



Different Days, But the Same Glorious Mission

While many SGA missionaries from the earliest days of our mission are now with the Lord or retired, several remain on active service including Ruth Deyneka Erdel, Andrew Semenchuk, Florence Daneliuk, and Nick and Rose Leonovich. We recently conducted a roundtable discussion with several of our senior missionaries to look back, and ahead to what God will do in the future. From that discussion, we are pleased to share a part of the Leonoviches' ongoing story.

When you sit down for any length of time with Nick and Rose Leonovich, it's hard to believe that they are past the age when most have long since retired. Their youthful energy and joy of serving Christ knows no bounds, and they remain on duty as senior international representatives for SGA. Nick and Rose served in SGA's Russian-language radio ministry through Trans World Radio between 1958 and 1985, with most of those years in Monte Carlo. They were

'on loan' to TWR and Nick was the director of the TWR Russian Department.

ROSE LEONOVICH

For Rose, it all began in the late 1940s when she was a young girl, and SGA founder Peter Deyneka visited her church in Edmonton, Alberta. In his thick Russian accent, he said, "Roza, you must go to our Russian Bible Institute in Toronto and prepare to serve the Lord among our Slavic people!" Said Rose, "Mr. Deyneka didn't give you much opportunity to say no. It was like the Lord saying, 'You go!' *Continued on page 2*

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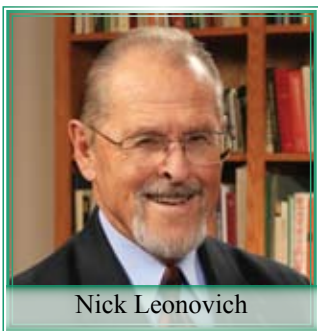
And I really did feel the Lord calling me to go.” After Rose graduated from the Institute in 1948, Peter sent her to work in Europe with Russian-speaking refugees at the International Refugee Organization Camps, to be joined later by his daughter, Ruth. She hadn’t been there long before God vividly declared His power . . .



Rose Leonovich

Ruth and I had only been in the DP camp one week holding meetings at the YMCA house. Ruth played the accordion and did the flannelgraph for the children gathered around us, and in the evenings we had Gospel meetings with the parents in the auditorium. At the last meeting, I gave the Gospel again. Then I said, ‘Those who understand all that I’ve been trying to tell you all week, raise your hand.’ Every hand went up! I said, ‘No, you don’t understand. This is a very serious thing between you and God. Do you want to repent of your sins, put your faith in the Lord and be a child of God? If so, stand up.’ Everyone stood up! I looked at Ruth and began to cry. I said, ‘I don’t know what to do!’ Ruth said, ‘Roza! You pray and let them follow you [in prayer]!’ She had been with her father in evangelistic meetings, but I had never had that exposure. So I prayed, and they prayed with me. There must have been 1,000 people there!

NICK LEONOVICH



Nick Leonovich

Nick Leonovich had somewhat different circumstances than Rose, yet a similar experience with Peter Deyneka, whose wife, Vera, was Nick’s cousin.

[In the early 1950s] I was working with youth at a church in North Carolina, when Peter invited me to a missions conference in Chicago. When I arrived in Chicago, Mr. Deyneka said, ‘Nick, this summer my son Peter, Andrew Semenchuk and I are going to Europe to minister in the refugee camps. Nick, why don’t you go?’ Like Rose, I felt the Lord speaking to me through Peter. When I

got back to North Carolina, the pastor I had been helping surprised me on the way home when he told me that the Lord had been moving him to begin a missions ministry, and would I consider going out as a Grace Baptist Church missionary to the displaced persons camps! We prayed together, and it wasn’t long before the church unanimously voted to send me, and took on my full support. I’ll never forget their response!

After I met and married Rose, I just thank God for the way He led us. We went out to minister to Slavic



Peter Deyneka with Rose, Nick, and other SGA missionaries in Europe

people, many in the camps because of forced labor. When the Nazis occupied part of the Soviet Union, they sent these people to Germany as slaves. Then in 1958, we got involved in radio ministry to those inside the Soviet Union when missionaries couldn’t go. Today, God has given us the opportunity to go personally to the former Soviet Union and minister there. And we still meet people who were reached for Christ through our programs!

