



<p><i>The Belarusians: A People Seeking Hope</i> September 2006</p> <p>Part 06, Ch. 34 CRF Media Chronicles</p>	<p>Final: 08/10/13 Time: 25:22</p> <p>© 2006, 2013 CRF Media</p>
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Green = from original DVD ; black = new narrations

Carl: This could be a small city in mid-America with people going about their daily routine and, not far away, a farmer works his land preparing to plant winter wheat. In another field, the corn is nearing harvest. The tree-lined meandering streams are reminders of the Ozarks and the large round bales of hay ready for storing in the barn looks much like the hay harvest on our Missouri farm.

In the large cities like Minsk, factories are busy and the employees enjoy shopping at the nearby supermarket. Colleges and universities offer hope for the future.

The rural areas seem generations apart from the cities. Harvesting potatoes reminds me of my youth growing up on an Arkansas farm in the 1940's. Back then, we rode to town in a horse-drawn wagon. There was no money for a car.

Arline: Like America, evangelical churches abound in the cities and, on Sunday, the auditorium is filled with worshippers. The well-directed music is inspiring, often with tunes we could recognize but the words were in Russian.

Overlay: "It Is Well With My Soul"

Unlike America, the Communist government has blocked the organization of churches in the rural areas. All we found were a few clandestine Bible study groups.

Traveling around sharing a meal with our hosts, Don and Diane Combs, was a special time. Always, our ability to communicate with others was made possible with our translator, Sasha, closeby.

On-camera: Sasha

For us, Belarus is a country with friendly people, a welcoming atmosphere and surprise discoveries wherever we traveled. It seems God always has amazing "divine coincidences" awaiting us in every country we visit.

In Gomel, we were invited to attend and film a wedding. A wedding for Believers is real to them and to the church. Using both High-Definition camcorders, Carl and Don did a splendid job of capturing the lovely ceremony for this Christian couple. Later, after returning to the States, we made a special DVD of the wedding and mailed it to the Belarus church.

Another day in Gomel we went to an orphanage with no idea that arriving on this day were the Samaritan's Purse "Operation Christmas Child" boxes. This was September and they had been held up in customs for ten months!! What a joy it was to be

there and see the excitement of the kids! They were told to open the boxes in their rooms.

Carl: In Minsk, we were leaving the apartment one day and a large group of people came out of another door. To our astonishment, we were in the middle of an Orthodox funeral! With great care and respect, we were able to photograph amazing scenes.

One night in Minsk, our hosts took us to the circus. For the Belarusians, an evening out at the circus is a time to enjoy watching the highly skilled performers from Moscow; the acrobats on the high trapeze or the dance couple performing their breathtaking routines, ... and, of course, the trained dogs closely obeying their master's commands. Unknown to us, cameras were not allowed. An employee informed us of this AFTER we had already taken some awesome video!

Arline: Throughout our trip, gracious Christians hosted us in their homes for overnight stays as well as for delicious meals. We were accepted as a brother and sister in Christ as we interacted with these people in their churches and homes. This became a memorable time with many dear people and places. Sadly, the politics of the country make it impossible for us to return.

Our two weeks went quickly as we explored all six of the Oblasts of this small country.

Overlay: Minsk Oblast © 2006 CRF Media

The Minsk Oblast is located in the central part of Belarus and is surrounded by the other five oblasts. Minsk is the capital of Belarus as well as the administrative center for the Minsk district.

The city of Minsk, with a population of about 2 million is by far the largest city in the country and is an independent administrative unit. This is also a showplace city.

Overlay: Vitebsk Oblast © 2006 CRF Media

The Vitebsk Oblast, the northern most district of Belarus, is bordered by Lithuania on the west, Latvia on the northwest and Russia on the north and the east.

The drive up Highway M3 from Minsk to the city of Vitebsk is one of the most scenic in Belarus. The rolling, tree-lined hills speak of a time when most of the country was covered with forests. Today much of the land has been cleared for growing wheat and other small grain crops. Large government-owned combines usually harvest the wheat; however, the small fields and frequent rains make this method difficult and not suitable in some cases. Hand harvesting is often necessary.

Overlay: Mogilev Oblast © 2006 CRF Media

The Mogilev Oblast is in the east central part of Belarus and borders Russia to the east. This area is well known for manufacturing of heavy industrial equipment.

Orsha, about half way between Vitebsk and Mogilev on Highway M8, is one of the heavy industrial areas of the district. The large smokestacks in this city, located along the Dnieper River, point to the intensity of the manufacturing activity.

The Dnieper River, the largest in Belarus, originates in Russia and flows on to Mogilev as it makes its way to Ukraine on the southern border of Belarus.

Overlay: Gomel Oblast © 2006 CRF Media

The Gomel Oblast is in the southeastern part of Belarus and borders Russia to the East and Ukraine to the South.

In this district, the flat terrain and deep soil allows for growing a variety of crops. These include corn that is chopped and used for cattle forage, vegetables including squash and pumpkins as well as potatoes ... the staple food for Belarus. Still, wheat is the major commercial crop of the area. Some fields are planted in winter wheat, which will be harvested in the spring while others will be planted in the spring and harvested in the fall. When harvested, the grain is usually damp and must be dried with large gas-fired heaters before.

Overlay: Brest Oblast © 2006 CRF Media

The Brest Oblast is located in the southwestern corner of Belarus and borders Ukraine to the south and Poland to the west.

The 200-mile drive on Highway M10 from the city of Gomel to city of Pinsk in the Brest district passes through an area that was once unproductive swampland, peat bogs, and dense forests. Today this area is the most productive farm land of Belarus. A large network of canals, ditches and pumps are used to drain the swamps and thus, allow cultivation of vast tracks of the otherwise unproductive land. Wheat, sugar beets, potatoes, and animal forage are the main crops.

Overlay: Grodno Oblast © 2006 CRF Media

The Grodno Oblast is located in the northwestern part of the Republic of Belarus. It is bordered by Poland to the west and Lithuania to the north.

The residents of Grodno often take advantage of the lower cost and better selection of products in the neighboring countries. Vilnius, Lithuania is only 100 miles to the northwest. This large city is much more European in character than other cities of Belarus. For Grodno, the connection to European markets is strengthened with its railway system serving as a pathway between Europe and the central Asian countries.

Carl: Over 70% of Belarusian's live in urban areas; most in the vast apartment complexes. In the rural areas, harvesting crops by hand is still a part of life on the small farms. The older homes are wood frame construction. Usually, at least one Orthodox Church is in each community even though it may be small and seldom attended by the residents.

The following three previews introduce the city, the rural and the religious life of the Belarusians.

Overlay: CITIES OF BELARUS © 2006 CRF Media

The cities of Belarus are a place to enjoy: a place for the very young, a place to begin life together, a place to grow old and a place to die.

The open-air markets and other shopping areas are where people of all ages can be found. For some, shopping appears to be an effort. For others, it is an opportunity to check out the latest gadgets.

Overlay: RURAL BELARUS © 2006 CRF Media

Smoke from cooking and heating fires is part of life in rural Belarus. As cold weather approaches, firewood is cut and stacked in preparation for the long winter. Often this involves the entire family as does harvesting hay to feed the cattle, horses, sheep and goats.

Cemeteries, located among the trees, tell of generations past and the families who have lived off the land. ... of a time when Russia was ruled by the tsars and the communist dictators. Just as in the earlier times, gardens are an important part of surviving. They provide food for summer as well as winter and are always carefully cultivated and cared for to get the most from the small area around their homes. Still they find room for a variety of flowers and their dazzling beauty.

Overlay: The State Church of Belarus © 2006 CRF Media

Opening: Orthodox dirge playing while showing a funeral procession.

Eleven centuries ago Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev chose Greek Orthodoxy instead of Roman Catholicism and Islam. Upon his baptism, the Orthodox Church became the State Church of Russia. Today, the Orthodox Church is the dominant religious institution of this country despite the significant decline during the 70 years of Communist rule.

Arline: The Belarusian's are survivors. They have survived the long history of domination by outside influences; of being trampled upon like a doormat.

We were touched greatly as we visited some of the memorials and watched others as they remembered past calamities. It is inconceivable as Americans to imagine what people of this country endured during these dark, dark times of their history.

The four previews to follow cover a heartbreaking time for the residents.

Overlay: The Killing Fields © 2006 CRF Media

The large mound between the city of Minsk and the airport is a special monument to the Soviet Army who liberated Belarus from Hitler's fascist regime. With Belarus free, the end of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 was now in sight. "Glory Mound", ... as this memorial is known, ... was built with soil from the several hero cities in Russia and in Belarus as well as handfuls from Belarusian citizens.

Further down the road is a different kind of monument that is visited by few and represents a dark time in Belarus ... a time that began in 1937 and ended in 1941 when Hitler's army attacked the Soviet Union. It was during this time ... prior to the Great Patriotic War, ... that Stalin used the Kurapaty Forests as a killing field.

Overlay: Impossible to Forget © 2006 CRF Media

Video fades to black and white scenes of German tanks, guns, soldiers fighting, buildings burning etc.

Audio: guns, bombs etc. in background with the following narration in very strong voice:

Attention! ... Attention! ... Today, ... June 22, 1941 at 4:00 am. Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

Different Voice, less dramatic:

The surprise attack on the Brest Fortress was the beginning of Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. He had over 3 million well-trained and equipped soldiers positioned along a 1500-mile front that extended from the Baltic in the North to the Black Sea in the South. Hitler planned a quick knockout blow within a matter of weeks. However, these plans did not expect the heroic and sacrificial response presented by the Soviet defenders.

Overlay: *Just Another Village* © 2006 CRF Media

Along the highway north of Minsk is a large sign pointing toward Khatyn. This could be any of the thousands of villages in Belarus; small wood frame houses, a garden, a barn for the farm animals and people passing the time of day ... but it is not.

There are no houses ... just chimneys where homes once stood ... 23 in all; a stylized representation of wells that supplied water to the homes ... gates connecting to the concrete walkways where roads were all a drab gray, the color of ashes from a fire. Nearby, is where the barn stood. The sounds of village life are replaced by the solemn peal of bells mounted on the top of each chimney.

Overlay: *TEAR DOWN THIS WALL!* © 2006 CRF Media

USSR flag, Hammer and sickle emblem

Fade to overlay: (6 seconds)

Belarus, USSR, 1985

Depictions of life style in Belarus during late 1980's with various worker scenes.

Audio track:

1977 version of USSR National Anthem

-- Subtitles while playing anthem:

Unbreakable Union of freeborn Republics,
Great Russia has welded forever to stand.

Created in struggle by will of the people,
United and mighty, our Soviet land!

Sing to the Motherland, home of the free,

Bulwark of peoples in brotherhood strong.

