymore. I kept thinking, "No one can serve two masters." I was not drawn to hang out with them anymore. The Lord, like a good shepherd, drew me to him, and he continued to draw me to him for the rest of my life.

A believer with many years of experience lived next to Kolya (Nickolai) Razlutshki. He explained my questions and the ambiguities, and the misunderstandings faded like a dream. While reading the book of Proverbs, I marveled at the wisdom of Solomon. Therefore, when I read, "... behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Mt. 12:42), the gospel completely subdued me. It was even more wise. When something didn't make sense, I took the advice of my new friends and prayed for God to open His Word so that I could have understanding. Before, I didn't understand and criticized the word of God, but now it was rebuking me. It persistently convicted me: that I am not did honor and obey Him and that I was a doomed sinner. God revealed that Christ is not only a wise teacher, but he is the Good Shepherd who is giving me eternal life.

I began to understand these questions: what is life, what is its meaning, where are we coming from, and where are we going, and is there life after death? I wanted to read the gospel more frequently, and I devoted all my time to this. Now, I regularly attended services, although my mother was against this. But my father allowed it. "Let him go," he said, "otherwise, bad friends might show up."

Deliverance from the German Capture

In the middle of 1943, I, along with many of the other young villagers, was entered into the list of those who will be taken for forced labor in Germany. I asked the believers to hold a farewell service, in our yard, to pray to be delivered from having to go on this undesirable trip. My parents allowed it, and we collected many chairs and benches from the surrounding neighbors for the listeners. Many of the villagers came. Many of them sang and preached. At the end of the service, I asked them to pray for me. They suggested that I personally ask God about this need, "You should pray first, and then we will all pray to our Savior." So, for the first time aloud and in public, my prayer rang out to the Almighty. In this prayer, I asked Him about the forgiveness for my sins and for Him to deliver me from the trip of forced labor to Germany.

Peace and joy filled by heart because I was now under the cover and protection of Almighty God. The empty-headed shame which I had in front of the villagers disappeared with my confession of Jesus Christ. At this moment I knew, whether I lived or whether I died, this would happen under His cover and projection. Then, we sang a psalm:

Looking on to Christ, give your life to Him,

Calling for the sinners, He gives them paradise... (literal)

Hymn- Look Away to Jesus

Look away to Jesus, Soul by woe oppressed,

'Twas for thee he suffered: Come to Him and rest;

And the last verse especially:

*It is there, in the kingdom of heaven, forgetting all our worries,
Looking unto Jesus, joyful you shall be. (literal)*

*Then, amid the glories, Of the crystal sea,
Look away to Jesus, through eternity. (Henry Burton)*

Now, Christian songs were heard in our home. Father loved to sing, and we heard psalms: "My Homeland is in Heaven" (*Oh, think of the home over there.* D.C. Huntington, Music by T. O'Kane), "Holy Alleys of Paradise, I yearn for them with all my soul," and others. He said, once the time comes, he will also attend the church services with believers. This inspired hope and joy. Nonetheless, I was certain that my fate was now in the hands of Almighty God and that without his will, nothing would happen to me.

A few young men were hiding in the quarries, so they wouldn't be taken to Germany. They were found and then pelted with grenades. Many of my relatives were killed. In the beginning of September, I was led away toward an unknown future as my loved ones said farewell with tearstained eyes. But I was not scared, and I comforted my sisters and relatives. I told them that I was not alone, my Protector is with me and He is mighty enough to protect and save me from any harm.

My relatives loaded an ample amount of food in a home-made plywood suitcase and clothes in a bag. They drove me 20 kilometers to the station "Mirovaya" (meaning: World), where they brought all of the future German laborers from the whole region. We were loaded into freight cars with 30-40 people in each. The echelon was guarded by the Germans. At night, the freight cars were locked, so the captives would not escape.

Upon my departure, my father sobbed, since I was his only son and last hope, but he did not know what future awaited me in the foreign land. When the train set off, someone broke the brake valve, and the train stopped. My father was the first one to run up to the car so he can see me and wave farewell one more time. That is how he remained in my memory. I never saw him again.

At every station, new freight cars were added, filled with laborers, which ended up being a large crowd. It's always scary when faced with an

unknown future and there is a certain anxiety in one's soul. A few guys were planning to run, but I relied on the Lord and kept calm. After passing Lviv, we arrived at the Peremishl station where everyone was dropped off and directed 3 kilometers from the station for a recommission. The Germans needed healthy working hands. They were scared of being infected with tuberculosis or other diseases.

I had a lot of things, and because the heavy weight of the suitcase the handle broke off. It fell, broke, and everything inside fell on the road. I immediately dropped to pick up all of the produce. But since the Germans were accompanying and rushing us with dogs, most of it was left on the road. Since I was collecting the items, I fell behind my fellow countrymen; my name was on the same list as theirs. By the time I found them, it turned out that they were already going through the medical examinations. I ran up to them out of breath, tired, and with my heart pounding; so, the medical inspectors rejected me. "Zurück (back) - not ready for work." From the entire echelon, only 100 remained. But from our village, only one countryman. He had glaucoma. We were kept under security for three weeks and then sent to our homes.

That is how God kept and delivered me from the capture and forced labor in Germany.

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The Germans retreated from Stalingrad (modern Volgograd). During this time, military operations were taking place in eastern Ukraine, and it was forbidden to go there. The sick from the Dnepropetrovsk region were sent to Kamianets-Podilskyi, and from there they were assigned to various village regions. Ten of us were sent to the village Paraevka, in the Orininski region, which is 25 kilometers from Kamianets-Podilskyi. We were stationed in the school. I went to look for believers in the village. I was prompted, and in the third home, I found fellow believers. I took lodging across from the church with a woman and her sixteen-year-old son. Soon, my friend Lyeva, who was from our village in the Pereshepinsk district, joined me. We read the Bible and attended church services together.

We had to work on a collective farm, from which we received our produce for food. With the regional youth, we visited other gatherings, where I often shared spoken poetry, especially during holidays. In order to trade salt for walnuts, the mistress of the house and other villagers had to walk 25 kilometers to the market in Kamianets-Podilskyi. Money wasn't in

circulation, so we got all of our produce by trade. We took salt from the region that used to be a Polish territory.

Once in Kamianets-Podilskyi, I entered the pharmacy and became interested in the job of a pharmacist. People in white coats, concentrated on their work. They looked beautiful, but most importantly, they brought a practical benefit to people. What is more important than health in this world? After this, I had a dream to work with medicine and benefit people. I enjoyed medicine. Could there possibly be something more noble than giving people back the most important treasure in life: health. However, earning the highest medical education was difficult and I had the privilege of studying to be a pharmacist.

In the middle of April 1944, the war front neared the village of Paravka. Therefore, when the troops occupied the village, Lyeva and I were able to go back to our home village on foot. During the nights, we asked to stay in villages. After four days, we reached a station where the trains were running again. We rode on open platforms with the wounded, who were infested with lice. That is how we reached the Pyatihatki station, where Lyova and I separated. He continued to Dnepropetrovsk, and since trains didn't go to Apostolovo, I traveled on foot. I rode from there by tightly holding on to a tank car. The train traveled slowly, since the railroads were just restored. The constant rocking made me drowsy, and I even fell asleep a few times. The tank was next to the engine and after glancing at me, the driver asked the other travelers to keep an eye on me, so I wouldn't break free and end up under the train.

Even here, the Lord kept me safe.

Thus, I reached the city of Nikopol, where I met my fellow villagers and relatives, who informed me that my father perished at the front. This was difficult to hear. I took the freight train to the city of Marhanets and thanked God that I have almost reached my home. Just after the city, I stopped by at Aunt Darya's, my mother's sister, and she told me that mother was recently with her. Tired from the journey, I changed my clothes, rested, and continued walking to the village of Il'inka where my oldest sister worked as a teacher. She told me that our mother just left to go home.

