



Christian Radio for Russia

Sponsor of the New Life Satellite Network—Odessa, Ukraine
Broadcasting worldwide at www.NLRadio.net

SPECIAL REPORT 3/18/22

www.CRFR.org

NEW LIFE RADIO—A Christian voice of hope during war



Odessa, Ukraine. What so many feared, became a reality on February 24 as Russian forces invaded Ukraine. New Life Radio, located just up the street from where this photo was taken, **is still on the AIR!**

As we write this report, NLR is positioned safely to maintain broadcasts, with studios set up in IASI, Romania as well as our studios in Odessa. It is unclear what the future holds and we will trust in the Lord as He is sovereign over this world and we will follow in whatever path He chooses for us. We ask for prayer, that there would be peace, and that our ministry stay equipped to carry out Christ's command to proclaim the Gospel to the Slavic world. Our CRFR partners have been faithful in their provision to NLR and we look forward to a wonderful future, despite the horrors of war around the region we serve. NOTHING will stop the plan of God!

A timeline of events and actions at New Life Radio



РАДИО НОВАЯ ЖИЗНЬ
NEW LIFE RADIO

DECEMBER 2021: As Russian forces amassed along the border of Ukraine, NLR made contact with the *Agape Church* in Chisinau, Moldova to set up an emergency broadcast operation within their facilities in case NLR is threatened by a possible invasion of Odessa. Over the next two months, fruitless negotiations to prevent war take place, and despite assertions that war was not possible, NLR staff prepared for the worst. Station manager Ivan Zhurakovski took apart portions of our radio studio equipment and placed them in suitcases, ready for a quick departure to Moldova. Everything for a functional station was placed in those bags. The NLR network had to be preserved even if done from another country.

In early February, it was clear that NLR needed a vehicle to transport equipment and staff to Moldova, should the worst case happen. A donor from Illinois stepped in to provide funding, and Ivan started looking for a car. Finding one in decent shape for a good price took time, and finally on the evening of February 23rd, Ivan purchased a 2007 Nissan SUV; was granted an underground parking slot in the building next door to him, and after a long day, went to bed thanking God for this good result. It was NLR's very first car after 26 years of operating as a radio station.

Early the next morning on February 24, Ivan called CRFR's Daniel Johnson in Pennsylvania and simply said, "its war." Russian forces

attacked Ukraine across multiple fronts, and the Russian navy shelled a military base outside of the city. Odessa went into a panic as people began fleeing the city and officials called residents to immediately go into bomb shelters. Ivan kept his family in their apartment, near the city port, as wife Natalie saw rockets flying past their building. They had to make sense of what was happening and how best to protect their three children and the station as well.

Ivan decided to stay for the time being thinking he and Yuri, NLR's engineer, could make a quick trip to Chisinau to drop off equipment. However, it became clear that Yuri might be stopped at the border as no men between 18-60 were allowed through (Ivan being a Russian citizen might have had problems as well).

Over the next few days, Ivan prepared his family for the move, and it was decided that Eva Zhurakovski (our NLR staffer) would accompany family along with the equipment. Offered the chance to leave Odessa, Yuri wanted to remain at the station to ensure its operating, while our two new pastoral staff, Sergey and Mikhail, decided to go back to their churches full time to help during this looming crisis. To ensure the success of getting radio gear and family across safely, Ivan set up a plan to have Sergey follow him in a second car up to the border crossing, and if problems happened, Sergey could bring back the radio gear to Odessa.



On February 28, as the Russian army took a brief pause in hostilities for peace talks, the little NLR convoy set out for Moldova as hundreds of other cars from Odessa took the same highway toward Chisinau. The trip to the border was surprisingly fast, but once there, Ivan found miles long lines of cars waiting. The SUV loaded with six people and equipment would make for a tough situation should they have

to wait for a long time. Fortunately, border guards going down the line of cars spotted Ivan's three little children, and looking at one year old son Elesey, waived Ivan past all the cars in line and took him directly to the border checkpoint. Sergey and Eva then followed them, took the rest of the equipment from his car, and put it into the SUV with Eva, and all made it through successfully. Sergey went back to Odessa, while Daniel let Victor Mirza at the Agape Church know the family was on their way.



Ivan and family safely arrive in Chisinau

Arriving safely in Chisinau, the tired crew were welcomed to the church, where apartments and studio space had been set up for them ahead of time. Ivan planned to get a good nights sleep and then install radio equipment in the morning. They thought they were safe and home free, but it wasn't to be.

Late that night, Pastor Victor informed Ivan that it would be too dangerous for him to stay in the city, as Moldova now feared the Russian army in Transnistria were prepared to invade Chisinau and the nation would capitulate—implying no freedom for NLR to operate. Victor had his own bags packed to leave, so Ivan called Daniel and appraised him of the situation. Where could they go? This plan had been set up in December, but now Ivan had no idea of what to do, as there were no other options he was aware of. They could not go back to Odessa, time was of the essence and they had to go somewhere other than Moldova. The family was exhausted and they needed a safe place to establish themselves while they waited for the situation of this war in Ukraine to become clear.

Back in the CRFR office, Daniel immediately started a search for churches in nearby Romania where Ivan might head toward. Romania, a NATO country, was next to Moldova and even shared a border with Ukraine in the extreme south of the country along the Black Sea coast. Taking a quick look at a map of Romania, he found three cities near Moldova; Constanta, Iasi (pronounced Yash) and Galati. Typing a Google search in each town for “evangelical churches” he only noted one or two hits and most didn't have websites, just Facebook pages without email addresses. Daniel wrote to three churches on FB sites and a few emails that did exist, not knowing if he could even make contact in a timely manner. Over that day, he waited for a response while Ivan decided to spend another night in Chisinau. God would have to find a way out of this desperate situation. In the meantime, Yuri was back at the Odessa studios overseeing the radio automation systems keeping NLR on the air.

