



Christian Radio for Russia

Sponsor of the New Life Satellite Network—Moscow, Russia

September 2016

www.CRFR.org

New Life Radio (NLR): an oasis of Christianity in a desert of secular broadcasting and strife in Russia

Looking at current events and possibilities

CRFR organization at the crossroads: a time of transition and new callings for board directors

What the listeners are saying around the world

Dateline Moscow: 9/1/2016

"It is for freedom that Christ set us free"

Those words—so clearly spoken by the Apostle Paul nearly two thousand years before the breakup of a political state that denied Christ's existence—reveal the true status of who we are as Christians in modern day Russia. But no one said it would be easy to follow Jesus. Certainly not anyone who is called to evangelize freely on the streets of Moscow or anywhere else in the Russian Federation.



This past summer has been a time of testing for the evangelical Church in Russia, with repressive laws against public evangelism and general freedom of expression and assembly, but God has shown a way for New Life Radio to continue on in its mission to be a Christian voice of Biblical knowledge and spiritual freedom. That we exist and are able to operate amidst this highly controlled broadcast environment that restricts what people can say on the air, is just another of God's miracles.

Our missionary staff has been busy in the last few months, providing our audience not only milk for new believers, but a vast array of solid apologetics and Christian history and analysis programs that truly informs and helps those to grow.

Since our recent visit with Ravi Zacharias, there is a heightened sense of what NLR is to broadcast alongside an urgency to develop Christian leaders among our young people as quickly as possible.

While the recent law against free evangelism has had its first court case trials, NLR manager Dima Vatoulya has informed us that its provisions have not impacted existing broadcast laws, and NLR can go on as it does, even though we are subject to other regulations that make our team very careful. And yet we boldly broadcast the Scriptures even while men are arrested in public squares for handing out religious literature or inviting non-believers to a home Bible study.

Now in its 16th year, NLR is ever more important as a tool to communicate the Gospel in this land with little Christian content and a Church under siege from those in power who would deny the most basic freedom of sharing their faith in the Lord.





LOOKING AT CURRENT EVENTS and POSSIBILITIES for NEW LIFE RADIO

Still fighting jet lag after spending August in Ukraine, my thoughts are a whirlwind with so many issues presenting themselves as we try to figure out how to better serve our radio audiences in Russia, Ukraine, the former Soviet republics, and indeed, to Slavic listeners around the world.

The challenges to our ministry are formidable, not only in simply trying to do our job as Christian broadcasters, but to negotiate the myriad problems and potentials that are inherent in any mission that wants to tell as many people about New Life in Christ --when the government doesn't like it. Landing in Kiev, Ukraine, you could not feel there was a war going on in the eastern part of the country. But there was, and it is between close peoples, even impacting brothers in Christ on each side of this crisis. Taking a train to Ternople, passing multiple little villages along the tracks, I was amazed at how many simple, poor homes, had satellite dishes on the side of the house. And yet when we began in 2000 as Russia's first Christian satellite radio station, hardly anyone had a satellite dish. Now they are ubiquitous in the lands we target.

Getting to the village I visited (my wife Oksana's home), I spent time with the sole evangelical pastor in a neighboring town, and he sadly informed me that after years of effort to get an FM radio channel for NLR, they finally gave up following many state denials. Fortunately he could listen on the Internet and by satellite. The same is true in Russia right now as Christian media advocates tend to give up on trying to get a station started, especially with the recent laws working against them.

So I spent three weeks wondering how NLR could expand its network, and provide additional support services to the many ministry groups in Russia and Ukraine that are struggling to continue on. Broadcasting in Russian isn't very attractive to some western Ukrainians (because of the conflict and growing resentment of Russia), yet so many speak Russian and have

satellite antennas and computers. Developing a new network of local FM stations seems out of the question, but new media forms can take our broadcasts where it is needed. The key, as always, is CONTENT. It is NLR's intention to continue providing the highest quality Christian programming to our audience.

I was pleased to hear my visiting Russian sister in law express her gratitude for NLR and for the people we put on the air. She knew some of them personally.

Photo: Mom & Maria

On the possibility side, harsh realities have fostered a new willingness by ministries that have not cooperated together in the past, to begin doing so. This factor alone makes NLR highly relevant for strengthening the work of those on the ground with programs in Christian leadership development (especially targeting youth), Biblical instruction, and general Christian content and news.





In Ternopol's main city square, a young man working a Christian literature tent asked me if what he did was now possible in Russia. I said "probably not." It was apparent he was truly concerned for his Russian colleagues who do the same type of evangelism. I asked him if he listened to New Life Radio, and he said he had never heard of it. That told me we have an awful lot of work ahead of us in getting the word out to our intended audience of young Christians in both countries. And the idea wasn't lost on me that NLR has been a shining light of unity between the evangelical churches in both Russia and Ukraine, and that we must continue this in order to be able to reach out cooperatively to ministries and congregations in each land, especially when they can't have their own local FM stations to reach out to unbelievers in their cities.

