

MAGNOLIA MINDS: A Bathtub Baptism and The Lord's Supper via Zoom

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Below is a glorious story from church planter Vasily Lopatin. Vasily and his wife Tatiana are Russian immigrants serving as North American missionaries. They are planting the Slavic Evangelical Fellowship in Rochester, New York. Their work is being supported by Emmanuel Church, Grenada; the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; the North American Mission Board; and a host of supporting churches nationwide.

Butan (named changed for security purposes) has a different kind of story. Her story does not look like something that would happen in the middle of America but somewhere in the Mideast. She came to the Lord from a Muslim background.

During a recent Zoom teleconference discipleship meeting, Butan asked Vasily if she could take The Lord's Supper with Vasily and Tatiana via Zoom. Vasily responded, "Why not, if you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior." With that, Butan proceeded to share about her unusual baptism.

Butan lives in another state. One Sunday she managed to attend a local church near her home and asked for baptism from the

pastor. He agreed to baptize her but explained that she would need to attend pre-baptism classes (which is fine and normal but not in her situation).

She told the pastor, "I cannot as my husband does not allow me to have fellowship with Christians. I really would like to be baptized today." The pastor replied, "We cannot do that."

Butan was determined to follow the Lord in believer's baptism, so she asked her sons (15 and 16 years old) to baptize her in her bathtub. She confessed Jesus as her Lord and Savior and they immersed her in the bathtub.

Upon sharing this experience, she asked Vasily if this was an acceptable mode of baptism. Vasily answered, "Well, it is a slightly non-traditional one for sure, but the Lord knows your heart and He knows that you acted in obedience to Him in the only way you could. I have no problem with that."

In preparation for the Lord's Supper, Vasily reminded Butan to retrieve a small amount of grape juice and a piece of bread. Butan replied, "I do not have grape juice and I cannot get any right now since I am still learning how to drive a car. Can I use water instead?"

On Thursday night, April 1, 2021, via Zoom, Butan and her two sons participated in the Lord's Supper using water and bread!

Everyone has suffered in some way from the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions for the past year, and it has proven to be a very challenging time. However, it opened new inspiring online opportunities to serve people like Butan.

In addition to discipling Butan, Vasily and Tatiana have been able to reach out to Nadia in New Jersey as well as truck drivers on the road through their Thursday night Zoom discipleship meetings.

Vasily says, "Praise the Lord who makes all things to serve

His purposes!" He also shares the following prayer needs:

- We would like to ask God to continue developing our ministries and bringing people to our ministries. Especially pray for those families with whom we made friendships recently. May the Lord work at the soil of their hearts to receive the Word of God and have it to grow and bear fruit.
- Pray for our pilot English as a Second Language (ESL) development and for people we would like to lead in relations with God.
- Pray for Elena (Tatiana shared the Gospel with her) in Crimea to grow in the Bible reading and faith.
- Pray for Butan as her husband, who has not come to the Lord, opposes her Christian faith, and mistreats her.

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