O Party of Lenin, the strength of the people,

To Communism's triumph lead us on.

Video: Fade to photo of Mikhail Gorbachev, ... then to Ronald Reagan, ... then to Brandenburg Gate, Berlin.

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was the leader of the Soviet Union. Ronald Reagan was serving his second term as president of the United States. It would be another two years before he would stand at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin and proclaim:

Audio -- Using actual words of Reagan:

Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! ... Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

Video: Fade to Orthodox Church then inside with lighting of candles.

Main overlay: Belarus, USSR, April 25, 1986

For the Orthodox Church, it is only 9 days until Easter. But, ... in the dark of this night, an unauthorized test on the #4 nuclear reactor at Chernobyl was under way. The crew had disabled emergency backup equipment and turned off warning alarms.

Main overlay changes to: Belarus, USSR, April 26, 1986

Clock starts at: 01:23:20... The count goes on by the seconds as the narration continues.

This one thousand megawatt nuclear power generator located just south of the Belarus border in Ukraine used highly flammable graphite for the moderator.

Arline: Despite the government sanctions, combined with religious and economic persecution, there is hope for the Belarusians – God's Word is alive and well. Believers proclaim: “God is Love” and know personally that God IS the source of love, peace, joy, ... hope.

The following four previews provide a short sampling of the commitment of Christian believers.

Overlay: *A New Day for Belarus* © 2006 CRF Media

Belarus, located on the Eastern edge of Europe and only 400 miles from Moscow, was part of the Soviet Union until 1991. During the Soviet rule, the country was divided into six administrative districts known as Oblasts.

In every Oblast, monuments to the past are displayed in the cities and major towns. Statues of Vladimir Lenin, the founder of the Soviet Union, are often the most prominent. Memorials display the horrendous events of 1941 to 1944 known as the Great Patriotic War. As a result of this war, one fourth of the population of Belarus was killed.

The 70 years of Communist Rule by the Soviet Union has left other monuments as well;

Overlay: *FAITH THAT ENDURES* © 2006 CRF Media

Opening – Granny reading her favorite passage, Psalm 121 – Have caption for vs. 1-3

I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot slip.
He who watches over you will not slumber. Psalm 121:1-3

To her family she is “Granny”. Widowed for many years, she lives in a small house in Berazino, Belarus. Granny’s garden, which takes up the front and back yard, provides most of her food. But, it is her faith in God and in Jesus Christ that sustains her.

Overlay: *A Church Planting Movement in Belarus* © 2006 CRF Media

Opening – Video background – flags and pictures of Russian rulers.

Put on the full armor of God,
that you may be able to stand firm
against the schemes of the devil.
For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the powers,
against the world forces of this darkness,
against the spiritual forces of wickedness
in the heavenly places.
Ephesians 6:11-12

For over 1,000 years, the people of Russia have been subjugated by tsars and dictators. During most of that time, the Orthodox Church was the State church and religious freedom was unknown.

But, it was in the late 1800’s and the early 1900’s that an evangelical church planting movement was underway in Russia.

Overlay: *An Investment for Eternity* © 2006 CRF Media

The Belarusians are much like you and me ... a friendly people who are concerned for their families and those about them. They are also a people who have been victims of tragic world events ... events that have left scars on the land and on the people.

Their daily toil is little different from others. Whether in the office or in the fields, they work to provide for their families and to seek peace and stability.

Growing up, the people of Belarus learn that to be a true Belarusian is to be Russian Orthodox. Of course, Orthodox churches abound but these buildings are not important in their lives. The buildings, the icons inside and the worship rituals do not offer the eternal hope that can be found only in trusting Jesus Christ as their savior. Evangelical Believers are few in this land ... less than 1%.

Carl: Before heading home, there was a little time for Arline to gather souvenirs. She purchased one of these beautiful painted eggs. With our treasures in tow, we were ready to leave the country!

Our original plan was to travel to Bashkortostan, Russia after leaving Belarus. However, problems with scheduling required that we return home through the country of Lithuania located directly north of Belarus.

Overlay: Vilnius, Lithuania

The large city of Vilnius is much more European in character than cities of Belarus. For us, it was a time to relax and enjoy the sights before going to the airport.

Overlay: Closing Song: “It Is Well With My Soul”

After arriving home, we spent about four months producing the DVD, “*The Belarusians: A People Seeking Hope*”. There were a total of 17 chapters and we distributed over 2500 copies. In 2010, the Blu-ray version was finalized and is on Part 8 of the *CRF Media Chronicles*.

Overlay: CRF Media Chronicles © Filmed in September 2006



Minsk Oblast

Ch. 35 (4:31) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

The **Minsk** Oblast is located in the central part of Belarus and is surrounded by the other five oblasts. **Minsk** is the capital of Belarus as well as the administrative center for the **Minsk** district.

The city of **Minsk**, with a population of about 2 million is by far the largest city in the country and is an independent administrative unit. This is also a showplace city. The well maintained streets, the new busses, trolleys, and trams as well as the shopping centers and office buildings exude an air of prosperity. The apartments, ... most with a new coat of paint and others under construction, ... convey a similar theme' although the “new look” is often only on the surface.

Automobiles, many of them recent foreign imports, pack the central part of the city with commuters going to and from work. The subway, the only one in Belarus, is well maintained and offers an alternative for those who do not have a car. The busses, trams, and trolleys provide the most convenient form of transportation for short distances. Long lines form in the morning and afternoon as people head for work or return home.

Well-stocked shelves of the retail outlets match those of many European cities; however, many people cannot afford to shop at these places. A common saying is, “Under Communism we had money in our pocket and no products on the shelves, today there are products on the shelves but we have no money in our pockets.” Yet there are symbols of prosperity, five McDonald’s restaurants are in **Minsk** ... the only ones in Belarus.

Minsk is the major industrial area of the Republic with a variety of manufacturing plants located throughout the city. The large smokestacks, a legacy of the Soviet times, point to centers of heavy industry. The Belarus Tractor Factory has over 20,000 employees and markets the Belarus Tractor worldwide including the United States.

Among all of the apparent trappings of progress and westernization are some ominous signs. The statues of Lenin remain, as does the prominent display of the hammer and sickle – both symbols of the communist dictatorship of the former Soviet Union.

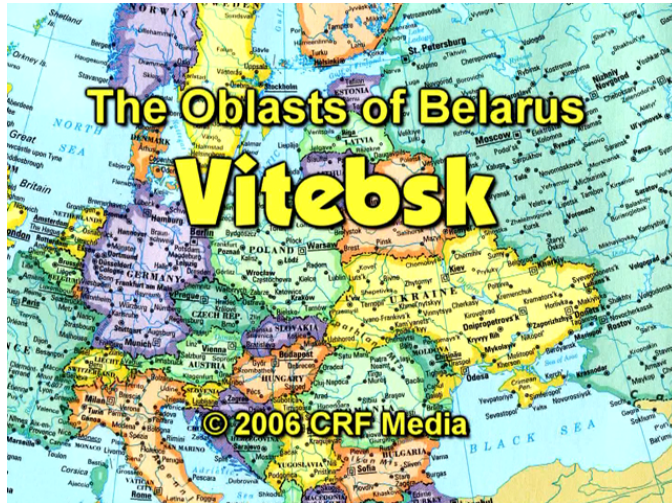
Only a short distance from the high-rise apartments and the multi lane highways is a different city. The roads are narrow and the homes are old and in need of repair. For some, running water is from the faucet at the street corner. Wages are very low and few of the working class can afford the fine cuts of meat at the market, instead they make due with a high starch diet of potatoes and cereal grains. Small cuts of meat are usually served once or twice a week. Mushrooms, gathered from the forest, are often used to provide flavoring or as a main dish.

Minsk, like the rest of Belarus, is controlled by a Soviet style dictatorship ... the same type of rule that existed prior to 1991, the year Belarus declared independence. The people of this oblast, ... as in the other five, ... live in two worlds; the world that Westerners often see portrayed as a prosperous country ... and ... the reality of a state controlled economy resulting in

low wages, poverty, and limited freedom of speech.

As we progress on the tour of the remaining five oblasts, this dichotomy will continue to be evident.

The next stop is **Vitebsk**. Join us as we continue to learn about the people of Belarus and the place they call home.



Vitebsk Oblast

Ch. 36 (3:42) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

The **Vitebsk Oblast**, the northern most district of Belarus, is bordered by Lithuania on the west, Latvia on the northwest and Russia on the north and the east.

The drive up Highway M3 from **Minsk** to the city of **Vitebsk** is one of the most scenic in Belarus. The rolling, tree-lined hills speak of a time when most of the country was covered with forests. Today much of the land has been cleared for growing wheat and other small grain crops. Large government-owned combines usually harvest the wheat; however, the small fields and frequent rains make this method difficult and not suitable in some cases. Hand harvesting is often necessary. In this field the grain crop is

cut and tied in small bundles, which are then stacked to dry. After a few days in the sun, a crew loads the bundles on a wagon for the trip to the stationery thresher to extract the grain.

The extensive clearing of the land has not destroyed the scenic beauty of the lakes and streams. The small villages, ... originally built along the lakeshore, ... have been expanded and now occupy the slopes and ravines surrounding the lakes. Eleven of the nineteen major lakes of Belarus are in this district.

Winters in the city of **Vitebsk**, ... as in all of Belarus, ... are long and cold. Here in this area, the snow is usually on the ground for five months out of the year; but in the southern part of the country it lasts only four months.

The bitter cold winters are part of life in Belarus. Venturing out for supplies is difficult for some. Yet, for the kids, it is a time to enjoy a sled ride. Many brave the cold and snow to purchase groceries in the outdoor markets. These markets are open year around. For those in some construction jobs, ... work must continue even during a snowstorm. Other construction ... including the large Orthodox Church ... has been suspended until warm weather.

With a population of about 400,000, **Vitebsk** is known for its culture and history with many old buildings and monuments. In the city center is a huge memorial commemorating the Great Patriotic War. The statues, the signs and the monuments all reflect on the destruction, the loss of life, the suffering and heroism during the four years of conflict. Villages, towns and cities were destroyed ... and ... one-fourth of the people of Belarus were killed.

Vitebsk, like the rest of Belarus, is an interesting place with a rich history dating back for a thousand years but tourists are rare. Occasionally, tour busses with visitors from Russia or Europe make a short stop in this city sharing the same roadway as the Belarus Tractor.

Belarus Tractors are common on the farm and in the city. Fortunately, we will be traveling by car to the next stop ... **Mogilev**.

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE:

Minsk	MIN-sk
Mogilev	mahg-ee-LAHF
Oblast	OH-blist
Vitebsk	VEE-tipsk



Mogilev Oblast

Ch. 37 (3:51) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

The **Mogilev** Oblast is in the east central part of Belarus and borders Russia to the east. This area is well known for manufacturing of heavy industrial equipment.

