

50 YEARS OF OUR NEWSLETTER

“Thus far the LORD has helped us.” 1 Samuel 7:12

Fifty years is a long time. Not every undertaking, regardless of how good it may be, has the opportunity to last so long. Nevertheless, the Slavic Christian newsletter, *Nashi Dni (Our Days)*, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.



The creator of the newspaper was Nikolay Alexanderovich Vodnevsky, a well-known writer and poet who immigrated to the United States in 1950. God placed it in his heart to serve those emigrating from the Soviet Union in the best way that he could, so he began writing Christian articles for *Novaya Zarya (New Dawn)*, a secular Russian newspaper published daily in San Francisco. Soon, he began receiving letters from readers and started to answer their questions in the paper itself. This ministry completely enticed Nikolay, and he supplemented his work by collecting and publishing poems and testimonies in addition to the questions and answers. This experience stimulated his idea to create his own, purely Christian, newspaper in the future.

It is interesting to observe how God facilitated even the initial stages of this project. Brother Pavel Rogozin, a well-known Slavic writer and preacher living in San Francisco, was himself printing a journal called *Khrisianin (Christian)*. He decided to donate his linotype machine to the Pacific Coast Association of Slavic Baptist Churches, and the Association decided to station the printing house in Bryte church. Brother Ivan Aleksyevich Karpenko, a recent immigrant to San Francisco from Argentina and expert in printing machinery, was placed in charge of the printing house.

Construction of the building to hold the printing house started in the fall of 1965 and was completed in the spring of 1966. After its completion, the linotype and other printing equipment were shipped from San Francisco to Sacramento. An 80-year-old printing press was also purchased, but due to its size, part of the building was required to be torn down in order to fit the machine inside. As soon as the printing house was set up, work on the first issue of the newspaper began immediately.

The very first attempt to print a page ended up a disaster. A visitor, particularly eager to see the first issue of the newsletter, urged the operator of the machine start printing before the main frame of the machine was properly secured . As a result, the set of matrices was broken, the transformer damaged, and the machine went out of order. The head of the printing house became very upset, and returned home to San Francisco.



An example of a linotype. The linotype used by the newsletter was more old-fashioned than the one above.



Nikolai Vodnevsky and his wife at work on the printing press.

Brother Vladimir Mikhailovich Tkachev, the official cashier of the newsletter and an unofficial “Jack of all trades,” was able to fix the damaged printing press and made it work again. Ivan Alekseyevich was invited back to continue working on the newspaper, but he refused, stating that continuing the project would be hopeless. Nevertheless, trusting the Lord, the brothers continued working.

During the May conference which was held May 28-30, 1966, the Pacific Baptist Association made the decision to make a weekly newsletter publication called *Nashi Dni (Our Days)*. Vodnevsky was named the chief editor, and Ivan Karpenko became the deputy editor and head of the printing house.

On June 11, 1966, the first edition of the newsletter was published with 1,500 printed copies. This was the first Slavic newsletter to be printed for a specifically Christian audience, and it quickly received subscribers from Canada, Australia, Argentina, Belgium, and many other countries that hosted Russian immigrants along with the United States.

Printing the newsletters was a hard and demanding ministry. The work was tough and it negatively affected the health of those who were directly involved in printing.



Anna Vodnevsky working on the printing press

The linotype machine operator entered text on a 90-character keyboard. The machine assembled matrices, which were molds for the letter forms, in a line. The assembled line was then cast as a single piece, called a slug, of type metal in a process known as "hot metal" typesetting. The matrices were then returned to the type magazine from which they came, to be reused later. This allowed much faster typesetting and composition than original hand composition in which operators place down one pre-cast metal letter, punctuation mark or space at a time.

The linotype used lead-based type-metal, and lead was harmful to health. Lead easily evaporates and enters the respiratory system, which may cause lead poisoning. The lead dust from the room can also poison the linotype operator. Linotype operators handled slugs with their barehands, and they had to be careful not to touch their mouths. Many linotype operators reported that they had leadpoisoning.

The original figures in charge of typing material for the newsletter were brother Karpenko and his wife, later joined by the editor's wife, Anya. Working on the old-fashioned linotype meant close proximity to melting lead and dyes, and no ventilation existed in the unit. Even after Anya's death from leukemia in 1978, the work continued, regardless of the fact that the newsletter's equipment was old, constantly breaking, and spare parts were impossible to find.

The records of the Pacific Baptist Association during those years reflect the progress of the newsletter and its positive reception among the Slavic churches. Circulation gradually increased, and in 1971 there were 1165 subscribers from 32 different countries. Letters sent to the newsletter from churches and readers told the staff that the newsletter was loved and read by people of all ages. Over the years, the works of various well-known people were published in the newsletter, including that of famous Russian poet and writer Radion Berezov, poetess and translator Vera Kushnir, P. Harchlaa, and many others. The content of the newsletters was always interesting and engaging, and included the material of many famous preachers and theologians, such as I. Rogozin, I. Mark, and N.I.Salov-Astakhov.