Last year, we were in Ukraine. At a small church near Irpen, I was invited to speak by the pastor, who is on staff at Irpen Seminary. Rose and I were moved deeply as he introduced me. He said: ‘When I was a young boy, my family lived in Far East Russia in the city of Irkutsk. My father was a military officer and not a believer. Eventually, he heard the Gospel and received Christ as his Savior. Soon after his conversion, he heard of Christian radio broadcasts and began listening to them, and I also began hearing the Gospel through the programs. When it became known that my father believed in God, he was discharged from the military.

Eventually, I too believed and we moved to the Kiev area, where I began working at the seminary. A few years ago, as I was walking through the halls, I heard a familiar voice from childhood. As I approached the classroom, I saw the man speaking, and realized that this was the man whose voice I used to hear in the radio broadcasts! That is when I got to meet, for the first

time, the brother who will bring God's Word to us this morning, Nikolai Pavlovich Leonovich.'

While these testimonies of the past are joyful and encouraging, today represents yet another phase in not only the ministries of senior missionaries like the Leonoviches, but also in the overall ministry of our mission. Nick believes that it's vital to press ahead while the opportunity still exists, because the

spiritual hunger and need for the Gospel has never lessened across the lands of Russia. We have enjoyed a brief season of open ministry there, but the doors are closing again and ministry there is becoming much more difficult. That is why it is imperative to press on and take advantage of every opportunity the Lord grants to help Russian evangelical churches in their great task of reaching their people for Christ!

SGA During the 1970s . . .

1970 . . . Then 36 years old, SGA had (as of 1970) more than 100 missionaries in 22 countries reaching Russians and other Slavic peoples for Christ. The "Gospel Messenger," a Russian-language publication, was sent to readers in more than 65 nations. Bibles and Christian books were being taken behind the Iron Curtain and into Russia. Gospel broadcasts were being transmitted daily from 10 missionary radio stations to millions of Russian speakers. Also, some 200 Christian leaders had graduated from the Russian Bible Institute in Argentina.

SGA missionary Bill Kapitaniuk and Peter Deyneka, Jr. broke ground in northern France for a missionary center and literature storage facility. Bill described the building as a "launching pad for Eastern Europe." Later, a youth center building was added along with vehicles for transporting literature to communist Eastern Europe.

1974 . . . By the middle of June, 30 young people, led by David Wagler, arrived in France to help Bill Kapitaniuk and share his vision through a program called SYTE (Summer Youth Training in Europe). These young people would eventually fan out across Eastern Europe to take literature and relief assistance to Christians living under communist oppression.

Having been accepted as an SGA missionary in 1972, Dr. Roman Dechtiarenko began his Bible teaching ministry during this year. To this day, Roman



Roman Dechtiarenko

continues to hold classes for pastoral and Christian education students at SGA-sponsored seminaries and Bible institutes across the lands of Russia.

1975 . . . Peter Deyneka Sr. retired as president of SGA. His son, Peter Deyneka Jr. succeeded him. The ministry had doubled in size over the previous five years, so the mission leadership made the decision to relocate from its offices on North Kedzie Boulevard in Chicago to the suburb of Wheaton, Illinois. The move enabled expanded radio ministry as well as the establishment of a missionary training center.

SGA released a new, 30-minute sound-color film, *Not By Bread Alone/Cry of the Raging Sea*. The film was shot on location in the Soviet Union, Argentina and several other nations. It told the story of how Stalin seized power and began a reign of terror over believers, but could not stop the mighty power of God who enabled the church to survive and grow. The film showed how God was using SGA to help Russian churches, strengthen believers, and bring many unbelievers to Christ around the world wherever Russians could be found.

1978 . . . SGA launched the *Strategic Prayer Program*, aiming to blanket the entire Soviet Union with a network of much needed intercessory prayer. By participating, midweek church prayer groups, campus fellowships, Bible study groups, other Christian organizations, families and individuals could become sturdy links in a nationwide prayer chain for believers and others in the U.S.S.R. The prayers were to targeted to specific people and specific needs across the USSR.

We're Not Ashamed of the Gospel!