Orsha, ... about half way between **Vitebsk** and **Mogilev** on Highway M8, ... is one of the heavy industrial areas of the district. The large smokestacks in this city, ... located along the **Dnieper** River, ... point to the intensity of the manufacturing activity.

The **Dnieper** River, the largest in Belarus, originates in Russia and flows on to **Mogilev** as it makes its way to Ukraine on the southern border of Belarus. This river is an important shipping channel for Russia and Eastern Europe.

Up river from **Orsha** is a village, ... typical of others throughout the area. It is in these villages that time seems to move very slowly. The homes are all wood frame construction and a style much different than the large apartment buildings of the cities. The yards are small and are used for vegetable gardens and fruit trees. The vegetables and fruit are an essential food source for residents during the summer and the winter. Additional floors and rooms have been added to the homes to accommodate extended families living in the same house. There are very few automobiles in these villages. People often ride a bus, walk or use a horse drawn wagon when traveling to the city.

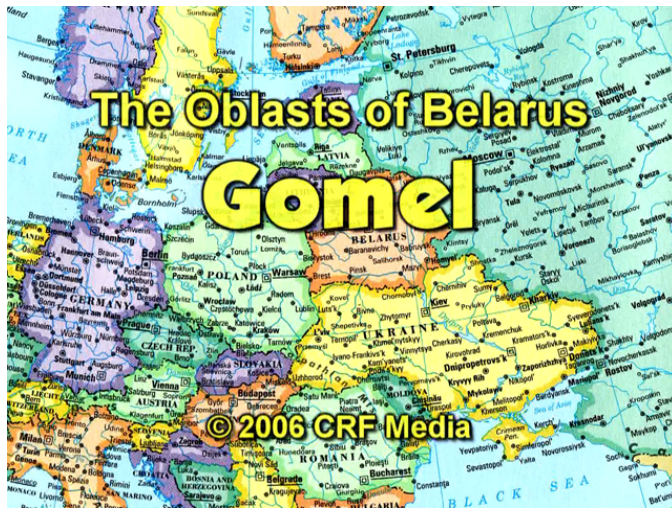
The rolling hills limit the size of farms to small acreages. The soil, however, is deep and nearly rock free. The huge government-owned combine seems out of place as it harvests a family-owned wheat field. There are very few privately owned tractors in the country making it difficult to keep weeds under control in the fields when left fallow.

In **Mogilev**, things are much different. The huge apartment buildings built during the Soviet era provide housing for the factory workers. The construction of apartments is similar to Minsk; however, these are in need of updating as has been done in the capital city. But, like the villages, there are few automobiles. The bus service is excellent and groceries as well as other household goods can be purchased at shopping centers within walking distance of the housing complexes.

Mogilev, with a population of 360,000, is a progressive city with a well-kept park along a small river. The **Mogilev** Hotel overlooks the park and offers accommodations for tourists as well as business visitors. Two large universities are located in the city. **Mogilev** State University offers a wide variety of education opportunities in the arts and sciences as well as engineering. The Belarus School of Law is much smaller with its classrooms and offices located near a busy city street. The Performing Arts Center is only two blocks from the law school.

The industrial area, important during the Soviet times, is decaying now because of the obsolete equipment, inefficiency in production and lack of markets outside Russia.

The next stop is the **Gomel** Oblast. ... It may take awhile to get there.



Gomel Oblast

Ch. 38 (3:46) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

The **Gomel** Oblast is in the southeastern part of Belarus and borders Russia to the East and Ukraine to the South.

In this district, the flat terrain and deep soil allows for growing a variety of crops. These include corn that is chopped and used for cattle forage, vegetables including squash and pumpkins as well as potatoes ... the staple food for Belarus. Still, wheat is the major commercial crop of the area. Some fields are planted in winter wheat, which will be harvested in the spring while others will be planted in the spring and harvested in the fall. When harvested, the grain is usually damp and must be dried with large gas-fired heaters before it can be safely stored.

Farming continues to be an important part of the economy of southern Belarus even though, in 1986, a large portion of the land was contaminated with radioactive fall out caused by the meltdown of the **Chernobyl** nuclear reactor. This reactor was located a few miles south of the border in Ukraine but the prevailing winds caused 70% of the contamination to fall on Belarus. The effects linger in the rural areas; however, the city of **Gomel** ... with a population of 500,000 ... received only a small amount fallout.

On the eastern edge of this city, the **Sozh** River continues its southward journey through the Oblast to join the **Dnieper** River as it flows to the Republic of Ukraine. Along it's peaceful banks young people easily find a good place to sit and dream of the future. Fishing in a cove along the river will often provide food for the evening meal.

Along this meandering river a large city park, ... known simply as **Gomel** Park, ... is a place where people come to spend the day visiting and watching other people. It is also a place to make new friends or renew old acquaintances. Today, however, is Saturday, ... a special day, ... it is when weddings are performed. The tradition is that the bride and groom visit an important memorial site for a photography session. Dressed in their finest, the wedding party usually spends less than an hour getting the photographs before returning to the formal wedding reception.

Within this park ... and high above the river's edge ... is a tower made from a smelting furnace smokestack. From the top of the 150-foot structure, ferryboats can be seen going up and down the river. The vantage point of this tower gives a quick view of the large city of **Gomel**. The soccer stadium is easily identified by its array of lights. In the foreground, the Performing Arts Center is the focus. Like other urban areas of Belarus, apartment and office buildings make up a large portion of the city. Church spires, smokestacks and broadcast antennas reach upward as they pierce the skyline.

Gomel is a wonderful place to visit and get to know the friendly people of the area. This is true not only here but also in every region of Belarus. For us, it is time to go. We must head down the highway about 200 miles to the next stop at **Pinsk** in the **Brest** Oblast.



Brest Oblast

Ch 39 (3:44) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

The **Brest** Oblast is located in the southwestern corner of Belarus and borders Ukraine to the south and Poland to the west.

The 200-mile drive on Highway M10 from the city of **Gomel** to city of **Pinsk** in the **Brest** district passes through an area that was once unproductive swampland, peat bogs, and dense forests. Today this area is the most productive farm land of Belarus. A large network of canals, ditches and pumps are used to drain the swamps and thus, allow cultivation of vast tracks of the otherwise unproductive land. Wheat, sugar beets, potatoes, and animal forage are the main crops grown here. The farms are organized into large

government collectives similar to what was done during the Soviet times. Very little farmland is privately owned.

While farming is essential to the economy of the area, oil and natural gas provide the major source of income for both the **Gomel** and the **Brest** Oblasts. The oil and gas fields of this area produce approximately 13% of the Republic's energy needs.

Pinsk, a city with a population of 130,000, looks much like other large cities in Belarus. The Orthodox Church is the dominant religious organization. Most people live in large apartment complexes as is the case throughout the Republic. On the northern edge of the city, several new homes have been constructed or are under construction. These homes are for the few very wealthy people of the area. The economy of **Pinsk**, unlike other cities, which are manufacturing centers is primarily dependent on farming, petroleum, the chemical industry and on forestry products. Several flour mills within the city limits grind and package flour for regional consumption.

Brest, 100 miles west of **Pinsk**, is the administrative center for the **Brest** Oblast. With a population of 300,000, it is also part of the agricultural, petroleum and chemical operations of southern Belarus. In addition, manufacturing of heavy industrial equipment is important to the economy of the city. Brest has its share of large apartment buildings but most of these are new reflecting a vibrant economy.

The **Brest** Fortress is the place to visit for tourists and residents alike. This fortress ... constructed centuries ago using the natural defense barrier provided by the junction of the **Bug** and the **Mukhavets** Rivers ... served well until 1941. This was when Hitler's army over ran the fort despite the heroic efforts of the Russian defenders. For Americans, this time was comparable to defending the Alamo during the early history of the United States.

More on the **Brest** Hero Fortress is provided in a separate chapter. For now, the trip around Belarus must continue on to **Grodno**, the sixth and final oblast on this tour of Belarus.



Grodno Oblast

Ch. 40 (4:21) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

The **Grodno** Oblast is located in the northwestern part of the Republic of Belarus. It is bordered by Poland to the west and Lithuania to the north.

The residents of **Grodno** often take advantage of the lower cost and better selection of products in the neighboring countries. **Vilnius**, Lithuania is only 100 miles to the northwest. This large city is much more European in character than other cities of Belarus. For **Grodno**, the connection to European markets is strengthened with its railway system serving as a pathway between Europe and the central Asian countries.

Farming is well developed in the rural areas of the district. Cattle, ... dairy as well as beef, ... are common in the region. Sheep, goats and chickens are also part of the commercial farm operations. Green chopping of corn for silage is necessary since the summers are too short for the grain to mature. Alfalfa and grass hay also provide forage for the livestock during the long winter months. Large round bales are most often used for the grass hay. The Belarus Tractor ... with an improvised hoist ... loads the 1000-pound bales on the wagon for transport to a storage area. Sugar beets are becoming a more popular cash crop in this region and are often planted instead of potatoes.

The chemical industry is the dominant factor to the regional economy. Factories identified by large smokestacks produce a variety of petrochemical products for farm, industrial and consumer use. Newer factories are usually in the rural area. Older ones are found in the urban areas near the railroads or along the **Neman** River that runs through the city of **Grodno**. This river, however, is too small to serve as a dependable commercial route. Nevertheless, it provides a picturesque setting for homes along its banks.

The city of **Grodno**, ... with its close proximity to Poland, ... has several Catholic churches. At one time, this area was part of Poland, which is predominantly Catholic as opposed to the Orthodox tradition of Belarus.

The Drama Theater ... located near the central plaza ... is an impressive building that can be seen from all directions. It provides an important cultural opportunity for residents. The view directly across the street is a reminder of the Great Patriotic War.

In **Grodno**, the growing middle class seems to be real. This is an optimism that extends much deeper than the surface treatment of the apartments buildings of Minsk and other cities. New apartments have been built or are under construction around the city. Living in one of these complexes would be a dream for citizens of many areas visited on our tour of Belarus. More importantly, new family homes are an indication of the strong economic growth in this city. Driving into a new housing development is remarkable. The styles and sizes reflect the tastes of the owners. Homes are in various stages of construction with some complete including well kept yards and flowers. The owner often builds these homes as money becomes available. Materials are piled on the property as they are purchased awaiting the hands of those who will put them into place. Several years are usually needed to complete the project and may involve members of the extended family. When livable, the family moves into their home and the work continues. During the 7 years the family constructed this home, their large family lived in a small apartment. By the time they moved into their new home, three of the children had married.