Home Again

" but time and chance happen to them all." Eccl. 9;11

"How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Rom. 11:33

Surely the times and the chances are in the hands of the Lord. Finally, I am home. How much joy is there to meet the loved ones! My mom and sisters were there to meet me. And again, as always, I thanked my God for His protection and care and surrounded my future life into His hands. The meeting was overshadowed by the awareness that his father had died at the war and that he would never be with us. The Germans hijacked our cow, our milkwinner, and without the cow it was hard. Mom at that time worked on a collective farm. On Sundays, she and I attended church meetings, and again and again thanked God for the fact that, despite all the life difficulties, endured by me, He brought me to this place, to our home. When I became registered in the village council, my sister Maria's friend, Katya Valyaybaba was the secretary there. She registered me with a different year of birth - 1927. I objected, but to my prejudice, she just pushed me out of the room and said: "Leave! I am responsible for this." And as it turned out that it was not by chance, but by the will of the Most High. Thanks to Katya's trick, I did not fall under the draft age.

Thus, God, through the sister's sister Katya, saved me from being called up for war.

In summer, I worked on a collective farm until the end of August, and in early September, my sister Nadia came from Zaporozhye, where she studied at teacher training courses and reported that the application process had begun at the school of pharmacists. I went with her and applied to this pharmaceutical school, based on the 7 years of secondary school education. The first exam was in mathematics. And for 3 years of my wanderings around the world, I forgot a lot. But the Lord, on whom I have always relied, has provided everything here. I met with my cousin Kolya, the son of my mother's brother, Kuzma, who also took exams here.

He helped me revise the mathematics, and at that time in connection with the war, the requirements were not very high. The Russian language exam and the constitution exam (there was such a subject in schools), I passed well. I won the competition, but my brother did not. I had a benefit – the certificate that my father died at the war. And his father was repressed and died in the camps. At that time, the children of the “enemies of the people” were biased and limited in many ways. Kolya had a sore heart, apparently from worries about his father, and he wanted to study and work in a pharmacy in order to competently maintain his health and the health of others. Sick people, such as Kolya, through their misfortune, especially feel the pain of others. We, as his friends, turned to the school director with a big request for Kolya, he went to meet us and accepted his brother to study.

Kolya, like me, was also a believer (God supports His own), and together we attended the church meetings. We had to study for 3 years so that we could work in a pharmacy. Classes were held in the evenings - 2-3 lentas. A lenta was a 1.5 hour lesson. Kolya and I rented an apartment from believers, and so to get to the school, we had to walk far, and then still take the tram. There were a lot of girls in the class, and not many guys. The other guys were soon taken to a military school and Kolya and I remained, just two guys in the group. There was a war, the city was defeated, and we were taken several times to restore the Zaporizhzhya Dam. We received a small scholarship, and on the cards that were given to us, we received 400 grams of bread per day. Of course, it was financially difficult, but we trusted in the Lord and knew that we could overcome difficulties and they would pass. We visited the house of worship in Zaporozhye in the southern village near the southern station, where we had many friends. Among friends were students of Borya and Tolya, who studied at the metallurgical college. Kolya wrote the biblical texts well, and I recited poems. I tried to sing in the choir, but there you need to know the notes, and I had difficult relationships with them. So I left the choir. Our friends Borya and Tolya, as believers, were greatly oppressed, and they were forced to leave to study in Lviv.

In the spring, Kolya and I moved to another apartment in the city center, next to a tram stop and city ticket offices. Because of this, the apartment was constantly noisy, but over time we got used to it. Our church friends often came to us at this time and we had friendly Christian fellowships. There was coal stove heating the house, but there wasn't enough coal, so my friend and I went to a landfill and sifted through someone's charcoal burned out by people, they called him a “zhuzhalka”, so we got half-burned

coal suitable for heating. This half-coal saved us from the cold. Often, at school, and even at home, there was no light, and we had to read and do homework using the oil lamp “koptilka”. This is such a primitive lighting device, consisting of a wick and kerosene or oil. The wick was saturated with fuel, and when set on fire, it illuminated our books and notebooks.

At the end of the first course, in 1945, on the day of the Trinity, I was baptized in the Gulf of the Dnieper. There were more than 20 people baptized that day. Pastor Golovachev was performing the baptism. It was a great event in my life, and I was very glad that I joined the Church of Jesus Christ. For the first time then I participated in the commandment of Christ - the Lord's Supper. In general, I rejoiced in all communication with the children of God. "To the saints ... and to your wondrous ones - all my desire for them." (Psalm 15: 3).

The Word of God is beautiful in that, no matter how much you read it, it always opens from a new perspective, always something new. One of the parables about the seed thrown into different soil allowed me to think about my life: what is my soil? Is it good? Do not be tempted by those unnecessary temptations with which our everyday life is abundantly strewn, I thought to myself. You need to work hard on your soul in order to strengthen it, so that there is a good fruit.

My favorite church song was:

“To labor, I’m called to the earth

To fight with your flesh and the evil

Hostile to everything sinful

And to the life, in love with the enemy.

Fight every idol

Without looking at timid friends

Be a witness in front of the world

Not being afraid of people's judgment.”

Kolya, my brother, because of his illness, didn’t take exams. He was transferred from course to course just based on his accomplishments. The end of this war, which forced so much trouble, grief, tears and deaths to our land, finally brought untold joy to compatriots and hope that finally we will

live well. It was only overshadowed by the fact that many mutilated people were returning from the war.

Many preachers and choir singers returned, because the church was encouraged very much. It was the post-war time, a difficult one. Once I went to the bank of the Dnieper with notes to study. There were no books, and we wrote notes at lectures, then we worked them out in detail. Since on the shore, I decided to bathe at the same time. I put my clothes and notes in a basket. While swimming, the basket disappeared. The guys were swimming nearby, and we started talking about clothes with notes, then about God. The conversation was held with interest, and there were many questions. They promised to find the one who stole the clothes. I got home in my underpants. It is good that believers lived nearby and gave me clothes. On the third, last, course, Kolya became seriously ill, went home, and, in February 1947, he died. The sorrow filled my heart. We were together for a long time and became close. This year was difficult due to the lack of food. We were hungry. In order to somehow live, I had to go to Melitopol, it was on the shores of the Sea of Azov, where I bought sprat fish and sold it in our market. The proceeds made it possible to exist somehow. I ate constantly soup with sprats, the body did not tolerate such food well, so I began to swell, and the body was covered with boils. The Lord helped to survive this difficult time also.

The Work

In July 1947, I graduated from a pharmaceutical school and received the specialty of assistant pharmacist. I got a job referral to the Dnepropetrovsk pharmacy. From there they sent me to the village of Yuryevka. I worked as an assistant pharmacist, prepared medicines and dispensed according to the prescriptions. I lived in an apartment near a pharmacy, with older people. The landlady baked bread for the collective farm, and her husband guarded the collective farm's field, where watermelons were grown. After the hunger, the appetite was good and thanks to the hostess, I quickly recovered.

Three kilometers from us, in the village of Pearl, there were believers, which I visited. One of the families of believers had an apiary with bees. After the war, not all fields were cultivated, and there was a lot of herbs, so the honey collection was good. Thanks to all these friends of mine, I recovered so well in three months that when I arrived home they did not recognize me. And sister Nadia, joking, took me by the cheeks and asked: "Kostya, is that you?" In Yuryevka, where I lived, there were no believers, and therefore I had to go to Pavlograd (the church meeting location was far from the train station), and more often to Lozovaya station, where the meeting was near the station and where I had many friends. But there was a policy of persecuting Christians in the country - we were humiliated and mocked. The pharmacy manager found out that I was a believer and she began to be cautious with me. She tried, especially with strangers, to humiliate me in every way, to emphasize how retarded I was. When an inspector came to us from the county with the inspection and found out about all this, he advised me to transfer to work in another pharmacy. The Lord gave me strength to endure humiliation also in this case. Some friends asked where I got the patience, which forge I go to forge it for, that I have such a strength to endure bullying. I joked that every morning and evening I went to the forge (I prayed at home), where the strength and firmness forged. I worked in this pharmacy for a whole year and quit. And here, at the old place of work, a summons to the army came to my name. But I was already discharged. Therefore, there was a scandal in the village council due to the fact that I was mistakenly discharged without the knowledge of the military registration and enlistment office.

