

Celebrating 30 Years

*Steadfast Mission,
Faithful Legacy, Strategic Future*

1991-2021

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

— 1 Corinthians 15:58



FALL 2021

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REMAINING FAITHFUL TO OUR STEADFAST MISSION

Thirty years ago the world watched in shock and amazement as the once-powerful Soviet Union, constructed on the Marxist-Leninist atheistic ideology, collapsed. The Soviet Union plunged into economic, political, and social chaos. There was huge spiritual hunger and searching.

After decades of persecution of Christians, this was also a time of rejoicing and religious freedoms and many ministry possibilities for Christ and His Kingdom. As a follower of Christ living in the Soviet Union, experiencing religious repression, I understood that a miraculous answer to the prayers of many had happened. I dreamed of ways that the Good News of the gospel could now be shared in my homeland.

Miracle of Change & New Opportunities

I will never forget Christmas Eve 1991 when the red flag of the Soviet Union was lowered from the Kremlin for the last time. This flag was supposed to symbolize equality for the working class, but it actually symbolized oppression for political dissidents, and especially for the evangelical church, which was severely persecuted by the communist regime.

The lowering of the Soviet flag was the miracle that so many people had prayed for because it meant the end of Soviet rule and the end of persecution. As believers living in the Soviet Union, we felt like we were finally able to breathe the fresh air of freedom for the first time.

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Peter Deyneka, founder of our ministry, in front of the Kremlin

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But this was not the only miracle we experienced as believers in the former Soviet Union. We soon experienced another miracle when the global Christian community, especially believers from the West, began showering us with generosity and compassion. With open hearts and outstretched arms, they started rushing in to bring resources and leaders in order to help the national evangelical church gain new momentum.

I am grateful to God that among those generous and compassionate believers were our founders, Peter and Anita Deyneka.

I will never forget how I watched the news on a black and white television in our small Moscow apartment while talking with Peter, who came to share his new strategic ministry vision. Peter poured his heart out as he shared his vision with me to evangelize the former Soviet Union by training and equipping new leaders for the national evangelical church. As he said, *"We have been waiting a long time for an opportunity like this!"*

Both of us knew that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, people were in desperate need of the light of the gospel.

Peter and Anita Deyneka



For more than 70 years, Soviet atheistic ideology had attacked the church and covered the land in spiritual darkness.

This ideology had tried to eradicate the church altogether:

It targeted children, not allowing them to attend church or receive Christian teaching until they were 18 years old.

It targeted Christian youth, not allowing them to enroll in institutions of higher education in order to prevent them from becoming members of influential professions.

It prevented the public from having access to the Bible, which was considered a dangerous book by the communists. Also, no in-person theological training was available at this time. Since Bible schools or seminaries were not open, church leaders were either mentored by older leaders or they were self-educated.



"Jesus said, 'I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'"

— Matthew 16:18

GOD'S CHURCH RISING FROM THE ASHES OF COMMUNISM



'The global church family had to help'

So when freedom came to the Soviet Union, we knew that the global church family had to help the church by raising up the Next Generation of Christian leaders, providing them with copies of Scripture, and giving them opportunities to learn and grow in their faith. Only then would the church be strengthened and be able to minister beyond its own walls to a spiritually and morally bankrupt and hurting society.

'An enormous legacy' & 'rich history'

Since the time that Peter and I met in that small Moscow apartment, Peter has gone to be with the Lord, leaving an enormous legacy. After Peter's death, Anita, his wife and co-founder, then later led our ministry for many years and is still wholeheartedly involved, using her experience and strategic networking skills and compassion to forward our mission.

The support and governing involvement of our founding board, including Dr. Glenn Heck, chairman, Barry Gardner, Jim Cummer, Ray Smith, Tom Leafstrand, and Andrew Semenchuk were invaluable as our ministry sought guidance and direction after the sudden death of our founder, Peter Deyneka, Jr., helping us to build solidly on Peter's legacy.

We are also deeply grateful for the contributions made by strategic, resourceful, and dedicated national leaders and staff, including Valentin Vasilizhenko, Pavel Tokarchuk, Alexei Melnichuk, Michael Cherenkov, Yuri Pozhidaev, Sergey Moroz, Roman Vecherkovsky, Peter Marchenko, Vadim Kurat, Viktor Krotov, Nadia Abidenova, Svetlana Belova, and many others. Together they helped us refocus our strategic ministry initiatives during challenging times and ignite a movement to train and equip Next Generation Christian leaders for years to come.