The round trip of the Republic of Belarus will be complete when we return to **Minsk**. Please come and visit sometime soon.



Cities of Belarus

Ch. 41 (8:25) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

The cities of Belarus are a place to enjoy ... a place for the very young ... a place to begin life together ... a place to grow old ... and a place to die.

The open-air markets and other shopping areas are where people of all ages can be found. For some, shopping appears to be an effort. For others, it is an opportunity to check out the latest gadgets. But, for a child the real treat is sitting on the back of a pretend horse with his grandmother at his side.

At a self-service restaurant, many different foods are available to satisfy the most adventurous taste. On the other hand, for those living in the capital city of Minsk, one of the

five McDonald's may be nearby for a quick American style snack. For those having a meal at home, pork, chicken or beef ... all fresh and ready for the cook can be purchased at the market and enjoyed by family and friends. For most Belarussians, however, these options are beyond their means. A hot dog purchased from an outdoor vendor will suffice instead of a visit to McDonalds. For the family at home, small cuts of meat are usually served only once or twice a week.

An evening out at the circus is a time to enjoy watching the highly skilled performers from Moscow; the acrobats on the high trapeze or the dance couple performing their breathtaking routines, ... and, of course, the trained dogs closely obeying their master's commands.

A visit to the city park is a time for relaxation, for enjoying the company of others and to reminisce about the "good life" during Soviet rule.

Another option is showing respect for times of trouble and calamity by visiting memorials to the Great Patriotic War. It was during this time that most of the cities and villages of Belarus were destroyed and one fourth of the population of this small country was killed. However, the memory of this war is fading into little more than a photo opportunity for the younger Belarussians.

Getting to work, even in the rain, is not a problem in the shiny imported cars ... cars that are becoming increasingly numerous in the large cities. A home at the edge of the city is now a reality; ... custom built to suit the taste of the owner and in a place free from the shadow of the apartment buildings. Unfortunately, these options are out of the price range of 95% of the population.

In every large city Vladimir Lenin's statue is in a prominent location. Even though he died in 1924 the long shadow of Communism is ever present in this land and the people.

The shopping centers, the new apartment buildings, the universities and the Orthodox Church are indeed part of the cities of Belarus but only a small part. Behind the glitter of the new and the refurbished apartments there are other buildings that reflect the overwhelming majority of homes in the cities. Many were built in the '50's and 60's when Nikita **Khrushchev** was premier of the Soviet Union. They reflect the communist ideal of uniformity of homes and of a utilitarian design. Large furnaces located throughout the city provide centralized heating with hot water circulating through pipes to the radiators within the apartments.

The individual apartments are comfortable but small ... often only 600 square feet for a family of four. The living room, like the other rooms, provides the basic needs for the family. The balcony offers a view of more apartments or of the traffic below. In some cities, a TV antenna farm appears to be growing on the apartment roofs but there are a few satellite dishes as well, and even fewer air conditioners.

There is little parking space around the huge complexes. It is not needed since most do not have a car. The subway, the busses, the trams and the trolleys are the most common methods of traveling. Most often people walk the short distance, ... to the grocery store, to school or to church.

About 80% of Belarusians claim to be Orthodox, the State church. There are many Orthodox churches located throughout the city and within easy walking distance; however, people usually visit the church at most only two or three times a year ... if at all.

There are a few evangelical churches in the cities and their members walk to church as well. Established in the early 1900's, this church in **Gomel** is among the largest churches in the country with a regular attendance of over 300. On a Sunday morning, the Church is full; ... full from top to bottom and overflowing at the sides. This church like others in the larger cities of Belarus would like to expand, to establish more churches; but beginning new evangelical churches is very difficult.

The vast apartment complexes would be ideal places to conduct Bible studies and house churches. But the government, in concert with the Orthodox Church, has set up laws specifically designed to prevent evangelical churches from expanding.

In Belarus, there are 16 cities that have a population of 100,000 plus. Over 70% of Belarusian's live in urban areas. You can help bring the light of Jesus to the cities of Belarus by praying for the leaders of this country and by praying for the evangelical churches in the cities. Churches in the United States are needed to enter into a prayer partnership with Belarusian Believers for the cities of Belarus. Will you commit to pray?

Americans can participate in mission projects targeting specific subgroups such as doctors, nurses, teachers, university students, senior adults, intellectuals and mentally handicapped persons.

Won't you visit Belarus and share God's Word with those living in the new apartments, old apartment complexes, and in the new single-family homes?



Rural Belarus

Ch. 42 (7:20) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

Smoke from cooking and heating fires is part of life in rural Belarus. As cold weather approaches, firewood is cut and stacked in preparation for the long winter. Often this involves the entire family as does harvesting hay to feed the cattle, horses, sheep and goats.

Cemeteries ... located among the trees ... tell of generations past and the families who have lived off the land. ... of a time when Russia was ruled by the tsars and the communist dictators. Just as in the earlier times, gardens are an important part of surviving. They provide food for summer as well as winter and are always carefully cultivated and cared for to get the most from the small area around their

homes. Still they find room for a variety of flowers and their dazzling beauty.

Jars of preserved fruits and vegetables are important for the family but potatoes are the staple food. After harvesting they are dried and then stored inside the home to keep from freezing.

Harvesting potatoes in the small plots of land still depends on the horse drawn plough and the extended family working together to complete the task. Rainfall and soil conditions will determine the yield. This field is too wet causing much of the crop to rot in the ground. Extra income is earned by helping harvest potatoes in large commercial fields.

Growing plentifully in the forest all summer, mushrooms are picked by the bucket full. Several different varieties are sold along the highway. Mushrooms are also cleaned and preserved for use during the winter months. Identifying the good from the poisonous is a skill passed down through the family as are the methods used for cooking and preserving.

Apples are everywhere and are usually ripe by mid-September. This fruit is also preserved for the winter. Some apples are peeled and sliced then canned. For others the juice is extracted and allowed to ferment for apple cider. Large trucks are used to haul the excess apples to commercial processing plants. Pears and plums, though not as plentiful, add to the fall fruit harvest.

Beehives are often located among the apple trees to pollinate the blossoms in the spring. The rich dark honey extracted from these hives is sold in markets throughout Belarus.

Chickens, ducks, turkeys, sheep and goats are also important as a source of food for the people living in the rural areas. Wood sheds or small barns in the back yard provide protection during the long cold winter months. Also located in the back yard and often behind the barn or woodshed is the outdoor toilet.

The older homes are wood frame construction. Some are showing signs of decay while others look like new. The classical log homes are still in use, even though nearby may be a new brick structure. Ornate scrollwork around doors, windows and roofs attests to the skill ... as well as the care ... that was exercised during the construction of the homes. The ownership of these homes is passed down from one generation to the next.

Outside many homes is a well providing water. Some use a windlass to draw the water up in a bucket. The wells are 20 to 30 feet deep and were dug when the houses were built. For some of the homes, replacing the windlass with a pump provides running water.

Inside there is often a small gas cooking stove and a wood fired heating furnace. The heating unit is built into the house with brick and concrete to help retain the heat after the fire dies down. This is a warm spot to sleep during the cold winter nights.

The villagers, like those living in the cities, generally claim the Orthodox faith. Usually, at least one Orthodox Church is in each village even though it may be small and seldom attended by the residents.

On the other hand, very few of the villages of Belarus have evangelical churches. The few that have been established are small. Some are called "**Dom Mvlitvi** - House of Prayer". Others have no outside identification other than the street name.

Even though 98% claim either the Orthodox or the Catholic faith, 99% of the Belarussians do not know Jesus as their personal Savior. This includes 39 cities with a population between 5,000 and 25,000 that do not have an evangelical church and over 1,500 villages without any type of Biblical witness for Christ. In many places in Belarus, there is still not even one Believer or evangelical family to shine the light of Christ.

The time and expense for the national missionaries to travel to the numerous villages and the anti-evangelical laws of Belarus make it very difficult to establish new churches. Bible study groups and worship services in ones home are generally against the law.

Some of the larger Baptist churches in the cities have sent out bi-vocational missionaries to the rural areas but progress is slow. One national missionary shares God's Word as he works at delivering supplies to homes and offices in his town.

The people in the rural areas of Belarus need to hear the Good News of Jesus. How can YOU help?

- ◆ ... By praying both here in the States, and perhaps in Belarus through prayer walks.
- ◆ ... By helping the national missionaries to obtain Bibles and other teaching materials as well as musical items.
- ◆ ... By providing scholarships to Bible camps such as Pearl Camp at **Korbin**.
- ◆ ... By participating in mission trips or projects that would assist national missionaries and pastors of small churches in reaching the people of Belarus.



The State Religion of Belarus

Ch. 43 (6:11) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

Opening: Orthodox dirge playing while showing a funeral procession.

Turn down music.

Eleven centuries ago Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev chose Greek Orthodoxy instead of Roman Catholicism and Islam. Upon his baptism, the Orthodox Church became the State Church of Russia. Today, the Orthodox Church is the dominant religious institution of this country despite the significant decline during the 70 years of Communist rule.

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 allowed Belarus to become a country independent from Russia. With the support of the government, the Orthodox Church regained

much of its prominence and today about 80% of the Belarussians claim the Orthodox faith.

The Orthodox Church is a powerful political force and receives financial support from the government. Belarus president, Alexander **Lukashenko** and the Orthodox Church crafted religious laws that were enacted in 2002 to preserve supremacy of the Church.

The Orthodox Cross, the distinctive symbol of the Church is everywhere ... on the churches, along the highways, in the cities, the villages, and at religious shrines. The first bar on the cross refers to the inscription in three languages: "Jesus, the King of the Jews". The second bar is the cross upon which Jesus hung. The third a slanting bar represents the disposition of the two thieves ... one pointing downward to hell and other pointing upward to heaven.

Inside the churches, the focus is on visual symbols of the Saints important during the history of the church. These images, known as icons, are always paintings since statues are not allowed in the Orthodox tradition. The icons are considered to be windows to heaven through which people pray to God. Often worshippers light candles to emphasize a special need or an answered prayer.

In the Church, there are no pews; people must stand during the entire worship service, which may last two or three hours. The worship music is entirely vocal, no musical instruments are allowed. Despite the de facto allegiance to the Orthodox Church with the elaborate worship rituals, the icons and the spacious sanctuary, ... attendance is low. People usually only attend one or two times a year, if at all.

The Catholic Church is the second largest church representing about 15% of the population. A large portion of the followers of this church is in the western part of the country, an area that was once part of Poland. Most of the priests are from this neighboring country, which is predominantly Catholic. A very large church in Mogilev was constructed in 1692 but today it is hard to see because of the apartment buildings surrounding the structure.