Meanwhile, the pharmacy department sent me to work in the village of Golubovka, Pereshchepinsky district. At first I lived at the drugstore, but when I found out that there were believers in the village, I asked one believing old woman for a room. There were believers in the village of spiritfighting directions (not recognizing no baptism, not communion, but understanding this in a spiritual sense, as Molokans), therefore, to communicate with people who believed as I did, I went to other places for services: to Novomoskovsk, in Kulebovka, and in Pereshchepino (regional center). There in all those places were enough young people. We had conversations, I preached and we all worked together for the Lord. Often I had to walk for 18 km (12 miles) to get home from Pereshchepino at nighttime. During this period I corresponded with my old friends from Lozovays. In May 1950, the pharmacy department directed me to work as the head of pharmacy number 94 in the village of Alexandropol Novopokrovsky district, 90 km. from the city of Dnepropetrovsk. To get there I had to take the train from Dnepropetrovsk to the station Nezabudino, and then walk for 12 km. to the village. There was a district hospital, in which there was a pharmacy in which I was going to work. At the pharmacy there was a one-room apartment in which I lived. There was a lot of work. I needed to prepare medicines for the hospital, dispense them to prescriptions for patients, write reports, write out and deliver orders from the warehouse. At that time, there were no tablets and it was necessary to pack the powders in paper bags. I had to work until late, sometimes until late at night. But soon in the village they learned that I was a believer. There was a lot of surprise and questions, as such, a competent person, and a praying mantis. I wanted to find believers somewhere nearby. I asked friends. I learned that 12 km. from our village, there is a church community in the village of Aleksandro-Sofievka, and a little further, in the village of Krinichevatoye there was a larger church community than in Aleksandro-Sofievka. On Sunday I went to the long-awaited meeting and was very glad to communicate with friends and brothers in spirit.

This one also disappeared...

"if the LORD had not been on our side when people attacked us, they would have swallowed us alive when their anger flared against us;" Ps 124:2-3

In our country always it was not easy to live for believers. We suffered all sorts of persecution, ridicule, and mockery from the authorities and from the community. We have always been biased, oppressed in everything. But we endured. We were always ready for this. God helped us endure all kinds of humiliation. As King David said: "He will deliver you from the net of the catcher." (Psalm 91: 3). And that was so. Moreover, God not only protected us from our enemies, but also tamed them. I have said before how God protected us from adversity. An unbeliever would say: these are all coincidences. But we believers know that God has no accidents. Here are a few episodes. The communist party organization, in those days, however, as always, struggled in every way with ideological opponents, i.e. with us Christians. And in my one-room apartment in Alexandropol, I always had the Bible on my table. Once the communist party organizer came to me and, seeing the Bible, he began to criticize it in every way and threatened me. He promised that he would take me "for real." The threats were real, I knew that. He was chairman of the Selpo (Local FoodDistribution) and could harm me. But, as David said, God protects His faithful. The next inspection discovered financial violations in the chairman and was sentenced to several years of prison. And I continued to work. He simply disappeared from my life path. In 1953, 12 families of believing immigrants came to our village from Western Ukraine. We all went to the church meetings in Aleksandro-Sofievka walking for 12 km, but we often gathered in the houses of believers in our village. After the convicted party organizer, his place was taken by another, the same kind of man. He was also the chairman of the Food distribution store. This one also began to slander in every possible way. He invented all kinds of fables: that I can poison people, that I give the best medicine to believers, that Godpraying people in our village have no place, that I was an enemy. After the next audit, this chairman also was convinced in some violations. He was expelled from the Communist party, and this was equal to imprisonment. He immediately disappeared from our village. So another one disappeared.

Our hospital was there for several villages in the district and was considered a district hospital, accordingly. The head doctor of the hospital

was Jewish. Usually God's people, the Jews are wise people. And this Lady, apparently had some genetic abnormalities, because she hated people worshipping the God of her people. At every meeting of employees, she, in spite of all, in every possible way vilified and humiliated me. She just hated me. There was no surgeon in our hospital during this period. They sent a new surgeon, but he wanted to become a head doctor. The Soviet system was built in such way, that if you wanted to occupy someone else's position, it was enough to write a slander or anonymous letter on that person, and even more so some incriminating evidence. Immediately they will start a criminal case against that person. The surgeon collected all kinds of accusations against the head doctor: that she takes bribes, that she has financial frauds, patronizes her favorites, and much more. At that time, the Jewish doctors were suspicious in the country. There was even the sensational "doctors' case", as a result of which many were repressed. My head doctor detractor ended up in a mental hospital, and the surgeon became a head doctor.

And this enemy disappeared. The new head doctor initially treated me well. However, he was instructed to re-educate and free me from views alien to the communist understanding. For this he was promised that he would be accepted into the communist party. Being a member of a party meant that you could enjoy all the benefits. Since he was in the occupied territories during the war, and this was a crime, and therefore it was difficult to join the party, and he really wanted to - he took up my re-education. Like a mentally incomplete person, and he began to repeat the mistakes of his predecessors. He began to accuse me of all sins. In crowded places, he tried to humiliate, saying that I needed to have an operation in my head and to remove God from there. He forcibly poked cigarettes in my mouth and generally mocked me in every way. When he went on a vacation, a new young surgeon was sent from the district instead. He liked the village; the hospital and he began to prepare the ground for himself. According to the usual scheme at the time, he began to collect various dirt evidence on his predecessor. As a communist, he was able to do this easily. A friend also helped him - was the secretary of the district committee. As a result, my foe, the head physician, was deprived of the title of a doctor. His difficulties with my re-education ended.

Another one disappeared. Being a competent pharmacist, many nurses came to me for an advice. As a result of this collaboration, the gift of wisdom from God, many diseases were cured: eczema and others. The villagers said: if you want to really recover, it's better to go to a pharmacist

than to a doctor. Either the party conscience of the head doctor, or the desire to be in favor of those in power, or jealousy for a successful pharmacist, because he forbade nurses to turn with questions to me. He agitated them to join the party in order to be opponents to me. But when his persecution was too persistent and difficult to handle, God sent me relief. The head doctor and the communist party organizer had a conflict and they did not care about me. Once I stopped by at a pharmacy in the village of Novopokrovka (a district village or a district center), which was 16 km away from our village and talked with the manager there. She was a member of the party, and we were well acquainted at work. The head of the pharmacy told me that there was a meeting of the members of the district party committee at which the head of the district health department — our chief medical district head — spoke and the question was raised about me. He said that it was unacceptable in the midst of our friendly medical team to have a collaborator who believed in God: "He is with us like a thorn in the eye," the manager declared and promised to remove me from work. To which I answered to my colleague: "Without the will of God, nothing will happen." That was Thursday. When I returned home from the meeting on Sunday, I was informed that the head of the district health department crashed to death. He rode a motorcycle with a sidecar to the market, which was in our village; there was his daughter in the carriage. The stroller came off, and he lost control. The girl remained alive, and he left this earth for good, to give an account of his anti-divine activities.

This one also disappeared.

When we moved to Novoaleksandrovka in 1960, we were met unfriendly, even hostile. The neighbor of the adjacent land in every possible way reproached us and even broke the windows in our house. But soon he had gangrene, his leg was cut off and, in torment, he went to "his place".