Early the next day, Dan Maftai, who heads a Romanian Christian media ministry in Iasi, contacted Daniel as did Paul Schneider at the *Eclesia International Church*. Both men assured Daniel that they would be able to

figure out how best to help with meeting Ivan as he arrived and finding an apartment for both family and radio studios. Another answer to prayer in time of great need! Now the only challenge was for Ivan (with his Russian passport) to get across the Romanian border as there was talk that they were not letting Russians in. Daniel sent contact numbers to Ivan to call Paul and Dan, and around midnight on March 2 the weary family made it to Iasi where Dan met them and put them all up in his home.



Safe in Iasi the first morning with Dan and Anna

They stayed with him for two days and then Dan found a three room apartment owned by some American Christians who were outside of the country. There was plenty of room and even an office to set up their radio studio. GOD HAD PROVIDED wonderfully. And this just in time as Iasi became inundated with thousands of refugees fleeing from Ukraine and apartment space became both scarce and very expensive.

Safe in Romania, the war throughout Ukraine expanded dramatically as the Kremlin began a campaign of destruction going far beyond their stated strategy of demilitarizing Ukraine and *denazifying* Kiev's government. Odessa would experience occasional shelling on the outskirts and Yuri kept the radio operation running. Odessa sealed itself off from the sea with mined beaches and barricaded its streets with tank traps and sandbags awaiting attack from the east, the west, and the sea.

Eventually, Ivan was able to install studio and transmission equipment in his new apartment that allowed him to switch signals between Iasi and Odessa over the NLR

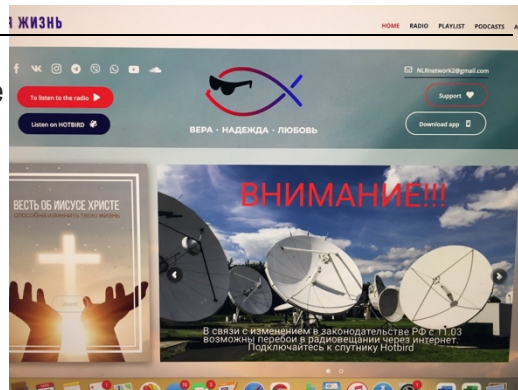


satellite and internet networks. He and Eva noted that listeners had been writing, asking when NLR would be live again so they could be encouraged by their regular programming of Bible discussions, the daily listener song request hour, and greetings across the NLR audience that now included many new listeners in Russia.

NLR now airs a larger amount of teaching programs and sermons for listeners across both Russia and Ukraine who face uncertain times and are trying to make sense of the chaos and war impacting their lives. God has been good to provide us the backup system we need to ensure that Christian broadcasting will continue, even if lost from Odessa.

As of March 18, Odessa had yet to experience a full attack, unlike the other Black Sea ports of Mariupol and Kherson that were bombed and overtaken. It has been singled out for last, being Ukraine's final and most important access to the sea. Even as the city, while barricaded and preparing for countering Russian forces, attempted some sense of normality and keeping services open along with markets, NLR continued to broadcast despite knowing that it could be forced to stop should the station be damaged or telecom lines cut off.

Fortunately, NLR remains a satellite broadcast service able to penetrate all of Ukraine and the most populated areas of Russia, and we remind our listeners using the NLR webpage, that should the Internet be cut off in Russia, they can listen via HOTBIRD.



While NLR-Iasi is operational, we view it to be a temporary situation as our goal remains to stay in Odessa and continue whatever future we have from there. If not, CRFR will determine a new operational site for NLR, then start a capital funding campaign to rent or build a new facility.

Finally

As we pray for peace and resolution during these times of mass terror and war, we look for new doors that the Lord might open to further His mission of evangelism and discipleship to those we are called to reach. This may involve an expansion of our radio services to include a Ukrainian channel. We will keep you apprised as the Lord makes clear this new direction.

NLR has been featured on a number of international media sites as the war developed, and here is one notable report:

<https://wng.org/roundups/christian-radio-station-in-ukraine-plans-for-invasion-1645117275>

“David Paronian is a frequent listener to New Life Radio. Born in Georgia, Paronian now resides in Moscow, where he works in construction and pastors a local church. In a Telegram message to WORLD, he framed the work of New Life Radio in the context of Jesus’ prayer in [John 17:11](#) that His disciples be one, even as He and the Father are one. ‘Those who love God can’t but say ‘amen’ to New Life Radio,’ Paronian said.”

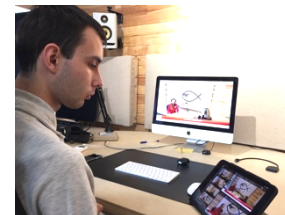
While we don’t focus on results, leaving that to the Lord, we do know that NLR is being effective in its outreach and emphasis on communicating the Scriptures and sound doctrine on the air. Many new listeners are finding us so we work hard to ensure that what we broadcast is what they need to hear, and that is the message of the Gospel!

A few people to thank for their aid to NLR during these tough times



Paul Schneider and family in Iasi, Romania

Victor & Inna Mirza in Chisinau, Moldova



Yuri Ignatenko, our lone man at the station in Odessa serving God faithfully

May the Lord bless all of you who have been so generous investing your kingdom funds to the work of NEW LIFE RADIO!

Contact:

Christian Radio for Russia
Box 428

Jamestown, NY 14702

Email: CRFRoffice@gmail.com

a 501©3 non-profit org. Contributions tax-deductible