Inside the Catholic Church, ... such as this large one in **Grodno**, ... there are pews to sit on and statues instead of the icons. The Catholic Church, ... like the Orthodox Church, ... is sparsely attended.

The Jews ... once representing over 20% of Belarus ... are few now. During Hitler's rampage of conquest and ethnic cleansing, the Jews were either killed or they left the country. The monument in Minsk pays respect to the many Jews who were annihilated during this time. Markers along the highway identify some of the scores of concentration camps.

A small synagogue in **Pinsk** is one of the few in Belarus. Inside, the students learn the scriptures in Hebrew. Some of the trainees are from other countries including the United States.

[Leave out the following re mosques if we don't find a suitable picture.]

There are five Islamic mosques in Belarus but these are small as is the Muslim population.

Closing:

Unlike the dirge from the Orthodox, the Catholic, the Jewish and the Islamic faiths there is a different kind of music coming from the Baptist and other evangelical churches. It is alive! It is growing! It does not depend upon paintings, on statues, on Hebrew or Arabic writing. Instead, it depends on the Word of God and the faithfulness of Believers as they reach others who

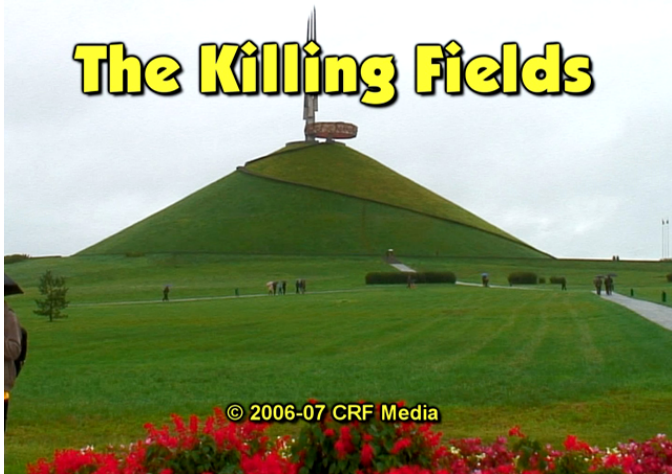
are seeking hope in their lives.

In Belarus today, it is estimated that more people ... on a regular basis ... attend the evangelical churches than the combined attendance of the other faiths even though the evangelical Believers make up less than 1% of the population of this country.

Why is this so? The answer is the HOPE found in the Word of God and in Jesus Christ.

Scripture:

Closing here with song.



The Killing Fields

Ch. 44 (3:11) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

The large mound between the city of Minsk and the airport is a special monument to the Soviet Army who liberated Belarus from Hitler's fascist regime. With Belarus free, the end of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 was now in sight. "Glory Mound", ... as this memorial is known, ... was built with soil from the several hero cities in Russia and in Belarus as well as handfuls from Belarusian citizens. This place honors those who liberated Belarus. Opened July 5, 1969, military parades and frequent visits by government dignitaries and ordinary citizens are a regular occurrence.

Further down the road is a different kind of monument that is visited by few and represents a dark time in Belarus ... a

time that began in 1937 and ended in 1941 when Hitler's army attacked the Soviet Union. It was during this time ... prior to the Great Patriotic War, ... that Stalin used the **Kurapaty** Forests as a killing field. Each day the NKVD, ... the organization that Stalin used to enforce State security, ... would bring truck loads of people who were rounded up from various areas in Belarus and who were considered to be enemies of the State. As they were brought into the forest, they were unloaded next to a pit ... and shot to death in cold blood. During those fearful three years, an estimated 220,000 people were murdered in this forest. But, ... it was kept secret. People in the neighboring villages knew about the killings but they did not talk fearing for their own lives.

During the difficult times of the war, the residents nearby cleared the forest for firewood. The mass graves became obscured with new growth.

It was not until 1987, ... nearly 50 years later ... as part of **Glasnost**, that an excavation was made and people began to recount the stories of the events.

This was only a small part of the estimated 12 million people who were murdered by the ruthless Stalin reign; a rule that began in 1924 and ended upon his death in 1953. The people of Belarus have suffered much during their history ... civil war, starvation and famine, the purges of Stalin, the wanton killing by Hitler's fascist army, and the radioactive fallout of Chernobyl.

The people of Belarus need a true hope ... the hope that can only be provided by faith in Jesus Christ. Will you pray for the leaders of Belarus?



Impossible to Forget

Ch. 45 (5:35) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

Overlay:
June 1941
The Mukhavets River
Brest, Belarus USSR

Video: Peaceful scene of river.

Video fades to black and white scenes of German tanks, guns, soldiers fighting, buildings burning etc.

Audio: guns, bombs etc. in background with the following narration in very strong voice:

Attention! ... Attention! ... Today, ... June 22, 1941 at 4:00 a.m. Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

Different Voice, less dramatic:

The surprise attack on the Brest Fortress was the beginning of Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. He had over 3 million well-trained and equipped soldiers positioned along a 1500-mile front that extended from the Baltic in the North to the Black Sea in the South. Hitler planned a quick knockout blow within a matter of weeks. However, these plans did not expect the heroic and sacrificial response presented by the Soviet defenders.

Overlay:
65 years later
The Brest Hero-Fortress
Republic of Belarus

Background Music: "The Sacred War"

Video: Entrance and people walking toward the "Courage" monument.
Fade to sign showing the Fortress layout and Vladimir explaining the area.

Narration:

The Brest Hero Fortress is located in the extreme southwestern corner of Belarus at the junction of the Bug and the Mukhavets Rivers. This fortress was commissioned in 1842 and expanded several times during its 100 years of active service. Multiple defense walls ... some several miles long ... were as much as 6 feet thick and 20 feet tall. The barracks inside the fortress would accommodate 12,000 men along with their equipment.

Video fades to some of the buildings with "The Sacred War" audio continuing.

Video fades to honor guard marching with background music fading out and only the sound of the marching honor guard.

Music fades to "Major Reverb String 04" as honor guard and others show respect at the eternal flame.

Video transition - Background music continues at a reduced level.

Narration:

Nearby is a monument depicting the thirst and desperation of the soldiers who were trapped without food or water. **962 of the defenders lost their lives and are buried here. These are the ones who held out for nearly a month forcing the enemy to pay a high price for every brick, for every stone in the fortress.**

The carvings on the backside of the central monument depict the courage displayed in the heroic defense, the counter attack, the commanding officers, the last grenade and the machine gun men, ... all fighting to the end...never surrendering.

This garrison and fortress was the first place in Belarus to experience the power and brutality of Hitler's fascist army.

Video: Old man and woman (with military decorations) at the Eternal Flame

Narration:

It was a time that is impossible to forget. ... A memory that beats upon the heart.



Just Another Village

Ch. 46 (5:42) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

Along the highway north of Minsk is a large sign pointing toward **Khatyn**. This could be any of the thousands of villages in Belarus; small wood frame houses, ... a garden, ... a barn for the farm animals ... and people passing the time of day ...

but it is not.

There are no houses ... just chimneys where homes once stood ... 23 in all; a stylized representation of wells that supplied water to the homes ... gates connecting to the concrete walkways where roads were ... all a drab gray, the color of ashes from a fire. Nearby, ... is where the barn stood. The sounds of village life are replaced by the solemn peal of bells mounted on the top of each chimney.

This village of Khatyn, ... on March 27, 1943, ... was killed by Hitler's fascist army.

Hitler's army had been in Belarus since 1941 when they over-ran the Brest Fortress. By the time they arrived at this village, they had already destroyed most of Belarus including thousands of villages like **Khatyn**. Concentration and slave labor camps located in the cities and towns were full of **Belarusian** citizens. Hundreds of thousands of people were already dead.

Khatyn was *just another village* to the fascists. They arrived with tanks, machine guns and a flagrant disregard for life.

First, they rounded up all the villagers ... 151 people, 75 were children ... one baby was only 7 weeks old. They were herded into the barn and locked up. Gasoline was poured on it and set ablaze.

It didn't last long ... the screams ... the pleading ... all ended quickly. Those who tried to escape were gunned down.

Then, ... on the way out, ... after plundering ... they set the homes ablaze ... all 23 of them.

Then they left for *just another village*.

But, all were not dead. Two children survived, one protected by his mother's body as she was gunned down. The other was pulled from the rubble of the barn. There was also a lone adult ... who was a short distance away at the time of the massacre. Rushing to the empty village, he found his son in the smoldering barn and carefully held him in his arms as the boy died. ... They were all dead. ... Standing alone in anguish, ... he remains for all to see.

Those who died here were buried near the barn where they perished. Nearby are the tombs representing each of the 186 villages that were destroyed and never rebuilt during the three years of Hitler's rampage upon this land and its people. A handful of dirt from each of the dead villages has been placed in the urn on the tomb.

Next to this graveyard are emblematic trees with names of the villages that were destroyed but later rebuilt. Along the pathway is a huge monument that reminds us all of the lives lost in the various places of Belarus ... 206,500 in (**Tras-EE-anis**), 100,000 in Gomel, 10,000 in (**DRAZ-dee**), 10,000 in **bar-EE-so**). It goes on and on. **209 cities destroyed. 9,200 villages burned. 2,230,000 lives lost in Belarus** ... one fourth of the population. The eternal flame honors these lives lost and the three trees surrounding the flame represent those who survived.

Closing Comments:

On the chimney of each of the 23 homes is a plaque identifying each family who perished that day when the fascists arrived at *just another village*. This gate invites you to come into the home of **Josif Kaminski**, ... the lone adult survivor. At home ... and included on the plaque ... were his wife and his three children ages 15, 13, and 11.

All died that day, March 27, 1943.



TEAR DOWN THIS WALL!

Ch. 47 (11:36) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

♦ **Video:** (10 seconds)

USSR flag, Hammer and sickle emblem

Fade to overlay: (6 seconds)

Belarus, USSR, 1985

Video during first part of song: (1 minute)

Depictions of life style in Belarus during late 1980's with various worker scenes.

Audio track:

1977 version of USSR National Anthem

-- **Subtitles while playing anthem:**

Unbreakable Union of freeborn Republics,

Great Russia has welded forever to stand.

Created in struggle by will of the people,
 United and mighty, our Soviet land!
*Sing to the Motherland, home of the free,
 Bulwark of peoples in brotherhood strong.
 O Party of Lenin, the strength of the people,
 To Communism's triumph lead us on.*

-- **Audio music track:** Turn down music.

♦ **Video:**

Fade to photo of Mikhail Gorbachev, ... then to Ronald Reagan, ... then to Brandenburg Gate, Berlin.

♦ **Narration:**

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was the leader of the Soviet Union. Ronald Reagan was serving his second term as president of the United States. It would be another two years before he would stand at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin and proclaim:

♦ **Audio -- Using actual words of Reagan:**

Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! ... Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

♦ **Video:**

Fade to Orthodox Church then inside with lighting of candles.