Another one disappeared. Later, his widow believed in the Savior. The son of these neighbors, Nikolai, cruelly slandered us. Once, when relatives, relatives of my wife came to visit us, and we in our yard sang psalms playing the button accordion, he complained about us to the village council; several cars arrived with the police and forbade us to sing, saying that it was against the law. Nikolay watched what was happening at that time and scoffed above us. Soon, as he was drunk, he was hit by a car. The adversary departed forever to his father.

Another one disappeared.

These are only a few examples. We can endlessly talk about when we personally saw the protecting right hand of God.

“Praise be to the LORD, WHO has not let us be torn by their teeth. We have escaped like a bird from the fowler’s snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.” Ps 124:6-8

Olya's Family

Olga's Family Chapter from Autobiography Translated by Kateryna Koryaka Mar 5, 2020 In a year, after I had already worked in Aleksandropol Village at the permanent position to which I was referred by the Pharmacy Association, I got married to Olga Romanovna Polishuk on May 1 1951. She was born on April 13th, 1924 in the family of Roman Ivanovich and Vasilisa Pavlovna. Her parents were born in 1905 in the village called Miroslavie of Baranovski county that in turn belonged to a larger province called Volyn. The province Volyn is the western part of Ukraine. Today the place where she was born belongs to Jitomir region, a little more toward east, though, which is right by Volyn district. Last names used to be given in the following manner: either based on the person's occupation, location where he lived, or based on his father's name, or on something similar like that. Vasilisa Pavlovna's maiden name was Zaleshuk because she was living behind the forest ("za" means "behind" and leshuk" means forest) and Roman Ivanovich's last name was Polishuk because he was living in front of the forest ("po" means "in front" and "leshuk" means forest). Roman and Vasilisa got married in 1922. In that region, families were huge and their socio-economic circumstances were such that there was usually a shortage of land for all the growing families. Moreover, soil was quite sandy which resulted in usually small yields of agricultural crops. In 1928, Roman and Vasilisa were introduced to the opportunity to move to Kharkov Region (eastern Ukraine) by their friends. By that time, they had four small children: Andrey-born in 1923, Olga-born in 1924, Sergei-born in 1926, Maria-born in 1928. They agreed and a huge group of Western Ukrainians totaling of about twenty young families moved on a cargo train together with their belongings to the Eastern Ukraine. They came to Panutino train Station, close to Lozovaia train Station; Lozovaia is little bigger one in Kharkov region. This group got a huge land to cultivate and to live on by the Soviet Government. Their land was in the open field, twenty km from Lozovaia train Station. The winter was approaching with snow and freezing temperature. The Western Ukrainian group together quickly had built homes and barns needed for agricultural storage. Soon, it looked like a village that had thriving community. The village was named Volynski that stands for Volyn, their homeland and that truly captured the essence of their endeavors. In the closest to them Village, called Kopani, there were Christian Baptists that had gatherings, so Roman and Vasilisa went there sometimes. Volynski was 6 km away to the closest train stop. Observing their new life, observing the land, observing the new very fertile black soil,

Western Ukrainians were constantly comparing their Volyn life and their current life. After the rain, though, black soil becomes muddy, unlike something they saw before. To many families it served as an obstacle and they moved back to Volyn. The one that works deserves the food and the one that puts an effort into his work becomes rich. It is the law of life. Westerners worked with a great effort, doing everything they could on their land. In the result, they became rich. But their hopes for better life with which they left their homeland were shattered. Two years into the new life, new political regime, headed by Joseph Stalin, came to their village and took the land, horses, cows in order to create a government-controlled village. The crop was also taken. The newly created village, now managed by the government became called Komintern and was officially one of the local sovhos (sovhos is the communist arrangement of public wealth, wealth like agricultural land, farm animals; the word sovhos is actually two words in one, "sovetskoe hoziaistvo", and means Soviet Wealth). The new name of their village was very pro-communistic as it is also composed of two words, "Kommunisticheski Internacional" which translates as Communistic International. Life became hard for Westerners. Everything needed to be given to the government and if something was taken for the family, such person was punished. A new law was popular, created by Stalin, that said that if one steals three spikes of wheat from the government field, that person goes to jail. But people needed to survive, and they tried to be clever in creating new ways to get food because longer people were working for themselves--all the crop had to be given to the government. Roman Ivanovich, hiding wheat, took chaff he stored in the attic and mixed it with wheat in order to somehow preserve some food for his family. Kids were trying to find dropped spikes of wheat along the road after the harvest. Families had small gardens by their homes, but that was not sufficient. In three km from their home, government had built new residential complex for workers, new government farm for animals, new management building as well as a elementary school for grades one through four. Grade five through seven, which was the last required education level, school was located at 8 km distance in the village called Novoivanovka. Olga and Aleksei went there by foot and Olga was a good student, even though she missed school very often due to the needed help to her parents at home. Often, on her way to school, she would lay by the pathway and rest to only wake up at the end of the school day. Polishuk family grew. Andrey was born-born in 1931, Vladimir-born in 1936, Zina-born in 1938, and Elena-born in 1941. Aleksei, after finishing 7th grade, went to Nursing School in nearby city Pavlograd. In 1941, he was taken to

serve in the war where we was at a military medical unit. In 1942 through 1943, in the Komintern village, a military front line was passing and, as a result, the village was controlled by a changing group, either Nazi or our troops. During the bombing, people were hiding in the cellars. At one time, when the village was controlled again by our troops, Roman Ivanovich was called to serve in the war. After the end of the war, young children, not knowing about the dangers of possibly explosive found metal pieces that they thought were toys, often became the victims of sudden explosions. Sergei liked to play at trenches where they could find interesting things. One time he found a shiny metal piece and was curious about it. He took it home and started to hit it at a table. Vladimir and Zina were standing and watching. Explosion happened and Sergey lost his fingers. Vladimir lost one eye. Zina had pieces of the bomb in her arm. Andrey while playing at his friend's home also lost two fingers as a result of a similar experience. Olga's parents became Christian baptists while living in Volyn. Olga's father loved to sing Christian hymns, learned them very quickly and also was able to teach others to sing them. Olga's mother also had a very nice soprano. At church, people often asked both to sing Volyn songs. They also sang a lot a home and this is why all the children loved music, loved to sing and and were involved in church choir. At the end of 1943, family received a note that Aleksei died in the war. Roman Ivanovich came from war in 1945 ad started to work in sovhoz. Olga first worked as a recorder--recorded the completed job of workers in the fields. Then she worked as an accountant in the sovhoz. Management was greatly pleased with Olga's performed job as she organized filing system and documents, was filling out accounting forms proficiently and made accounting reports on time. Every Sunday, Olga went to church and was judged for the fact that she went to church and as a young lady did not want to be a part of Komsomol. Komsomol is a word that is made up of three words: Kommunisticheski Souz Molodezhi which means Union of Communistic Youth. One day, while Olga was performing her job duties, partorg along with few other people of some higher administrative position people from the region in order to sway Olga from Christian beliefs as they were atheists. Partorg is a word composed of two words: partini organizator which means party agitator. They had a serious conversation with Olga. Part of that conversation was that they suggested that she gets enrolled into University and stops being a Christian. Moreover, they said that they would guarantee an admission to a University if she denounces her beliefs. Olga replied to them with reference to Scripture and said: "Satan offered Jesus the whole world if Jesus bowed to him. I will not compromise my inner Christian convictions." Soon, she

was fired from not only from accounting but also from working at sovhoz. In search for job, she came to Lozova train Station. She was looking for an accounting position. Her first stop was at Mashino-traktornaia stansia (MTS), a government company that had to do with Machinery like Tractors and similar. She got her position, but her old partorg found out about her new position and she was fired. Then she went to baking factory as an accounting assistant. Her manager was a drunkard and because of it eventually he was fired. Olga now became the main accountant. Director valued Olga for her moral standards, for her proficiency doing the job, for her conservatism even though he clearly knew that she was, unlike the most, a Christian. The director had a high military rank and was not afraid to protect Olga from her enemies and from attacks of her old partorg that tried to reach her everywhere. The director even himself often reminded Olga to go to church gatherings according to the set schedule that he memorized. Olga lived at the old couple's house at this time and was there until her wedding.