Since my return to the states a few days ago, I sense new possibilities to cooperate with groups we have tried to work with in the past, but unsuccessfully. It is my hope that CRFR and NLR will be able this coming year to engage more ministry partners and establish vastly more listeners during these times of tragedy, violence, and general social crises in the territories we broadcast in. As usual, CRFR and its partners will be needed now more than ever to keep NLR on the air, so we can provide that guarantee that Christian content will remain available 24/7 by satellite and Internet.

Pray especially for our radio missionaries-- Dima, Andre, Vladimir, Alona, and Denis, as well as our many program guests, that they continue their excellent work each day to explain the simple commands of our Savior and what He wants for us in our lives. Thanks for being our partners in ministry.

Daniel Johnson CRFR President



BROADCASTING in Russia, Ukraine, Europe, and the Middle East via the HOTBIRD satellite...also 24/7 on the Internet at www.NLRadio.net

NLR program features from our website (sample)

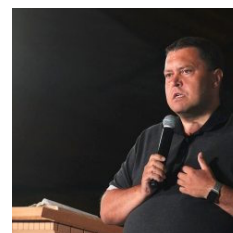
TALK SHOW: 'IN PLAIN ENGLISH'

How should Christian education look today? What are its main tasks? What can be said about its present level? What is the future of Christian education in Russia? Discussion by Sergey Yastrzemski, Director of the Moscow Theological Institute.



INTERVIEW with Eduard Grabovenko

NLR features a discussion with the bishop of the Russian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith (RTSHVE), pastor of the "New Testament Church" in Perm. The conversation took place at a national Christian youth rally *PassWord7*, on the shores of the Black Sea.



TALK SHOW "Answering Atheists"

Theme: Is it possible to be a scientist and still believe in God? Atheists are not asleep. They continue to ask uncomfortable questions, to which



Christians are not always prepared. Can the faith of even mature Christians be shaken? Learn how to answer the atheists, and imagine yourself in a new talk show with Andrew Gursky, director of the Scientific Biblical Center-*The Apologist*.



Analytical program “**Gifts of the Reformation**”

Theme this week: “Protestants in Russia: overseas and originals.” We are talking about the gospel tradition in Russia. Oksana Kurolatkina and Andrei Ryabenko continue to discuss the development and beginnings of the evangelical tradition in Russia. It is believed that some sort of Protestantism in Russia appeared before the Reformation (Strigolniki, Doukhobors, Molokans, etc.). What was behind it, and what were its characteristics?

NLR talk show EDITORIAL with lawyer Lusik Adamia

The passion of the so-called "law of Spring" gradually subsided. It's time to calmly and soberly assess the situation. What are the rights and duties of citizens of Russia and foreign citizens in connection with the adoption of amendments to the existing legislation? What has changed for ordinary people? What has changed for the faithful? What can and what cannot be published on social media? What problems does the Church face? Legal responses to questions facing religious and non-profit organizations. Host of the program: Dima Vatoulya

NLR Listener responses in August (a translated sample)

We want to give big thanks to your Radio for your work and expanding God's kingdom!

*Greetings to New Life Radio! I listen to you when it rains and my mood stays great! Thank you for your work. **Pavel, in Moldova***

*Thank you New Life Radio that you exist! You probably know it yourself but you are so effective! Thanks for everything you put on the air! Especially we like your short radio dramas! **Valya, Irkutsk***

*Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! It is cloudy here in Minnesota but New Life Radio brings sunshine to our souls - thanks for that! **A. Myrsa***

*Great radio! I always listen to you via Hot Bird satellite - too bad you are not on Tricolor anymore. You always have new programming and new music - this brings me joy! I can always find something useful for my heart. Thank you! May God bless you in Jesus name. Amen. **Oleg***

*Shalom! I am greatly thankful to the Lord for New Life Radio. Fresh music, hot topics - all of it helps to stay on the right tune! **Andrew***

*Good day! I am from Buenos Aires Argentina. Thank you guys very much that you exist and do what you do. You are a great blessing for everybody who listens to you. I personally start my day with you and both at work and at my free time I fill myself with sermons and music that you play. I know that on this continent there are people who listen to you and need you every day. God's blessings to you. **Andrey***

*Glory to God for you and everybody who financially helps this radio to exist! We listen to you every day in my “Esther” beauty salon in Stanitsa Veshenskaya, Rostov region of Russia. Our unbelieving clients also listen to you. Many people from our church listen to you also! You have listeners at Verhnedonski in Novo-Nikolaevsk, Peskovatsko-Lopatinks, Chestyakovo and Bokovsk regions. Not everybody has the opportunity to write you so I am writing on their behalf. Thank you and glory to God! May God richly bless you! **Svetlana***

THANKS TO OUR CRFR partners who keep NLR on the air!