♦ **Main overlay:**

Belarus, USSR, April 25, 1986

♦ **Narration:**

For the Orthodox Church, it is only 9 days until Easter. But, ... in the dark of this night, an unauthorized test on the #4 nuclear reactor at Chernobyl was under way. The crew had disabled emergency backup equipment and turned off warning alarms.

Main overlay changes to:

Belarus, USSR, April 26, 1986

♦ **Clock starts at:**

01:23:20

... The count goes on by the seconds as the narration continues.

-- **Narration continues:**

This one thousand megawatt nuclear power generator located just south of the Belarus border in Ukraine used highly flammable graphite for the moderator. ... Then as these misguided tests continued to drive the nuclear reactor well beyond safety margins ...

♦ **Clock at:**

April 26:1986:01:23:44

♦ **Narration STOPS:**

♦ **Clock flashes to:**

MELT DOWN

♦ **Audio:**

Loud multiple explosions

Video:

T-19 Part 06, Ch. 34-51 CRF Media Chronicles Belarus September 2006

Sun coming up then fades to several scenes of the blown up reactor.

Narration:

By daylight the magnitude of the disaster was clear. The explosions, ... the fires, ... the steam ... ALL sent clouds of radioactive particles into the air. Immediately, crews began an effort to extinguish the fires. ... But, ... Belarus was not told! ... The world was not told!

◆ **Video:**

Fade to worker scenes with life as usual

◆ **Audio:**

Start at verse 4 of Anthem

-- **Subtitles:**

In the vict'ry of Communism's deathless ideal,
We see the future of our dear land.
And to her fluttering scarlet banner,
Selflessly true we always shall stand!

◆ **Video:**

Life style scenes continue as narration starts.

◆ **Narration:**

The plumes of radioactive debris drifted over the Western Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and eventually around the entire globe. U.S. satellite images taken 3-1/2 days after the explosion showed that the intense graphite-fueled fire was still raging out of control. It was several days before the Kremlin reluctantly disclosed the magnitude of the disaster ... a nuclear disaster that sent radioactive dust equivalent to 150 Hiroshima bombs into the atmosphere.

◆ **Video:**

Map of contamination

-- **Narration continues:**

The prevailing winds carried 70% of the radioactive debris over Eastern Belarus. The residents of 430 villages were evacuated from their homes. 109,000 of the evacuees were resettled and never allowed to return. 116 of the villages were buried because of the contamination. The massive cleanup and containment effort took more than a year and cost billions of dollars and untold lives. More than 200,000 Belarussians participated in the cleanup. Eventually, the reactor was entombed into an enormous concrete and steel sarcophagus. Meanwhile medical teams worked to treat radiation sickness.

Twenty years later helicopters, armored vehicles, water trucks and other equipment rest in open graves. Contaminated by radioactive debris, they must remain to themselves for many years to come. Trees have replaced the grass and the vegetable gardens that were once part of the homes of the abandoned villages. Vines ensnarl the small wood frame structures where a family once lived. Some left in haste leaving behind shoes ... never to be worn again. Vandals broke windows and doors as they pillaged the vacant homes.

The roadway has been reduced to little more than a path by the shrubs and trees. Along this seldom-traveled trail is a war memorial. Although difficult to find, it still brings to memory a time when another tragedy befell this land. Nearby, farmers harvest their crops, but guard towers high above are a warning of the danger only a short distance away. The toil of surviving day by day continues as before.

On the edge of a contaminated zone in Southern Belarus ... and a mere 15 miles from the meltdown site ... is Bragin, a city of 15,000 people. Although located only 75 miles south of the large city of Gomel, the well-kept Bragin Museum is visited by merely a few. People from the United States very rarely come to this place. Inside, the guide explains the range of the fallout and how it affected the people living in the areas. Pieces of the past common to those who lived here are reminders of the many uprooted lives. A visit to the Bragin region recalls a painful time that did not need to occur.

Also in Bragin is one of the best-equipped hospitals of Belarus. It is at this facility that the lingering effects of Chernobyl are treated. Most often it is thyroid cancer. Birth defects and immune system disorders add to the continued misery. There are about 30 doctors on staff at this hospital.

The bitterness over the government's handling of Chernobyl contributed to the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. In that year, Belarus, Ukraine and many other countries declared their independence.

The Berlin Wall is no more and Germany is free, but the people of Belarus remain locked behind a wall. They live under a dictator with a totalitarian Soviet style government. The press is restricted as is the freedom of worship. The

Orthodox Church is the state church. Evangelical Believers ... including Baptists... are considered to be cults.

For several years, President Reagan and Premier Gorbachev met on a regular basis. Ronald Reagan's closing words at the Brandenburg Gate explained why the meetings were important.

♦ Audio from Ronald Reagan – actual words:

The totalitarian world produces backwardness because it does such violence to the spirit, thwarting the human impulse to create, to enjoy, to worship. The totalitarian world finds even symbols of love and of worship an affront. Yes, across Europe, this wall will fall. For it cannot withstand faith; it cannot withstand truth. The wall cannot withstand freedom.

The people of Belarus need freedom, ... they need our love and our encouragement. In a land where there is little hope, we are called to offer the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is He who will bring freedom, hope, and healing to a land and people that are, ... in many ways, ... surrounded by the past.

Won't you be one of those who help to tear down these walls and share the love of Jesus?

♦ Closing song in Russian:

(sung by young man playing guitar at Golgotha Church in Minsk)

Subtitles:

Who am I?

Chorus: Who am I that You lifted me up so high and chose me to be your son?

How can I thank you for everything You gave me so abundantly?



A New Day for Belarus

Ch. 48 (6:14) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

Belarus, ... located on the Eastern edge of Europe and only 400 miles from Moscow, ... was part of the Soviet Union until 1991. During the Soviet rule, the country was divided into six administrative districts known as Oblasts.

In every **Oblast**, monuments to the past are displayed in the cities and major towns. Statues of Vladimir Lenin, the founder of the Soviet Union, are often the most prominent. Memorials display the horrendous events of 1941 to 1944 known as the Great Patriotic War. As a result of this war, one fourth of the population of Belarus was killed.

The 70 years of Communist Rule by the Soviet Union has left other monuments as well; ... the drab shoebox style apartment buildings lined up row after row, the decaying heavy industrial areas in the larger cities, and the tall smokestacks of the power and heating plants. The fall of the Soviet Union allowed many of its republics, including Belarus, to declare independence. However, for Belarus close economic and political ties with Russia remain. Independence made little difference to most **Belarusian's** since they were reasonably happy with Soviet rule. Changes were made in the industrial activities requiring some plants to close while others expanded. The Belarus tractor factory, for example, began exporting its products worldwide. Petrochemical industries in the south, along with large-scale agricultural enterprises continued to contribute to the economy but with only modest expansion.

The first few years after independence were characterized by personal freedom unknown to **Belarusian's**. They could move about within the country without fear of the intrusion from secret police and were free to worship and praise their God.

(Music – Worship song from one of the churches)

The evangelical Believer could now openly share their faith with others. It appeared that there was a new day for Believers.

But this freedom of religion was short lived. A new president was elected who rewrote the constitution and enacted laws that curtailed much of the free press. Additional laws have made it difficult to share one's faith or to start new evangelical churches. Indifference and apathy allowed this transformation back to a Soviet style dictatorship. The people have lived for

centuries under an authoritarian government and they are comfortable with this way of life. The “good old days” of Soviet rule was considered a time of peace and stability. Appearance and stability is important for the Belarusian. This is seen as they spend time in a park and visit with friends and family; as college students stopping to enjoy a cup of **Kavas**; and as a large group of young pioneers meeting with parents, teachers and fellow members. Flowers along the roadway and in the city parks portray the theme of a peaceful and prosperous country. In the past few years, apartment and office buildings have been cleaned and painted bright colors on the outside. The roads, highways, and public transportation systems are much improved. The shelves in retail stores are well stocked with a variety of merchandise. For the most part, the appearance is just a veneer and not representative of reality. The economy of Belarus is still much below European standards. Wages are very low with salaries dictated by the government. New jobs are few and the future employment for young people is uncertain. Belarus has a negative population growth because of low birth rate and immigration to other countries.

The State supports the Orthodox Church providing for construction of new temples; temples that are monuments declaring the official State religion and excluding other beliefs. While 98% of **Belarusian’s** claim a Christian faith, few attend worship services and fewer still know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

The new day ushered in by independence may be turning to night for Believers in Belarus. It is becoming increasingly difficult to establish new evangelical churches and Bible studies. Gaining government approval for meetings and a meeting place is difficult particularly in the rural areas where there are very few Believers. Evangelical Believers represent less than one percent of the population and are considered a cult by the government and by the Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, many have a deep and enduring faith in Jesus. Those who seek to share their faith and to establish new churches continue on their journey despite the obstacles placed in their path.

Will you pray that the faith of Believers will shine for all to see and many Belarusians will come to know Jesus personally?

Will you pray that ... through faith in Jesus ... the darkness that pervades the land will be transformed bringing a bright new day for the people of Belarus?

Closing scripture – SCROLL: *“Jesus spoke to them again, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me shall not live in darkness but will have the light of life.’”* John 8:12



A Church Planting Movement in Belarus

Ch. 49 (15:29) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

Opening – Video background – flags and pictures of Russian rulers.

Put on the full armor of God,
that you may be able to stand firm
against the schemes of the devil.
For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the powers,
against the world forces of this darkness,
against the spiritual forces of wickedness
in the heavenly places.
Ephesians 6:11-12

For over 1,000 years, the people of Russia have been subjugated by tsars and dictators. During most of that time, the Orthodox Church was the State church and religious freedom was unknown.

But, it was in the late 1800’s and the early 1900’s that an evangelical church planting movement was underway in Russia. Missionaries from the Baltic region, Germany, Ukraine and Georgia began the spread of the Gospel of faith and holiness. This message continued an eastward progression all the way to the Pacific Ocean. In less than 60 years, the movement grew from no Baptist Believers to over 600,000.

But, the spread of the Gospel was not an easy task. It was against the law to convert from the Orthodox faith to Baptist. Prayer meetings and worship services were held in hidden locations.

The first Russian Baptist Believer was **Nikita Voronin** from the city of **Tbilisi**, the capital of Georgia. He was Biblically baptized in the dark of night August 27, 1867 by a German Baptist missionary. **Nikita** was very active in sharing God's Word. For this, he was branded a troublemaker by the Orthodox clergy and twice sent into exile where he died in 1905.