My Family

I married Olya, as she matched to what was written: "A woman who fears the Lord is worthy of praise." (Pr. 31:30). The wedding took place in the church of Lozova May 1, 1951. At the celebration, my mom and sister Zoya were with me. Right after the wedding, Olya and I went by train to my home in Alexandropol. Pharmacy, during my absence was closed, and people needed to dispense drugs, even though the pharmacist has such a significant event in life. At first, we lived in a room at the pharmacy, and then we moved to the house of a veterinarian, who at that time lived in another place. When friends came to us, we sang hymns, and we were asked to evict from there, since we, according to their understanding, violated the rules of the Soviet hostel. We rented an apartment on the edge of the village. In 1952, our first-born Petya was born. Luba was also born there. In 1954, we bought a not very expensive house in the center of the village, which required a large remodeling. Believers from the village of Alexandropol, Maslyuk Arseniy and Maksimchuk Volodya, worked as joiners on the collective farm and helped us with the renovation of the house. They changed the roof, made new windows and generally renovated our house. In the renovated house Nadia was born. I didn't have to walk far to work, as the pharmacy moved from the hospital to the building of the former store, one house from us. We started a little farm, brought a cow, pigs, chickens. Dug up our own well. We also had our own small garden and vegetable garden. Olya worked at the pharmacy first as a packer, then at night as a security guard at a school. But to make it easier for Olya, it was me who was on duty at night at school.

Then, Vera, Tolya and Nina were born in this house. In 1953, 12 families of believers, immigrants from western Ukraine came to our village. We made many close friends with whom we gathered for fellowship and prayer. On Sundays we traveled 12 km. to a meeting in Alexandro-Sofiyivka. Once, when we got together to fellowship at Evdokim Prikhodkos, a local policeman and a combatant (police assistant) came to us. They began to accuse us of violating the law, that we did not have the right to gather in private homes. They searched: they took the Bible, a hymnal book and other spiritual literature. All participants in the meeting were reported to the protocol and ordered the next day to be present in the district executive committee. The district executive committee was 16 km away. We were in the district executive committee already in the morning, but only in the evening they called us to talk. We were charged with the fact that, without

their permission, we are getting together to pray. As a result, we were banned from getting together, and control over us was entrusted to our neighbors.

A new pharmacy manager was sent from the regional pharmacy department, and I was appointed to be his deputy. Vladimir Batyuzhenko, new head, oversaw the construction of a new pharmacy in Dnepropetrovsk, so we visited our pharmacy only 2-3 days a week. He was kind to us and advised us to move closer to the city so that the children would not stay to live and work on the collective farm. Collective farmers at that time did not have passports and, therefore, could not leave the collective farm and generally move around the country. These were serfs. People tried all kinds of tricks to break out of the collective farm, but few succeeded. The guys went into the army and did not return. The girls tried to leave to study in the city and stay there or marry the city guy. Therefore, Vladimir knew what he was talking about when he advised me to move closer to the city. In 1960, I was again transferred to the head of the pharmacy since the construction of the city pharmacy was over, and Vladimir went there to work as a manager. I often visited Dnepropetrovsk: I went there for goods for our pharmacy, took reports to the pharmacy department, etc. I tried to use every trip to attend church meetings in the city. There I met Brother Evdokim Melnyk, from the village of Novoaleksandrovka, who informed me that a house for sale in their village and a pharmacy worker is required. I decided to take a look. Evdokim and I went there, met with the owner of the house for sale and went by train to our house to negotiate a price. We agreed to buy this small house, on the street. Surskaya No. 159, in the village of Novoaleksandrovka, Solonyansky district, and, in the summer of 1961, with all the households, moved to a new place of residence. At the end of our garden there was a river Sura, which flowed into the Dnieper. The water was clean, and people could swim there. In the winter, I walked the cow from Aleksandropol to a new place of residence. I stopped to spend the nights on collective farms asking the watchmen for permission. We were 9km from the city of Dnepropetrovsk using the highway. The village was large. On the other hand it was 5-6 km walk to the city tram. At the end of the village, near the cemetery, on the railway there was a train stop "Razyezd No. 217", where the working train stopped, and we traveled mainly to the city by train, one stop, to the Razyezd Vstrechny, which was near the district of Korea and preceded the stop "Lotsmanka", which, in turn, was near the Lagerniy area. However, they did not want to let me go from my previous job, and they let me go much later than I expected. only

in April 1962, and therefore, a place in the pharmacy within Novo Alexandrovka was already taken. In addition, the neighbors in a new place met us with hostility. They intended to buy this house themselves, and we prevented them. It would seem fitting to be discouraged: the lack of work in a new place, the hostility of neighbors and other circumstances - everything was against us. But although we were discouraged, our hope was in God. We did not know the ways and plans of the Lord. Only much later did we understand why we met so much opposition in this village. God, in relation to us, had other plans.

In Dnepropetrovsk, on the street of Stalingrad Heroes a new hospital #16 was opened. Now, already my friend, Vladimir Batyuzhenko, introduced me to the head the pharmacy of this hospital, Nina Petrovna. Upon learning that I was a believer, she gladly received me. The pharmacy served only this large hospital, and 10 people worked in it. I was hired by the personnel department of the hospital since the pharmacy was subordinate to the head doctor of the hospital. I was registered as a pharmacy deputy manager, but when they found out that I was a believer, I was transferred to the post of defector. Upon learning that I was a believer, the employees were suspicious around me, especially the head doctor and the communist party representative. But six months later, the head doctor was transferred to another hospital, and instead a new chief doctor came: Nikolai Belov. When he found out that a Godpraying man was working in his pharmacy, he called me up for a five-minute meeting, which was held every morning, and in front of all greeted me. He shook my hand and said: "This is Konstantin Davidovich. If everyone were like him, I would never lose my temper and curse. This is a true person. When I worked in Alexandropol, he came to our hospital two times in the summer to replace a surgeon who was on vacation, and often came to the pharmacy. We communicated well. After this five-minute meeting, the attitude of employees towards me has changed for the better. All these events once again convinced us all that God has His own ways and plans, even better for us than we planned. He has no accidents. Everything was happening according to His will.

"God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." (1 Cor. 10:13)

At home, we got a farm. We had 2 cows, pigs, hens. Planted a lot of currants, apple trees, grapes. We built a barn and a compartment for cows and pigs. Near the house there were 0,5 acre of the garden, and since we had many children, they also added another 0,5 acre. The house was far from the main road. At this place, God gave us everything and even more that we had in Alexandropol. Often we were visited by Evdokim Melnik, on whose advice we bought this house. Evdokim Prikhodko with a family came to live in our village from Alexandropol. At the end of the 70s, not far from us, across the river, brother Stepan with his wife Taisiya Kalashnikovs moved and settled here to live from Siberia. At one time, it seems, they were sent to Siberia from western Ukraine. We were very friendly with them. Stepan helped us to build a summer kitchen (temporary house) above the cellar and near the vegetable pit, and he built a good house for himself at the end of the village. He worked as a blacksmith on the collective farm and witnessed about Christ to all he could. He later traveled by train to serve in the church of st. Chaplino and was ordained there to be a pastor.

.Our son Petya loved to jump from a high bridge into the river. Once he unsuccessfully jumped and was injured. He spent a long time in the hospital, so at school he fell behind his class. Nadia and Lyuba went to the same class, and now they were joined by Petya. Now the three of them were in the same class, so no one offended the girls at school. On Sundays, we went to church meeting in the city. There, the children gathered at someone's house and conducted Sunday school.