Throughout our rich history during the past 30 years, God has worked in many miraculous ways, helping us train and equip thousands of leaders for the church, forming hundreds of strategic ministry partnerships, and providing countless resources.



Faithful Legacy:

Important Events Shaping the History of Mission Eurasia

- 1989: **Fall of the Berlin Wall** — This historic event signaled the beginning of the collapse of communism across Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War.
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- 1991: **Collapse of the Soviet Union** — This led to the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), igniting huge opportunities for evangelism and church growth in this part of the world.
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- 1991: **Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries (PDRM) is launched** — Peter and Anita Deyneka started PDRM at this pivotal time in order to respond quickly and strategically to new opportunities for the gospel across the CIS.
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- 1992: **Association for Spiritual Renewal (ASR) is established** — Our Moscow-based entity was among the first non-profit organizations to be registered in Russia and led by national leaders.
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- 2000: **Death of Peter Deyneka, Jr., founder of PDRM** — The tragic and unexpected death of PDRM's founder after a serious illness caused uncertainty about the future of PDRM, but gifted ministry leaders continued to lead the ministry during this transitional time, including veteran missionaries Andrew Semenchuk and Nick Leonovich, and also Dr. Richard Scheuerman, George Law, Sergey Rakhuba, Valentin Vasilizhenko, and others. PDRM staff working from the Wheaton, IL headquarters, including Wil Triggs, Elaine Springer, and Jean Zatulovsky, also helped to provide important support and stability for the ministry during this critical period.
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- 2000: **Election of Dr. Richard Scheuerman as president** — Under the leadership of newly elected president Dick Scheuerman, PDRM continued to implement new effective strategies for evangelism and church growth throughout the CIS, now called the former Soviet Union or FSU.
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- 2002: **Election of Anita Deyneka, widow of Peter Deyneka, Jr. and co-founder of PDRM, as president** — Anita led a strategic ministry refocus, along with Vice President Sergey Rakhuba, to train and equip Next Generation church leaders who could help the national evangelical church become effectively engaged in ministry following decades of Soviet repression. Anita and Sergey also spearheaded a number of new initiatives to help the church respond to critical challenges created by the collapse of the Soviet Union, including the HIV/AIDS epidemic, human trafficking, child homelessness, the rise of Islam in Central Asia, Chechen war in the North Caucasus, terror attacks, and the rise of Vladimir Putin and increasing challenges to religious freedom for evangelicals. Anita was instrumental in launching a ministry initiative called a Home for Every Orphan which was designed to place orphans and homeless children in the former Soviet Union into loving Christian homes. This initiative remains Anita's ministry passion today.

*“For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.”*

— Psalm 100:5

- 2008: **Association for Spiritual Renewal (PDRM field ministries headquarters) moves from Moscow, Russia to Kyiv, Ukraine** — With the changing political climate in Russia and increasing pressure on the evangelical church and mission organizations, PDRM made the strategic decision to move its field ministries headquarters from Moscow, Russia to a more stable and open environment in Kyiv (Irpin), Ukraine. Here all of our field ministries programs are coordinated today.
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- 2010: **Sergey Rakhuba, senior vice president, becomes president of PDRM** — Sergey was involved in many outreach and church-planting ministries in Russia before joining PDRM in 1992, when he helped to establish a network of church-planting and evangelism centers throughout the former Soviet Union. Sergey’s experience as a visionary with strategic understanding of the church and missions in the former Soviet Union has ideally equipped him to effectively lead the ministry during these challenging and changing times.
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- 2014: **Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries changes name to Mission Eurasia** — This strategic decision was made in order to emphasize our overall geographical scope and impact throughout the entire post-Soviet world and eliminate confusion about an association with one particular country and its regime.
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- 2020: **Mission Eurasia headquarters moves from Wheaton, IL to Franklin, TN** — This strategic move was made to provide Mission Eurasia with access to greater resources for ministry expansion, helping to increase its impact for years to come.



EXPANSION AND GROWTH FOR A STRATEGIC FUTURE

Throughout the past 30 years, Mission Eurasia has been catalyzing and igniting new ministry strategies that are unleashing the missional potential among churches in Eurasia today.