As the movement grew, the persecution also grew. Shortly before he died in 1894, Tsar Alexander III decreed that meetings of evangelicals were prohibited. Widespread and systematic persecution emerged in the Russian Empire and continued for the next 11 years.

In 1905, Tsar Nicholas II, ... recognizing the instability caused by the persecution, ... issued a decree that required religious tolerance. It became legal to leave the Orthodox faith and Houses of Prayer were allowed as well as meeting in homes.

This 1905 decree launched a revolution of rapid expansion for the Baptists. The 1911 Second Congress of the Baptist World Alliance recognized this growth. A large group of Russian Baptist leaders traveled to Philadelphia for this conference. The church planting movement continued at an unprecedented pace through the **Bolshevik** Revolution in 1917, the Lenin years, and the first few years of Stalin's rule. By this time, churches were organizing all over the country even though the government used a variety of tactics to stop or at least slow down the growth.

By 1929, Stalin became convinced that this movement was a significant threat to his power. Consequently, he enacted a repressive law that effectively halted all evangelistic church planting. Thus began a systematic extermination of all evangelical Believers. This continued through **Khrushchev** and finally on to the end of **Gorbachev's** rule.

By the time the Soviet Union fell in 1991, the number of evangelical Believers was reduced to less than 10% of that during the 1920's. Yet, in Belarus, as in the rest of Russia, the light of the Gospel was not extinguished even in these dark days.

Listen as one couple tells us how they came to know Jesus.

Vera and Sasha, Minsk Belarus (Interview in Russian – text has been corrected for English narration which will be done in different voices. Introduce selves with Mila translating.)
(fade to Vera) Female Voice #1

Since I can remember, I have known that God loved me and that I need to pray to Him. I have always felt the prayers of my parents and when I moved away from home, there were a lot of different situations when I realized that it was only my mom's prayers that kept me safe. When I moved to Minsk, I realized that I needed to be baptized for my commitment to the Lord; but I couldn't be baptized in the city. We had to do it at night. I went back to the village where I was born. My parents were there at my baptism service and other older members of the church were there and those people heard the promises I made to God.

(fade to Sasha) Male Voice #1 ...

I remember the time when my family was sent to Siberia for ten years and I remember the desire of wanting to hear the Gospel but there wasn't an opportunity to do that. There wasn't a Bible. There wasn't a church there. There was just the desire ... the thirst ... of wanting to hear the Gospel.

When we were allowed to move back to Moldova in 1955, I graduated from high school then served in the army. After that I moved to Minsk and got a job at the auto factory. It was here that I began to attend church where I accepted Christ and in 1972 I was baptized at night ... about 100 km from Minsk at midnight – right at midnight. ... It was at night because if you were under 30 years old you couldn't be baptized legally and so that is why I had to go to a little church in a village where the authorities were not watching. I became a member of the church and I joined a young adult group. I met Vera and for over 30 years we have been together.

Closing:

There are many strong churches in Belarus that have grown through the short years of freedom as well as the long years of tyranny. The church planting movement in Belarus will continue despite the repressive law adopted in 2002. This law requires that at least 20 people and a separate building be established and registered with the government before meetings can be held. Religious meetings in homes are not allowed, making it very difficult to start new churches ... particularly in the rural areas.

This law allows established evangelical churches to continue but growth is slow since their worship and other meetings are constrained to the specific location in which they have a government registration. Often, the pastor is not allowed to preach in districts other than his own. Despite these problems, the Baptist pastors of Belarus are working to accelerate the church

planting movement.

Nicolia Sinkovets, President of the Baptist Union in Belarus
Male Voice #2

Today we have 75 cities and more than a thousand villages without a Baptist Church. Those numbers make us look to the future and think how we could reach the people for Christ. Today, less than 1% of the people of Belarus are evangelical Christians. In the past 16 years, we have opened 206 churches. We pray that those churches would grow and be healthy and be missions minded and send missionaries to start other churches. Our goal is to have a Baptist church in each town.

Victor Kruktrkto, General Secretary of Baptist Union in Belarus and Senior Pastor, Bethlehem Baptist Church
(Pastor speaking in English)

Before freedom the main goal was to edify church. After freedom came we received opportunity to edify church and preach the Gospel. That is the #1 change. The #2 change I would say ... Soon we found out that we have to do something better to preach the Gospel ... how to reach these people ... how to reach this culture. We have to adjust something ... we have to change some approaches in our churches. Like in my church for example, our services are directed toward church people and unbelieving people. If you would know our country, Belarus – of former Soviet Union – in one service, we used to have 3, 4 even 5 sermons, which under Soviet Union was OK but now we have 1 or 2 sermons with a lot of Bible Study. A lot has changed. The music has changed through the years.

Dima Lazouta, Senior Pastor of Good News Baptist Church, Minsk
(Pastor speaking in English)

I have a dream to start 20 churches in 20 years. So the first church will be started very soon in one or 2 months. For a while it will be a part of Good News Church. Then it will be a totally independent congregation. We have a dream to start more churches in the big cities of our country and I am starting leadership school. In one month, I hope I will have 40 to 50 young leaders and I would try to train them. It will be a Saturday kind of studies.

Pavel Rudoy, Pastor of Hope Church, Grodno
Male Voice #3

We have three musical groups in our church involved in outreach ministry. The ministry is not only in our city but in many other places in Belarus. Also, we have a strong ministry among handicapped children with special activities for them at the church. Many people help in the rehabilitation center including bringing food. This ministry began three years ago and we have good results. Our church is built and equipped with these special ministries in mind including a wheelchair ramp.

The message that these and other Believers want all of the Belarusians to understand is clearly displayed in almost every Baptist church. This proclamation: “God is Love” serves as a reminder that God IS the source of ... love ... peace ... joy ... hope.

Yes! Your involvement is important! Listen to Pastor Oleg ...

Oleg Borisov, Pastor of Word of Life Church, Mogilev
(Pastor speaking in English)

Pray for our people. Pray for our churches. Pray for a generation – for the next generation to come to know Jesus because the future is in that. I would like to invite Christians from America to come here for short-term mission projects to work with churches because it really encourages us here when we can work together in the Christian camp or a building team or a building project can come and help the church. It really encourages people here to see that people care for them and people love them and people are willing to help.

[Sing along with the Belarusian Believers as they proclaim, “It is Well with My Soul”.](#)



Faith That Endures

Ch. 50 (12:02) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

(Opening – Granny reading her favorite passage, Psalm 121
– Have caption for vs. 1-3

**I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help
come from?
My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven
and earth.
He will not let your foot slip.
He who watches over you will not slumber. Psalm
121:1-3**

To her family she is “Granny”. Widowed for many years,
she lives in a small house in **Berazino**, Belarus. Granny’s

garden, ... which takes up the front and back yard, ... provides most of her food. But, it is her faith in God and in Jesus Christ that sustains her.

The Gospel was brought to Belarus some 200 years ago and by the late 1920’s, many evangelical churches were started. Even in the midst of Vladimir Lenin becoming ruler of what became known as the Soviet Union. This was a difficult time for Christians since Lenin proclaimed that there is no God. Religious meetings were banned and the once influential Russian Orthodox Church rapidly decayed. Still, many revere Lenin as his image remains a central monument in many places. However, no images of Stalin, the successor to Lenin, are displayed. Only the memories remain of the millions of people who were murdered or exiled to Siberia. The hammer and sickle, symbol of the Soviet Union, also is symbolic of Stalin’s brutality. During the 70 years of Communist rule and harsh religious persecution, the Believers avoided detection by secretly meeting in the forest. It was in the forest, ... in the dark of night and with only a few in attendance, ... that new Believers were baptized. This is how it was when Granny came to faith in Jesus as her Lord and Savior. But fear was constantly present. She could share with only her closest friends and relatives. During this time, Stalin’s internal security police used the forest as killing fields. Those considered to be enemies of the state were rounded up, murdered and buried in mass graves. The crosses were added much later.

Belarus, a country about the size of Kansas, is at a strategic location between Russia and Europe. It was in 1941 that Hitler’s army began the invasion of Russia at the fortress in the city of **Brest**. The events of this horrific period are displayed where it happened at the **Brest Hero-Fortress** in southwest Belarus. The tears of remembrance for those who fought and died to protect their homeland linger at this memorial. ... More was to come.

It came with the carnage and brutality of the Great Patriotic War ... or World War II as we know it; ... entire villages, ... 433 in all... were burned to the ground; ... the residents rounded up like cattle and murdered. The Jews, ... once a vital part of Belarus, ... were nearly all annihilated. Before it was over, ... one-fourth of the population was killed; ... most were young men. Granny’s husband was wounded in this fighting but survived to see a resumption of the draconian oppression of Stalin and his internal security police. Still, Granny, her family and other Christians throughout Belarus remained true to their faith ... even growing stronger.

In April 1986, another horror came to the country in the form of an unseen enemy covering much of the land. ... Chernobyl ... the meltdown of #4 nuclear reactor in the Chernobyl power plant just ten miles south of the border in Ukraine. 70% of the radioactive fallout contaminated Belarus. To this day, many villages in the southeast are uninhabitable. Trees and vines grow in, up and around what were once homes. Tens of thousands died. The effects continue with high sickness, depression and a low birth rate. Large sections of good farmland were rendered useless. One of Granny’s son’s was part of the massive **Chernobyl** cleanup effort and subsequently died of radiation poisoning.

The **Belarusian’s** are survivors. They have survived the long history of domination by outside influences ... of being trampled upon like a doormat. With long lines and bare shelves in grocery stores, they planted gardens and fruit trees. ... They work the land by hand to feed their families and store food and fuel for the long, cold winters. ... They go to the forests to gather mushrooms to use for themselves and to sell to others. ... They raise chickens, ducks, sheep and goats for food. ... The oppression brought on by the 70 years of totalitarian Communist rule made little difference to the mind set of the people; ... it only added to their pessimism and hopelessness. The bright colorful flowerbeds that bloom along the streets and in city parks are symbolic of the peace and tranquility that **Belarusian’s** value most.

The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1991 brought great celebrations for many countries as they, at long last, achieved

independence. Belarus, too, declared it's independence and for some this offered a new hope. Believers like Granny began to openly share God's Word. Churches started and church buildings, ... like the one where Granny worships ... were constructed. Seminaries to train pastors were expanded. It was an exciting time but, ... after only six short years, ... change came again with a return to much of the former religious oppression.

The memories of a trampled past, turmoil, grief, discouragement and lost freedom remain. The fresh coat of paint on the drab soviet style apartment buildings does not cover up these memories. The new busses and trolleys added to the fleet of public transportation and the shiny new imported cars and trucks will not carry away the feelings of the past. New construction throughout the capital city of Minsk and the shops stacked with merchandise are for the few who can afford the price. Because of the low wages, the lives of the common people are not changed. The blank, empty faces of those waiting for the bus express hopelessness in the hearts of the workers.