700 Russian Youth Leaders Meet in Moscow

by Rev. Allan Vincent
SGA/Canada Director

Through God's gracious provision, last February SGA/Canada was the main sponsor of a Moscow conference of youth leaders from across Russia. Eight key national youth leaders of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (UECB) met and were joined by a core of other youth leaders from across the country. By the weekend, 700 youth leaders had gathered for their "1 plus Infinity" conference that focused on God's gift of the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation. Through preaching and every segment of the conference, the youth immersed themselves in the Apostle Paul's words to the church at Rome . . . *For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also to the Greek* (Romans 1:16).

Each evening, Russian UECB national youth ministry coordinator Eugene Bakhmutsky preached on Romans 1:16. His ardent and zealous sermons spoke to many hearts and helped the youth to see the overall picture of God's calling for them. "The Theology of the Gospel", "The Character of the Evangelist" and "The Secret of the Evangelist" were used by God to articulate their desire to preach the Gospel to their generation. Knowing that God is willing and able to save many in their country,



Eugene Bakhmutsky preaching at the youth conference



the youth affirmed the truth that an exponential or "infinite" number of people can be converted through one believer.

Over four days, God used the best preachers and teachers in Russia to instill a clearly biblical ministry of evangelism into the lives of the youth. Realizing that good preaching and poignant examples do not always achieve the intended goals of a conference, the coordinators of the conference did something else to change the paradigm of evangelism in young people's minds. Rather than "project/event" evangelism that takes place when someone organizes it, they advocated a continual, personal evangelism. During the conference sessions, the leaders developed detailed strategic concepts of how to take the Gospel to Russia. Each participant was expected to both contribute to the strategy, and to take responsibility for its implementation. And these zealous, committed young people take their responsibility as from the Lord . . .

I confessed to the Lord a lack of evangelism in my life and I have asked the Lord to change my life. I want to proclaim Christ to people and I want to encourage our youth group to do the same.

Muravlenko City, Tyumen Region

My choice is clear – Jesus! He is the only

treasure in this universe. I am to live only for Him.

Volgograd Region

We are so grateful to the Lord for such a conference. Everything was well planned, well organized, well taught. This is the best conference for youth pastors

Tver Region

Now I know why I should preach the Gospel and how I need to do it. Praise God for it.

Bryansk Region

Planning is already underway for next year's conference called "2+". They are trusting that the Lord will bring new people into His church through the ministry of those who attended the conference. Those new believers will be brought to next year's conference as a testimony of God's grace and the power of the Gospel.

Please pray for these youth leaders as they preach the Gospel and disciple new believers. Pray especially during the summer as some of them plan to walk from St. Petersburg to Kiev proclaiming the Gospel in every town and city in between. Would you also please pray for Eugene Bakhmutsy, who has been asked to plant a church in Moscow? Some very gifted young adults are eager to be part of the core group, but they cannot begin without committed prayer and financial support. SGA/Canada and SGA/USA are seeking to raise that support. May the Lord use Eugene and all of the Russian youth leaders for His glory!



Gospel Expedition 2009

Multiple Colors of Russia

From February through March 2009, key leaders of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (UECB) traveled across the country in yet another Gospel Expedition — this time called "The Multiple Colors of Russia." According to Pastor Ruvim Voloshin, the UECB's vice president of missions, the intent was to encourage local churches in reaching out to the many different people groups that populate the Russian Federation.

The Expedition route covered approximately 7,500 miles, with visits to 21 churches that are zealous to reach their local regions for Christ. For some segments of the route, UECB president Pastor Yuri Sipko and Pastor Eduard Genrikh, president of the SGA-sponsored Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary, joined the team, as well as pastors representing some of the ethnic groups in the



Gospel Expedition team in Izhevsk, Russia

regions.

Pastor Voloshin expressed hope that this Expedition will serve the expansion of God's kingdom across Russia. "I was amazed at how God raised up people for this ministry. He prepared those of us who participated, and the brothers and sisters in the churches we visited. Their eagerness was tremendous. In addition, we saw how the 'nationality factor' worked in practice. In Bashkiria, our Russian driver offered a New Testament to a highway patrol officer. He refused, but when brother Igor spoke to the officer in his native Bashkir tongue, he accepted it. We saw God



Worship service in Naborizhnye Chelny, Russia

acting in Naborizhnye Chelny when we prayed

during the first service, and just a few hours later, a young Muslim Uzbek from Tajikistan came to the second service and told us that he came to accept Christianity. We rejoice at the opportunity to do God's will!"

