

‘Unbelievable Revival’: God Is Moving in Power Around the World

A remarkable Christian revival is underway in a Russian-controlled part of Moldova, despite Moscow’s heavy hand. Very few foreign journalists are allowed in, but CBN News gained rare access to the Transnistria region.

Getting here is no easy feat. We began the 5,000-mile journey from the U.S. East Coast, stopping first in the tiny former Soviet republic of Moldova’s capital Chisinau. From there, we drove north along Ukraine’s southwestern border, where Moscow has recently stirred up political turmoil.

We made our way through several Russian checkpoints to Transnistria’s capital Tiraspol where a huge statue of Lenin still adorns the town square.

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The Lord put a burden on Yuriy Semenyuk’s heart to move his family to this volatile region.

“In my heart, I really love people, that is my passion to serve people. I love God and I wanted to do something for Him all my life. And after a while, God told me, ‘Yuriy, I need you in one place that name is Transnistria’,” the pastor of Church of Christ Savior tells us.

In 2000, Pastor Yuriy, his wife, and three children decided to move from their home country in neighboring Ukraine to Transnistria. The first seven years of ministry as a missionary family were not easy.

“I was targeted by some people from the government, policemen,

KGB and gangsters. The worst of course was from the gangsters because they tried to kill me, they tried to kidnap my children. Once I was kidnapped, but praise God, God let me escape," he recalls.

A home video from May 2000 shows Semenyuk's first foray into preaching. Despite ongoing threats, he continued to openly share the gospel, often taking his message to areas controlled by gangs. "Some of the gangsters became Christian, they became evangelical, their wives became evangelical, so they hated this, so that's why they tried to stop us," Semenyuk says.

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In 1990, Transnistria broke away from Moldova to establish its own government, currency and statehood. And while it's not recognized by the international community, the breakaway territory became economically, politically and militarily dependent on the Kremlin. Russia has about 2,000 troops stationed here.

Moscow's agents soon began harassing Pastor Semenyuk. But he was undeterred. "Each morning, I wake up I say to myself, 'Yuriy, you are still alive, and you have one more day to preach the gospel, one more day to do something for God's Kingdom'," he says.

From those humble, and at times nerve-wracking beginnings, Church of Christ Savior today is the largest congregation in Transnistria. "We have an unbelievable revival," he says. "We are still alive 24 years later on the mission field, we are still alive!"

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