The newspaper was clearly in demand; however, few could imagine the mental and physical intensity that surrounded the weekly release of each issue. Each newsletter publication required interviewing authors, selecting material, designing, editing, interacting with readers and subscribers, and more. Moreover, the constant pressure from those opposed to the ministry, and the attacks fueled by the devil both without and within the newsletter, made it clear why Nikolai Vodnevsky asked to be relieved from his duty as editor for health reasons in 1973.



Eugene V. Garin

In 1974, Eugene V. Garin, who was previously the editor of *Na Rasvete (At Dawn)* and *Zolotiye Kolosya (Golden Ears of Wheat)*, was named chief editor of the newsletter. A talented seascape and landscape artist whose paintings hang in museums around the world, Garin was also a committed Christian and minister. Besides being the chief editor, Garin also held the position of secretary of the Joint Committee, and together with Vera Kushnir voiced Christian films produced by the Moody Institute.

He served as editor of the newspaper for 14 years, until 1988, after which Ivan Alekseyevich Karpenko, the newsletter's deputy editor, chief of the printing house, and a typesetter, became the newsletter's chief editor.

Karpenko was called to be the head of the newsletter at a particularly strenuous time. The membership at Bryte church had grown substantially, and church was in great need of rooms and space. When the question of transferring the printing room to another location was raised, First Slavic Baptist Church offered its services, and the newsletter moved to the church's location on Franklin Blvd.



Ivan Alekseevich Karpenko

Around this time, the prevalence of computers led the newsletter to be printed in a new way. The ministry now faced the task of finding funds to obtain a computer, and Ivan Alekseyevich and his wife, Valya, needed to learn how to use a computer – a new piece of equipment for both of them. Brother Adolf Andreyevich Pichaj purchased a computer for the ministry, developed a layout containing the Cyrillic alphabet, and set it to work. From that moment onward, the ministry had entered into a new stage of production.

In 1993, Nikolai Vodnevsky once again became the chief editor of the newsletter, and continued his dedicated service. In 1994, he invited Ivan Nikolaevich Bruyako to the editing room, and since then, Bruyako has been involved in the ministry for many years.

By 2000, the Pacific Coast Association of Slavic Baptists was in serious need of office space, which it obtained at 639 Welland Way, West Sacramento, which formerly belonged to the local Slavic church. Within this space was a conference room, a music department, as well as an office for the newsletter. For the first time in its existence since 1966, the printing house had a comfortable office space, which it could finally call its home.

However, on January 16, 2003, disaster struck. In an act of arson, the office building that housed the newspaper office was set on fire. Everything was burned, including the office equipment, all editions of previous newsletters, and all materials collected over the years. The sense of loss and grief was great for the entire staff, especially for Nikolai Vodnevsky. One can only imagine his thoughts as he looked at the charred



remains of the work that he and his colleagues had invested their lives into for the last several decades.



After the fire

Many question suddenly arose: “What do we do now? Where should we go? Should we stop publication of the newsletter for the time being?!”



But God is merciful, and a solution was found. The Bruyako family offered to temporarily host the newsletter printing office in their home. From 2003 to 2005, the content for the newsletter was collected, created, edited, and sent out to different countries from the residence of the Bruyako

family. Beside newsletter staff, volunteers as well as the entire Bruyako family participated in publishing and compiling each edition of the newsletter.

With God's guidance and blessing, the Association was able to construct a new, more spacious, and more comfortable building on the site of the burned office. The site was sanctified on January 14th, 2006, and is still used by the newsletter to this day.

In 2008, poor health kept Nikolai Alexandrovich Vodnevsky from continuing his work as the editor of the newsletter. Anticipating the end of his earthly journey, he recommended that the PCSBA's Committee consider his faithful, long-term assistant Bruyako as the editor-in-chief of the newsletter.

Honored, Ivan Nikolayevich Bruyako took the position and has now dedicated eight years to doing the work that was started fifty years ago. Just as it was then, the newsletter continues to bring glory to the Lord, as well as joy and the hope of salvation to readers in different countries. The newsletter is published every Thursday, and sent out to 42 countries with a weekly circulation of 10,000 copies.



Ivan Bruyako

It is impossible to recognize all of the devoted and sacrificial Christian volunteers who have been involved in the editorial process of this newspaper. Neither can we mention the hundreds of people who supported the newsletter financially, whose donations and contributions were enough to cover the costs of printing and sustaining the newsletter. And how could we ever account for all the prayers over this ministry, bringing the work of the newsletter before the threshold of God and supporting the hands of its ministers and printers? Some of these anonymous supporters have already finished their journey and have gone to be with the Lord, while others continue onward. Though their work may go unnoticed on earth, it is nonetheless, important and appreciated. God knows each of their names. They are recorded in His book of life, and He will reward each of them accordingly.

More information about the history of the newsletter, its past and present employees, and other details can be found in the articles and many photos of the newsletter's website nashidni.com

Celebrating our anniversary, let us glorify the Lord for blessing this ministry and thank the staff and volunteers of the newsletter for their hard work and dedication. God bless you!

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