In the rural areas, the horse drawn plow is still a part of life on the small farms. Potatoes and other crops are often harvested by hand. Mushrooms, sold by the bucket full, are found in abundance in the forest. But, like in the cities ... things appear to be changing. Large commercial farms rival those of the European countries. Huge combines harvest the wheat. Corn silage is cut and chopped for winter cattle feed. Acres of cabbage fields are now part of the landscape. Sunflowers add another touch of beauty to a growing farm economy. Except, the combines, the farms, the processing facilities are all government owned. The horse drawn wagon belongs to the farmer. The big trucks speeding by do not even bother the horses. They will be pulling wagons for many generations to come.

The people of Belarus have a deep commitment to traditional values. Weddings, ... often conducted each Saturday, ... exemplify this desire to connect with the past as the wedding party visits one of the many monuments for an extended photography session.

A wedding for the Believers is more than just symbolic. It is real to them and to the church as the bride and groom solemnly commit their lives to each other and to God.

Believers, like the bride and groom, have a deep commitment to their faith, to each other and to the church. They seek to learn more through worship activities and Bible studies. Unfortunately, the Believers of Belarus are few in number and are considered a cult by the government and by the Orthodox tradition.

The survivalist tendency of the Believers mirrors that of the **Belarusian's**; few venture beyond the church walls to share their faith with others. The current political climate makes it difficult for the open proclamation of the Gospel and the establishment of new churches and home Bible study groups. Nevertheless, the Baptists of Belarus agree with the words In Revelation 3:8, where Jesus said to the church in Philadelphia, "*I have set before you an open door which no one can shut.*" The Baptists of Belarus realize that before them stands such an open door and by faith a few are stepping across the threshold seeking to take the message of hope in Jesus Christ to their land. Recently, pastors and national Baptist leaders fanned out in a nation wide evangelistic crusade called, "*There is Hope.*" Other evangelistic outreach activities include: Youth and children's camps every summer at the national Baptist camp in **Kobrin** and regional tent camping experiences organized by local pastors and leaders held in the fresh air of the nearby forests and alongside the meandering rivers and streams.

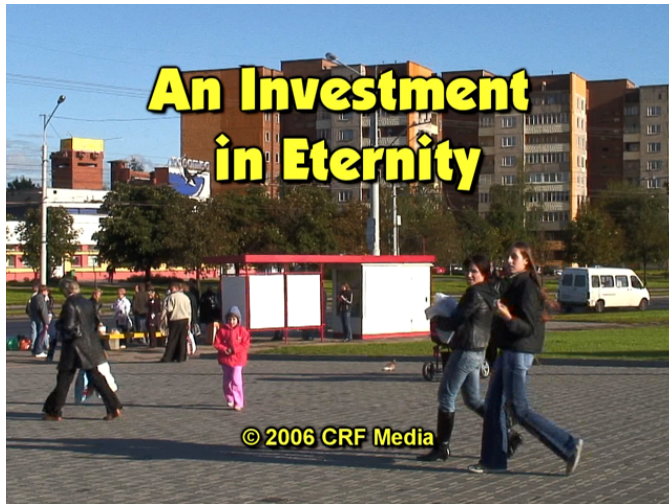
Yes, great things are taking place through the ministry of the Baptists of Belarus, but needs still exist.

The large cities each have an active Christian presence with several churches. On the other hand, much of Belarus is unreached by the Gospel. This includes 39 cities with a population between 5,000 and 25,000 that do not have an evangelical church and nearly 1,500 villages without any type of Biblical witness for Christ. In many places in Belarus, there is still not even one Believer or evangelical family to shine the light of Christ.

There are needs for evangelism, discipleship, and leadership training. There are needs for assisting Baptists in penetrating the unreached subgroups of Belarus such as Doctors and Nurses, Students and Teachers, Market Workers and Intellectuals, Orphans and the Handicapped. Are you available to assist with one of these needs?

Most of her life Granny has been sharing her faith with all who would listen. Her gnarled hands clutch her Bible as she tells of God's faithfulness. She reminds us of faithful prayer with her friends each day for her church, for her family, for her town and for Belarus. Most especially she prays for people to come from America and other countries to share their faith in Christ with the unreached of Belarus. Won't you be a part of the answer to her prayer? Won't you come to Belarus and share the Gospel?

Overlay ... the Faith That Endures



An Investment for Eternity

Ch. 51 (10:07) Filmed September 2006

Video on Pt. 08 Disc

The Belarusians are much like you and me ... a friendly people who are concerned for their families and those about them. They are also a people who have been victims of tragic world events ... events that have left scars on the land and on the people.

Their daily toil is little different from others. Whether in the office or in the fields, they work to provide for their families and to seek peace and stability.

Growing up, the people of Belarus learn that to be a true Belarusian is to be Russian Orthodox. Of course, Orthodox churches abound but these buildings are not

important in their lives. The buildings, the icons inside and the worship rituals do not offer the eternal hope that can be found only in trusting Jesus Christ as their savior.

Evangelical Believers are few in this land ... less than 1%. Within this small percentage only about half of these are Baptist. Religious laws and social persecution make it difficult to share God's Word. Nevertheless, it is happening ... but at a slow pace.

You and I can make a difference. We can be involved in reaching Belarus for Christ. Listen and discover how and why.

English narration:

Dr. Alexander Firisiuk, Pastor of the Minsk Theological Seminary, former president of Belarus Baptist Union

When I was a little boy, in my village several Baptist brothers sat down and they talked ... they said that there are a lot of Baptists who live in the U.S. It would be so interesting to see ... a live American Baptist and they say it is impossible on this earth. But when we get to heaven we wonder will we recognize who is an American Baptist or a Belarusian Baptist? I told about this to the students of our seminary that it is a miracle that we see them every day and I tell them that when a miracle happens once, it is a little miracle but since we see Americans every day, it is a great miracle. We want American churches to do this great miracle witnessing about Christ with us.

English narration:

Nickolay Sinkovets, President of the Baptist Union in Belarus

First of all, I would ask American churches to pray for us. That is something they were doing when we were under the Soviet Union. Second -- We have good relationships with some of the churches and conventions. We have a lot of opportunities but not enough resources sometimes. We ask American churches for partnership and to come and work. We're open for ministry.

Pastor Victor in English:

Victor Krutko, General Secretary of Baptist Union in Belarus and Senior Pastor Bethlehem Baptist Church

I would still encourage people from the Western world to come and to just visit churches to see the situations, to pray. Sometimes we have an opportunity with people like from America to reach even today ... we can reach some people that we cannot reach. For example, because we are considered as a sect here in Belarus I had several experiences under this difficult times. I have some American guys who we took to schools and they were talking to children ... they talked about Jesus Christ. That is only because they were American and the school received them anyway. "I want to wish American churches not to put the Spirit down -- go ahead -- not to be afraid of any obstacle. Everywhere in Belarus and in America - Western world, the spirit of liberalism and modernism is taking over the churches. We look up to American churches as an example for us."

English narration:

Genadiy Brutskiy, Senior Pastor of Minsk Region

I would like to thank Baptist churches in America, especially, the Missouri churches for working with us for so many years. We can't forget the kindness and the sacrifice Baptist churches in America made since the doors opened and freedom came to

our country. I have no doubt that the churches were praying about us even when we were under the Iron Curtain. The fact that this Iron Curtain fell is the result of the prayers too. I would like to invite those who have an opportunity to come ... young people and old people. We are open to many ministries and in many ways.

Pastor Dima in English:

Dima Lazuta, Pastor of Good News Baptist Church

To start new churches in big cities, it is very expensive. I will give you one example. We cannot find a room to rent that is cheaper than \$1,000 per month for one day per week. We are quite a big church and we have a lot of money like probably 40-50 thousand dollars per year that we have in our budget and it's quite challenging for us -- 400 people congregation it is challenging. So there is no chance for a church like 100 people – 200 people – starting a church without support because it is very expensive. So, if your churches would be interested to partner with us. Again, money is one issue but it is not the first issue. To help ... to inspire ... to encourage ... to pray ... it would be very good. We slowly will grow without your help but if you want to change the situation in our country to extend our ministry quickly, we need some help outside.

Pastor Oleg in English:

Oleg Borisov, Pastor of Word of Life Church in Mogilev.

It really encourages people here to see that people care for them and people love them and people are willing to help. I became a Christian in 1993 when there was one week camp – one week camp – when a short term missionary came – to do just a one week of Bible teaching and I was 14 and that is where I became a Christian and the guy from Georgia led me to the Lord so I am a strong believer and supporter for short-term mission work. Definitely I am a product of that-- if I may say so – I am a pastor of a church now – so please come. It really matters.

English narration:

Pavel Rudoy, Pastor of Hope Church in Grodno

Brothers and sisters in the United States, we just invite you to come to Belarus to support our mission work; to help in our fishing camps and VBS; to help us in our evangelization programs and to participate in baptism. To try for the first time is very difficult but the second step is easier and will be stronger and more joyful. Just bring your boat so we can catch many fish and it will be a great ministry for God's glory.

Dr. Artsiom in English:

Dr. Artsiom Adamenka, Chief of ICU Dept. in Bragin Regional Hospital; Executive Secretary of Belarusian Christian Medical Society.

I would like to say to my colleagues ... doctors and nurses and medical students ... welcome to Belarus ... welcome to your Belarusian colleagues. We are really very glad to meet with you and maybe to have some common projects here to spread God's kingdom in Belarus.

Narrator:

Those before you have made a difference and you too can have an impact on this nation. You can share the hope found only in Jesus Christ.

Sasha in English:

Alexandra Kazankova

Just ask God's guidance and follow Him and just come and be a sparkle for our people; a sparkle that will set the hearts of people on fire here. ... By the time you decide to come to Belarus, if I will be here, I will be glad to work with you.

Narrator:

Come and invest a moment of your life. Make an eternal difference!

>> The background is of several different fishing scenes. This scripture was based on the comments of Pastor Pavel in his interview.

>> Piano background music for this sequence is the chorus of "Living for Jesus".

>> Overlay – scripture

"Jesus said, Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men." -- Mark 1:17

>> Scroll with things to do

Youth Camp

Children's Camp

Leadership Training

Women's Conferences

Men's Conferences
English as a Second Language
Discipleship Training
Ministry to:
 > **Orphanages**
 > **Handicapped**
 > **Families**
 > **Widows**
 > **Alcoholics**
 > **Drug Addicts**
Evangelistic Partnership
Prayer Walking
Prayer Partnerships with:
 > **Young Belarusian Ministers**
 > **Belarusian Missionaries**
Sports Outreach Evangelism
Outreach to Professionals