In Novoaleksandrovka we got three more children: Larisa - 1963, Lilya - 1966 and David - 1969. We all at home, called him Dadik. People made fun of us: They asked: Where you all will live, what will you eat?. And we laughed it off: "God gave a mouth, and he will give a piece of bread. The earth is big, there's enough room for everyone." Glory to God, we never went hungry and all children grew up healthy. Gradually expanded the house and outbuildings, added a kitchen, a bath, bricked the house, made a central heating in 1969.

For a cow, we collected a chaff from the mill, and all this was great support for our farm. Along the railway there was a small beam and in it we mowed grass on hay. And we also brought hay from my sister Nadya from the village of Preobrazhenka in the Tomakovsky District, which we took at the end of her garden. All of us were loaded with the housework, so there was no need to get bored. In the 80s, buses began to commute to our village

and it became easier to get to the city. After the church meetings, I often walked from the tram home. Once, from under the bridge, several people came out to meet me, stood there and left. Later they told my son Petya that they had been instructed to do away with me, but they were drunk and did not recognize me. The Lord blinded their eyes, and was my Guardian. God also helped me with illnesses. In 1971, I got a stomach ulcer, they put me in the treatment department and offered to have a surgery. But at this time, many prayed about me both at home and in the church, and the Lord sent healing without the surgery. Once, after an illness, still being weak, I was getting to work in the back of a truck, since there was no bus and I was late. On a bump, the truck shook violently, I fell to the floor and could not get up. They brought me to the hospital, an x-ray showed a displacement of the vertebrae, and I could not walk. They made a stretch under the arms and tied a load to my legs, and I lay motionless for a week. The guts stopped working, and I was already preparing for the transition to a better world, but the Lord, by his great mercy, still left me here. My family still needed me. Brother Dmitry Kachan drove me by his car to the city of Kobelyaki, Poltava region, where the traumatologist Kasyan worked. It was a unique doctor, to whom the manual patients came for treatment from all over the Soviet Union. He looked at my spine, took me by the arms and shook me violently. The pain was terrible! I screamed in pain, but the vertebrae fell into place, the pain disappeared, it became easier, and I recovered. When I was in the hospital, several other people were lying in the room with me. Some joked, others chuckled at me: "Why are you sick? You are a believer. Why did your God commit such an injustice?" To which I replied: "I ask God questions not why, but for what? If I did not go to the hospital, to you, you would not hear about God. And when your time comes, so that you do not reproach God for not knowing about Him. To testify to you, I am here." "Why does God punish innocent children?" I replied: "Do you fight rodents and destroy only adult mice? Or small too? And they, poor things, are surprised: haven't they even stolen a grain for us? God himself decides whom to leave, whom to take. In addition, in illness, more time to think about yourself, about life. Am I living right?"

Our family regularly attended the church meetings in the central church at ul. Dimitrova 19. The senior pastor in the church was Schukin Emelian Makarovich. The choir director was Nikolai Matveyevich Rud. Since 1963, I preached in the church, and when I stayed overnight, I often stayed with Ivan Fedotovitch Garkusha.

* * *

Our brotherhood had its center in the capital, in Moscow, The union of Evangelical Christians Baptists. It had its own publishing: The Brother's Messenger. However, the state policy was aimed at eradicating religion. Both the government and ordinary fellow citizens were biased towards Christians and oppressed in every way. In factories, educational institutions, in all spheres of activity of citizens of the country, anti-religious educational work and discrimination against believers took place. As a result of the great pressure of the party bodies on our All-Union Center, in 1959, the leadership sent an instructional letter to the local churches of the country, in which was required from elders to coordinate all church events with the officer for religious affairs under the executive committee. This included: elders were required - to submit to the executive committee lists of members of the church; take permission from an authorized person for baptism; it was forbidden to do baptism to a believer under the age of 21; required to coordinate wedding ceremonies; not allowed to have Sunday schools, not allowed to have Bible studies; and much more. But a special outrage was caused by the ban for children on visiting of the worship service. At the entrance to the church, zealous believing sisters who were jealously obeying the pastors order and did not allow the children. That, and everything else, was a direct and gross violation of the Gospel commandments. The result of the distribution of this "instructional letter" to the local churches was that in 1961 part of the Churches split off from the Baptist Union. The Union of Churches was formed, which united all those who didn't obey. They did not register their churches with the authorities, did not fulfill all the provisions and requirements of the state, which were contrary to the Gospel, and lived according to the commandments of God. And today, despite the fact that already half a century has passed, this union still lives a separate life, and unification is unlikely to happen, despite the fact that there are no differences in the confession of the faith and commandments of Christ.

* * *

I was friends with "the separated" (as they were now called), with their youth. Especially with Misha Kharchuk, Peter Vandyuk, etc. Once I was called from work to the district health department and there a worker of the State Security (KGB) came to meet with me. After asking about my work, the family, he invited to cooperation with him in search for enemies among believers. I replied that this was not my calling and I did not see enemies among believers. After that, he met with me several times with his proposal, but I did not agree and then he threatened me: "We will make sure that all the brothers in your church turn away from you. We know how to do this, we do not need to be taught. " I answered him: "The main thing is that God does not turn away from me." I was very unhappy about these meetings with him. In 1966, I was ordained to be a deacon. I was ordained by brother Iotko Mikhail Leontyevich. In October 1966 the community nominated me as a delegate to our brotherhood congress, which took place in Moscow. After the congress, I went to the city of Leningrad, where I met with my friend of youth, cousin Stepa Vitko. He lived there at that time. We went to the church meeting, and afterwards he showed me the sights of the city.

"If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide.

But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend" Ps 55:12-13

Since the separated Baptists were not registered, the authorities persecuted them, so they gathered secretly at their homes. Every time in a new place. And they informed everyone where to meet, right before the service. Several times I went to their meeting with Misha Kharchuk, who was supposed to tell me where the next service would be, but he did not come to our meeting. As I later found out, he was wary of me, because there was a rumor that Kostya was cooperating with the KGB. This was a common occurrence among believers at that time, and people were afraid of each other. Then I remembered the KGB guy who threatened me that everyone would turn their back on me. Yes, it was their method of work, they did not disdain anything: they pour mud on you, and it's your job to wash yourself off. The slander is a hard one to wash off. It is hard to restore your good name after someone else's vile lies. In that period was extremely

difficult for me. I got a stomach ulcer in the beginning in 1971. Not far from the 16th hospital, where I was staying, Maria Sobko lived. Previously, they lived with their sister Marfusha in the village Sadovod, not far from Alexandropol, and we often visited them and believers in that area, and in the neighboring village of Loshkarevka. She was already married, and they had two children. Her husband was an unbeliever, so he considered it possible to cheat on Mary with a tenant who lived with them. Believers from the village of Sadovod often visited Mary. Believers from Loshkarevka, learning about my illness, began to bring food to me through Mary. Ivan was jealous of Mary. Once Ivan comes to the service and right from the doorway declares: "Kostya lives with my Maria!" My wife Olya explains that this is a vile slander, and I, even in my thoughts, did not commit such a grave sin. The older brothers did not decide to deal with this slander.

There was an explicit indication of the KGB people work. And then I once again remembered the words: "And your brothers will turn their backs on you." It's hard, very hard to bear a grudge from those you love, who you consider your brothers, who believed the slander. But the Lord, after temptation, gives relief. (1Peter 1: 6)

Tsuman Nikolai Gerasimovich became the senior pastor for the region and our church. At this time, Ivan Sobko filed for divorce with Mary, and the main argument was that Mary belonged to a sect herself and lured the children into the sect. Treason was not even mentioned. Tsuman understood, figured out that the accusation of treason was a slander, and I began to serve in the church again. "Throw your cares upon the Lord, and He will support you." (Psalm 55:23) Only the Lord can disperse the clouds above your head. And in this difficult, difficult situation for me, I relied only on Him.