Please pray for the churches in these ethnic regions of Russia, and for the local church workers who will continue their faithful labors for the glory of Christ.

Real Change . . . Through the Power of the Gospel



Pastor Sergei Naboichenko
SGA-Sponsored Church Planter
Kaluga, Russia

How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and

brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, "Your God reigns" (Isaiah 52:7)!

Recently, our church participated in a special regional ministry outreach called "Embrace the Power of Change." Not only was it a time of special spiritual revival for the people of the church, but it was also an opportunity to reach many people with the Gospel. Church members prayed for us and helped answer phones when people called for advice, and we received more than 300 calls! Special evangelistic books containing testimonies from Kaluga-area believers were printed and distributed. There were four testimonies of our church members in it. One of them was from Olga Perova, whose son was healed from drugs through the power of God. Another was from Igor Ignatov, a former alcoholic. Also contributing was Pavel Volnotepov, who used to practice occultism before his repentance, and Yuri Khoreshkov, an engineer in the factory, who used to strive after achievements but instead found himself in a deep depression. Many people expressed sincere interest in the fates of our heroes. And there are two more people with whom I had fruitful fellowship—Andrew and Michael. Here are their stories.

Andrew is a 50-year-old artist and a

designer who restored old Orthodox church buildings, but had begun drinking alcohol and smoking. After several meetings and talks with me, he repented and became very much interested in the reading and study of the Bible. Glory be to God!

Michael is a 25-year-old electrician. After his mother suddenly died, his relationship with his father became difficult. Also, his girlfriend recently left him, which caused him extreme pain. He was on the edge of despair. After our conversation, he prayed a prayer of repentance and asked God to help him. The next day, he told me about the complete change of his spiritual state. He continues to fellowship with Christians. Hallelujah! As part of my ministry during this time, I reach out to drug addicts and their families, with whom I share the Gospel. I offer to take them to the Christian rehab center, and one of them named Vadim agreed to go there. He is 28 years old and has since been in the rehab center in Kursk for several months. Please, pray for his spiritual condition. Please pray for us as we continue to work in this region. We have received many calls and letters from people in the villages. Please, pray that the Lord will continue to lead our ministry here in Kaluga. My wife and I thank God for you! May God bless you abundantly!

Editor's note: As Christ builds His church, Sergei and the other SGA-sponsored church planters pour themselves out day after day, taking the Gospel to the lost and building up the new believers in the faith. Their labors of love are the key to reaching the tens of millions of lost people who are waiting to hear . . . and even wanting to hear.

Canadian Connection

Celebrating
75
years



Rev. Allan W. Vincent
Director, SGA Canada

Although many Canadians think of Stella Jarema as a regular vocal soloist on the “People’s Gospel Hour,” that is only a small segment of the story of how an Alberta teenager was saved and called by the Lord to use her musical gifts to encourage believers and to

proclaim the Gospel in the once closed lands of the former Soviet Union.

Stella’s story really began with Safroni Jarema. Having emigrated from Ukraine, he landed in Halifax and travelled by train to Nordegg, Alberta. Safroni worked diligently in a variety of jobs including as a coal miner. His given name was difficult to remember and hard to pronounce for Canadians. It was not surprising then that one day a fellow worker called him Joe instead of Safroni, and after that, “Joe” it was. Joe eventually married Katie Halisky from nearby Dickie Bush. Joe and Katie settled on a farm near Smoky Lake and carved out a good life for themselves and their growing family that, in the end, included five boys and five girls. Stella was the seventh child. From Stella’s earliest memories, they were a big happy family that played and worked together on their dairy farm and the first flour mill in that area. Joe had a good head for business and was involved in a number of agricultural enterprises. The family even delivered milk to many neighbours until government regulations prohibited that.