Special insert

CRFR at the crossroads: Time of transition

Since our founding in 2002, *Christian Radio for Russia* has had the privilege of wise counsel from the many volunteer board members that have dedicated themselves to insure that Slavic peoples worldwide can hear the Word of God over New Life Radio. Without them, we could not continue organizationally and they have been key to helping our US and Russia staffs continue on with their special calling from God.

The original board members of CRFR took up the challenge to meet our primary mission goal outlined by Christ's final command-- To share the Gospel to the ends of the earth--and for them specifically, through the provision of Christian radio programming to Russian-speaking peoples across the former Soviet Union.



CRFR board in 2002



CRFR board in 2005

Through the years, our board has seen a variety of individuals--many of them being active ministers or mission specialists—and their insights and commitment have made the difference for this ministry to continue its effectiveness for building the Kingdom. Led by four outstanding chairmen, including Dr. Robert Larson, David Schmer, Keith Miller, and Rev. Ken Wagner, the board has been an anchor for CRFR President and NLR founder, Dr. Daniel Johnson to continue his mission to Russia that began in 1988.



This coming fall, our current chair, Rev. Ken Wagner from Mt. Vernon, WA will be stepping down. Reflecting on his ministry with CRFR, Ken noted:

I first met Dan and Oksana Johnson in 2005, while serving on the pastoral staff of Bethany Covenant Church in Mount Vernon, WA. Dan reminded me of a 21st century prophet—a man with a call, a laser like

focus, and a commitment to providing Christian radio to Russian speakers. The church I served supported CRFR, and over the next few years, my role as the pastoral liaison to our missions committee kept me informed about the activities of CRFR and NLR. In 2008 I agreed to serve on the CRFR Board, and in 2010, made my first trip to Russia, and met Dan in Moscow, where we spent time with the NLR staff. I retired from pastoral ministry 3 years ago, but have made a total of 7 trips to Russia, including 4 visits with the NLR staff in Moscow. I have served as CRFR Board Chair for the past 3 years.

CRFR's current members are Rev. Randy Vaught, Brian Bettger, and Marlene Hamrick.

Marlene, from Youngsville, PA writes:



I joined the CRFR board as a volunteer treasurer just under a year ago. I am able to combine my love for bookkeeping and serving others, while providing support to NLR. My prayer is that God's word will be heard and forever impact lives around the world for generations to come because of the service New Life Radio provides.



Brian Bettger- Mt. Vernon WA

I met four Slavic brothers at a Messianic Bible study many years ago who minister to the Slavic community here in Northwest Washington. After spending time with them and their focus on their brothers and sisters in Russia and Ukraine, my heart began to be moved in this direction. About ten years ago Dan Johnson came to speak of CRFR and New Life Radio. Having read his autobiography prior, I was ready to become active. Ken Wagner asked me to become a board member. I have been Secretary for CRFR since 2012.

Rev. Randy Vaught: President/CEO emeritus of *Christian Aid Mission*; pastor, Frankfort, Kentucky



My discernment is that the Lord led me to serve on the Board of CRFR because since 2006 I have studied the spiritual dynamics of Russian history. God prepared me and called me to pray for Russia. Russia is one of six nations that I focus on praying for.

With Rev. Wagner's departure, CRFR will have less than the required number of members of serving. **Our goal is 5 new candidates by October 2016.**

Members serve for a three year term, and are asked to contribute their time and resources to ensure NLR has the financing required to remain on the air.

IT IS IMPERATIVE for our continuation, that new board members step forward, committed to the mission, and willing to do the hard work needed to guarantee the NLR network in Moscow has the tools they need to reach their own people for Christ, especially in these very troubling times in Russia and beyond.

As a group, we work toward meeting the challenge of raising a minimum **\$15,000** each month for this evangelistic outreach with global potential, yet similar to the cost of operating a small church. New Life Radio is quoted by many as being a great ministry **BANG FOR THE BUCK** in terms of cost effectiveness.

But even so, we struggle to meet this and need new people and ideas on how to raise these needed funds consistently.



Photo (above) Founding CRFR Chair, Dr. Larson in Moscow with the first NLR radio team. Board members are encouraged to come to Russia to visit with the staff for a first hand look at how the ministry functions and speak with the people involved.

IF YOU SENSE the LORDS LEADING to serve as a board member, please contact Daniel Johnson by email at CRFR@juno.com

Bringing young people to Christ and helping them to grow in their faith: that's the mission of NEW LIFE RADIO!



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a 501©3 non-profit org