Another one of many cases. Petya was presented with the book "Advice for Teachers and Parents". Being sure that only her son would read it, my wife, having read only the first sheet, wrote her comments in her beautiful handwriting over each line. Where it was written: "Ilyich's (Lenin's) light shines for us," Olya wrote: "God gave the Sun to shine for the inhabitants of the whole earth." Where it was written how to destroy religion, she wrote: "You yourself will perish like red mice," etc. Petya, of course, did not read the book - what a young guy was interested to read about the upbringing of the younger generations - and gave it to his teacher for birthday, wanting to make her pleasant. He made it "pleasant". The teacher, after reading the comments, took the book to the KGB. It took them long to understand who

commented. My handwriting was not like that. Then, after all, they found out that it was written by Olya. The kgb guy, showing me this book, said: "You see, it looks like she will go to prison for seven years. So you have to work with us. " We were worried because the threat was real, but with God's help, the "book business" was suspended.

The Lord always sent us His help and protection, wisdom and ability to serve in the church

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The life went on. At work in the pharmacy, the new head was Lyubov Fedorovna Kolos. The hospital pharmacy was initially on the 5th floor, but then it was transferred to the first floor with a large basement. At this time, I worked at one and a half rate, as one salary was not enough, and the family that big. The children grew up. After graduating from the eight-year school, Petya and Lyuba studied programming at the welding college. Nadia first worked in the laboratory at the 16th hospital, and later at the Press factory. After graduating from eight classes, Nina wanted to go to a medical school, a pharmacy department, and study as a pharmacist, but she was not accepted because she was not a Komsomol member. She learned to be a seamstress. Tolik studied as a repairman for refrigeration units. Vera graduated from the railway medical school and was sent to work in the Saratov region. The teachers from her school came home to us, with the aim of re-educating their daughter, but after talking with his wife Olya, they began to treat Vera better. Larisa, after finishing school, worked as a nurse in the surgical department of the hospital and at the same time studied at the medical school as a nurse. Lily graduated from a metallurgical college. David graduated from 8th grade and then took three classes at the evening school. There were, of course, certain difficulties in life, but God saved us from misfortunes and, as they say, we did not know cold and hunger. Thank God, the children you grew up, everyone has their own families, and most importantly - everyone knows God.

* * *

Olya, like her mother and brother Sergey, had diabetes, but she did not pay attention to it. Someone from the "well-wishers" gave her advice on treating diabetes with sugar. She did so and as a result of which, she was almost blinded, moreover, this "treatment" of-negatively affected the whole body. Nadia and Vera, and then Anatoly lived in Dnepropetrovsk, on the street. Volodarskogo 66. There lived a lonely old woman in need of qualified care.

Children looked after her to the end; before her death, the hostess signed over the house to them. At the end of 1987, I retired. I had a pension - 130rub. The largest pension at that time was 132 p., not considering those who worked in hot shops. In the middle of 1989, Olya moved to live with her children on Volodarskogo - there were the better living conditions. There was a big farm at home: garden and field, there was a cow and other animals. It was necessary to watch after. But on Sunday I stopped by for Olya, and we went to the church meetings together. In February 1990, Anatoly Koryaka came to the village and said that mom is no longer with us. The news was so terrible and unexpected that I did not believe right away, because the day before I was at her place and nothing similar was expected. I did not even realize that this was our last meeting. Olya was buried in the city cemetery, near the Novoalexandrovka village. Her brothers and sisters came to the funeral, her last journey. In April, we finished planting in the garden. There is always a lot of housework in the village. One Sunday, as usual, I went to the city to church. After the service I went to the children on the street. Volodarsky 66. This is not far from the house of worship. Suddenly I felt sick, I lost consciousness. An ambulance was called, and it drove me to the hospital, which had the same name - "Emergency hospital." They discovered gastric bleeding from a stomach ulcer. The operation was postponed. I stayed there for two weeks. Then another month in another hospital on the left bank of the Dnieper. Later I was in a sanatorium near Kiev. By the grace of God, I slowly began to recover.

At home, as usual, there is still a lot of work: to prepare livestock feed for the winter, ongoing work in the garden and home, etc. At the end of the year, I again felt ill with my stomach. I needed to go to the hospital again, and at home the farm required man's labor. In the summer, Nadia and her children stayed in the village, but during the school year they were at school. It was hard to get out of this situation.

* * *

All children had their own families. Petya and Lyuba had two children: Andrey and Julia. Luba and Lyonya in Kharkov had: Alik, Diana, Misha, Zhanna, Vera and Vova. Nadia and Anatoly lived in Dnepropetrovsk and had nine children: Dina, Kostya, Katya, Masha, Ilyusha, Andryusha, Valik, Anya and David. Nina and Petya have Lisa, Elya, Zhenya and son Daniel. Tolik and Natasha have a son, Stasik and Lera. Larisa and Yura had three sons: Roma, Stiopa, Dima and daughter Olga, who was born before Dima. Lily and Pavlik have four daughters: Natasha, Jennifer, Margarita, Danielle and Tima - the son. Vera and Victor took custody of their son Viktor Kachkov. David and his wife, Katya, have a daughter, Varvara. And there is Eva and Philip also. I always pray for all of them. ““ A man’s heart ponders his way, but the Lord governs his walk. ”(Prov. 16:19)

I asked the Lord to send me a helper to live together to the end of the earthly path. The Lord discerned Ekaterina Petrovna Sinyakova. She retired only a year ago. Her house on Skelevataya str in the area of Red Stone, Dnepropetrovsk, was demolished for a new building, and she was given a one-room apartment on Red Stone in a multi-storey building on the seventh floor. Katya was born on June 8, 1934 in the village of Kondrovka, Prokhorovsky District, Belgorod Region, Russia. In 1939 the family moved to live in Dnepropetrovsk. Father, Petr Sergeevich, and mother, Marfa Fedotovna, had eight children. Two died in Kondrovka. Remained: Vanya - 1923, Mitya - 1932, Katya - 1934 and Maria - 1937. Those born in Dnepropetrovsk: Nina - 1941. and Kolya - 1943 Her father died during the war in 1943. Kolya was then 4 months old. Their family had to go through a lot of difficulties. Her mother died at the beginning of 1957 and Katya, as the eldest, became the mistress in the House. Over time, the brothers got married, the sisters got married, nephews appeared, and Katya ... She had no time to think about her personal life. She needed to be a mother to her brothers and sisters, and grandmother for nephews.

We registered in the village council on January 24, 1991. Katya's Brother Dmitry Blessed and prayer over us, on Saturday, January 26, in the house on ul. Volodarskogo 66. All my sisters and children came to the celebration, except David and Lyuba. There were Katya brothers with wives and sisters with husbands. My health was getting better. Katya held me on diet for a

year, and I had to eat mostly the broth. Soon a prayer house was opened in the village. Stepan Danilovich Kalashnikov, who previously led the ministry in the regional center of Chaplino became the pastor. In this period many repented, and the church increased. Andryusha with Alla and our Petya joined the church. After 3 years, some changes occurred in our lives. Instead of a cow, we bought goats. They got so attached to Katya that they ran after her like dogs. Where she was, they run after her. We made major repairs in the house and transformed the yard. We planted a lot of flowers. From the road to the house, on both sides of the path large asters showed off. It was beautiful, and we always had a lot of guests.