While Joe and Katie attended the local Greek Orthodox Church, they sent their children to a Sunday school in another nearby church. Sad to say, the Gospel was not preached in either of those churches. It wasn’t until Stella was 15 years old that she first heard the Gospel. Two single ladies, Lucille Sherstan* and Vera Musikov** had been sent by Peter Deyneka to serve as SGA missionaries in that area for the summer. God blessed their ministry and the ministry of Peter Deyneka who had preached in the area. One day Lucille and Vera invited Stella to join them when they visited a lady and witnessed to her. As they walked home, Lucille asked Stella if she wanted to be saved. When Lucille opened her Bible to John 3:16, and began to explain the Gospel, Stella’s heart had been prepared by the Lord and she eagerly prayed, thanking the Lord for

loving her and giving His Son so that she would not perish but have everlasting life. Stella remembers that before she finished praying, tears were streaming down her cheeks and she knew that the Lord had transformed her. When she told her mother what had happened, Katie, who was already a Christian, rejoiced with Stella.

Many families and churches remember what an encouragement Peter Deyneka was when he stayed in their humble homes, preached and prayed fervently in their growing churches. The Jarema family and what was to become First Baptist Church, Smokey Lake, were no exceptions. After Stella graduated from Prairie Bible Institute in 1952 with a major in Bible and music, she remembers Peter Deyneka and the leaders of her church laying hands on her and pleading with the Lord to call her to serve Him and use her for His glory.

Like so many others, Stella was encouraged and “mentored” by Peter Deyneka, who invited her to come to Chicago and work at the SGA office. In addition to helping with administration, Stella travelled with Mr. and Mrs. Deyneka and had musical ministry as a vocal soloist.

Peter’s preaching ministry eventually took him to Atlantic Canada and cities like Truro and Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he spoke in churches. Hearing of Stella’s music ministry from Peter and Andrew Semenchuk, Pastor Rockwood invited her to join the staff of the “People’s Gospel Hour.” Accepting his invitation, Stella became Pastor Rockwood’s radio soloist. Today, even though Pastor Rockwood has passed away, the radio program continues and Stella continues singing (on tape).

(To be continued – September *Canada Connection*)

**Lucille Sherstan married John Kushnerik. As SGA missionaries, they served the Lord in pastorates in Smokey Lake, Vegreville and the Ukrainian Evangelical Church in Edmonton. They also founded the Pioneer Bible Camp.*

***Vera Musikov married Jack Kozial. They served the Lord with Far East Broadcasting Corporation.*

***Vera’s sister Mary married Bill Danko. As SGA missionaries, Bill and Mary served the Lord in pastorates in Smoky Lake, Arlee, SK, Calgary and Swan River, MB.*



How You Can Help

You can make a difference . . . today!



SGA and Our Partners . . . Reaching Russia Together

With more governments across the Commonwealth of Independent States tightening laws and restrictions on evangelical churches, it is all the more vital that we step up our efforts to help them reach their people with the Gospel — before the door shuts completely. Millions of men, women and children have yet to hear of our Savior’s love for them. And they are waiting and even wanting to hear.

Your gift will impact so many through vitally important outreach ministries . . .

- Missionary Work — through evangelism and church-planting
- Pastoral Training — through theological seminaries and Bible institutes
- Orphan Ministry — through *Orphans Reborn*
- Bibles and Christian Literature
- Children’s Ministry — through Sunday schools, summer camps and follow-up outreaches
- Christmas Outreaches — through *Immanuel’s Child* and *Christmas for Orphans*



Please prayerfully consider how you can help evangelical churches reach Russian-speaking people with the Gospel.

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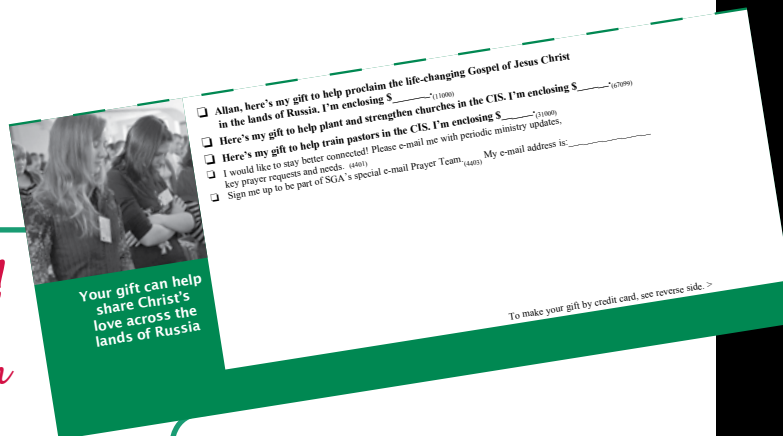
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