* * *

Life in America

In November 1991, Lilya with Pavel, and Natasha, with Pavel's relatives, left to America, Sacramento, California. In 1995 Nina left with Petya and the children. Katya's sister, Nina, and her husband Tolik Shcherbina and her family left for America. And also Musya and Seva with their family left Zaporozhye left for Canada. Saying goodbye, we thought that we would never see them again. Parting with loved ones is always sad. At the end of 1995, me and my son Tolik, we came to visit our loved ones in Sacramento. We liked the climate here. The climate is subtropical, where there is no winter. By this time, David and Sasha lived here. Lilya made a refugee program for religious believers request for me with my wife and son Peter and grandson Andrei. For the first six months of 1996, they considered the request, and in the middle of the year we received an invitation for an interview. There was a lot of excitement and concern and on December 13, 1996, we left for Sacramento. Here, in Sacramento, we - I with Katya, Andrey, and Alla with Nastya, arrived on December 14, 1996. Petya and his family could not go with us. This was due to the Petya's marriage and the birth of Bogdan. We were solemnly greeted by the children, grandchildren, all friends from Dnepropetrovsk, pastor Karpets. At first, Katya and I lived in apartments in which Nina and Petya lived the next room, and then moved to other apartments. David gave Andrew a car, and he drove us to church meetings. First we got food stamps, and then I started to receive the age allowance. Katya was given the allowance later. At the end of 1999 we moved to apartments on the street Hamlock 5326 apt. 206. We liked it here: quite a few russianspeaking people, and many know each other. On Fridays, we believing tenants gathered in the office for prayer. In the evenings, when the coolness fell to the ground, gathered together in backyard and sang favorite spiritual songs, glorifying the Lord. Later, in 1998, Petya and Luba arrived here in Sacramento, with Vitaly, the son of Lyuba, and Bogdan. 3 years after we came, in 1999 - Nadia and Tolya came with their family. Tolya received the allowance, and Nadia received a salary for the care of a sick Anechka. Later, Tolik arrived here with Natasha, Stasik and Lera. In the beginning we went to our homeland to visit relatives every 2-3 years. Then, as it happens, less often. And now, in general, health does not allow us to travel. Upon arrival in Sacramento, we visited the 2nd Slavic Church, then the 3rd Slavic Church, which is closer to our house, and then moved to the Russian-Ukrainian church on the street Madison, which is very close to our home. This is a small church where everyone knows each other well. Our pastor is Khanzhiev David

Petrovich. Since 2001 I visit the wellness center Altamediks for patients and the elderly. Time flies inexorably fast. Like one door entered, and went out into another. Not everyone is given such a fate, such an old age. Not everyone is given the opportunity to live up to such advanced years. But, most importantly, not how much to live, but how to live. How important it is to see and experience the helping hand of God in our life. "For you are my hope, Lord God, my hope is from my youth"(Psalm 71: 5). Nice to know that the Lord is my Shepherd (Psalm 23). How many mercies we have seen, but how many we did not notice! And now, when life may already have passed - in any case, "with a greater strength", the time limit is 80 years, which Moses spoke of is already long gone, the Lord gave- the opportunity to see my children together, the children of my children - 36 grandchildren, and 37 great-grandchildren, and even more than anyone sees in life - 2 great-great-grandchildren. The promise has been fulfilled: "You will see the sons of your sons" (Psalm 138: 6). I pray to God that my inheritance should live with the Lord, knowing Jesus and the wealth of the grace of the True God; so that they do not submit to the spirit of seduction, but walk in the light of the word of God, as written in Ps. 119: 105 "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and the light of my path. "

Instructions for My Descendants

(Translated by Daniel Panasenکو)

Everything that you have read has been written for you, my dear children. I have written about the past and what is now engraved into history forever, so that you can remember the people you are indebted to for your lives here on earth.

Now, I want to write about the future.

My future is you, my children, whom I love very much. I pray for all of you and desire for you all to be happy. Happiness, however, exists only in God. That is why I hope each of you makes the decision to commit your futures to God completely.

You are not indebted to me or your forbearers, but to your Creator. Although I cannot give it to you myself, I hope that all of you will experience everlasting abundance. But if you will walk with the Almighty, he will, through Christ Jesus, reward you with this abundance himself. Every passage from scripture that I will recite comes from the deepest part of my heart and has been tested throughout my life. I hope each of you will read the corresponding passages yourselves and embed them into your own lives. They will undoubtedly generate peace for the entirety of your time here on Earth.

First, I would like to underline one important thought:

God has designed humanity in such a way, that humans require intergenerational communication and cooperation. The elderly are blessed by God with wisdom, and the youth are blessed with energy and strength. There is little effect when each operates in isolation. Why do the elderly need wisdom? What can they do with it but pass it down to the younger generations? A youth is naturally without wisdom, and makes plenty of

mistakes throughout his life. Although he has strength, he has no place to get wisdom but from the older generations. Only in the cooperation between the wisdom of age and the strength of youth can there be any real productivity. That is why I am glad to share my life experiences, accumulated over many years, so that my young descendants can be successful in all their ways.

Throughout my entire life, the following words of Christ were a great encouragement for me;

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:11)

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

Think about these words. The Bible says, *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above”* (James 1:17). All of our abilities come from Him, and He will provide us with opportunities and resources if we praise Him more and more (Psalm 74:14). For Christians, all the best is still to come.

I often remember the proverb, *“If you want to be happy and abound, accept what’s happening around.”* I’ve learned to always thank God for everything, remembering Psalm 103: *“Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!”*

I also remember the strange sayings that the old ladies of Golubovka would recite;

“Those who pray, God will pay.

Those who yelp, God will help.

Those who request, will be blessed

With heaven's best."

But it's better to remember the words of Christ, *"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble"* (Matthew 6:34).

Christ is our Shepherd and the overseer of our souls (1 Peter 2:25). He is all-powerful, *"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy"* (Jude 1:24).

Praise God, for opening the eyes of our hearts to the wonderful grace that is in Christ Jesus. In him are everlasting treasures, in him is truth and eternal life!

I have briefly described what God has done for my soul. As it is written,

"We will not hide them from their children, telling the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." (Psalm 78:4-7)

I have not left an inheritance to my children and grandchildren, but I rejoice in the knowledge that my descendants know the one true God and Jesus Christ, who was sent to bring us eternal life. This is a much more valuable

inheritance. *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”* (John 17:3).

Through the death and resurrection of Christ, we are reborn to a lively hope.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-4).

May it please God for all of my descendants to be eternally with Christ. *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth”* (3 John 1:4). In John 14:6, Christ reveals that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and in John 17:17, that His word is truth.

Christ has been the pastor and guardian of my soul from my youth until the end of my life. God’s Word and His promises have always been my encouragement and comfort. *“...the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out”* (John 6:37).

“...for in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). How many promises God has made to us in the Bible! Trust in His word, *“For with God nothing will be impossible”* (Luke 1:37).

Do not disregard the riches of God’s goodness, humility, and patience. *“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”* (Romans 2:4). Submit yourself to the Son. *“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry...”* (Psalm 2:12).

Memorize Psalm 22 and may goodness and mercy follow you all the days of your life. Be thankful to God for all things. Notice how many unfortunate people in this world do not have the things you have. Heed God's word and live according to His will. Have fellowship with God's people. *"As for the saints who are on the earth, 'They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight' "* (Psalm 16:3). *"...not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer"* (Romans 12:11-12).

Cherish and take care of your relatives and loved ones;

"Bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2),

"[Do] not hide yourself from your own flesh..." (Isaiah 58:7).

"Pursue love" (1 Corinthians 14:1).

"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Romans 5:5).

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God..." (Ephesians 4:30).

Ask God for wisdom.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God (James 1:5).

Help one another and pray for one another. And, following our tradition, continue to gather every Christmas Day.

Redeem the time you have on Earth, because the end is near. *"Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ"* (2 Thessalonians 3:5). And may we meet once again at our eternal abode at the feet of Jesus.

*"The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you And give you peace."
(Numbers 6:24-26)*

The Apostle Paul was certain, and may God bless us with such certainty.
"He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

Until he takes us home to Himself,
Though we are weak, he is full of strength,
He has helped us to this place,
And He will help us until the end of our earthly journey!
Praise God!

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