- **Project 250 Church-Planting Initiative–1991:** through networking and partnering with other mission organizations in the West, this movement addressed the spiritual vacuum left by the collapse of the Soviet Union by establishing 52 church-planting and evangelism centers throughout the former Soviet Union. Through Project 250, an estimated 5,000 church planters were trained, and 1,000 new evangelical churches were planted. Project 250 fueled the movement for training church planters, which is still growing today through School Without Walls (SWW) and the Next Generation Professional Leaders Initiative (NGPLI).



- **Networking–1991:** forming partnerships with national and Western organizations has been a hallmark and key strength of PDRM since the very beginning and has helped to expand Christian ministry and church growth in the former Soviet Union. Throughout the last 30 years, we have partnered with hundreds of organizations, including the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), Conservative Baptists International (CBI)/World Venture, Gideons of Canada/ShareWord Global, Campus Crusade for Christ, Focus on the Family, Child Evangelism Fellowship, AWANA, Alliance for Saturation Church Planting, TEAM, Youth with a Mission, Samaritan's Purse, and many others which continue to impact the post-Soviet region today.



- **Children's Bible camp ministry launches–1999:** through our summer Bible camp ministry, we are now replacing the spiritually dark Soviet Pioneer youth camps, once used by communists to indoctrinate children in atheism, with teaching them the truth of the gospel. Peter Deyneka, Jr. and Sergey Rakhuba attended the opening of the first Christian summer camp when the statue of Vladimir Lenin that stood in the middle of the campground was taken down. The camp director climbed onto the podium where the statue once stood. He held a Bible in his hand that had been smuggled into the Soviet Union and, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed, "I have been living for a moment like this!" He then said a prayer for the 250 children who would hear the gospel at this first-ever Christian Bible camp supported by PDRM. As Peter and Sergey wiped the tears from their eyes, they thanked God for this miraculous start of a new ministry that would ignite the summer camp movement in the former Soviet Union/Eurasia and lead tens of thousands of children to Christ over the next 23 years. Many of the children who received Christ through our summer camps have become leaders who are now leading the national church.



- **School Without Walls (SWW) leadership development program launches–2004:** this nonformal, flexible leadership training program was launched in response to a growing need in the FSU to train Next Generation Christian leaders who can lead the national evangelical church into the future by transforming their communities and nations for Christ. SWW started as a pilot program in Ukraine and today is operating in all 13 countries of Eurasia and Israel where Mission Eurasia carries out its ministry. Throughout the past 17 years, more than 39,000 Christian leaders have been trained and equipped through this strategic and effective program.

*“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”*

— Psalm 32:8



- **Gift of Hope Christmas outreach (previously called Project Hope)–2005:** this strategic, innovative nationally based children’s outreach has helped to bring the hope of the gospel to thousands of needy children in Eurasia facing poverty, homelessness, war, and other desperate situations. Gifts of Hope are not subject to customs restrictions because they are packed in-country by national church volunteers. Each Gift of Hope contains toys, treats, mittens or socks, and most importantly, a children’s Bible or other piece of children’s Christian literature. Since the first 10,000 Gifts of Hope were delivered in-country to needy children in 2005, this program has become a strategic component of the national church’s mission outreach program, reaching approximately 125,000 children on an annual basis.



- **Next Generation Professional Leaders Initiative (NGPLI) begins–2012:** this program was introduced to strengthen, nurture, and support the first generation of Christian professionals who emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union in order to fill the spiritual vacuum in the professional sector left by the communist regime. This initiative is focused on reaching and training young Christian professionals in order to bring the gospel to contemporary society and the marketplace in Eurasia through healthcare, education, business, law, and other influential professions.



The International Alliance for the Development of Christian Education (IADCE) partners with NGPLI to provide “faith and teaching” professional development training programs and resources for Christian educators in private and public schools in the countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU). Through its IADCE representatives, Raymond and Cindy Le Clair, Mission Eurasia helps to equip a highly influential group of Christian professionals—teachers.



- **“I Care” Refugee Assistance Program launches to aid refugees impacted by war in eastern Ukraine and others in need–2014:** through partnership with the national church and Western relief aid organizations, “I Care” has expanded to care for refugees from other conflicts, including the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020, as well as those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through “I Care,” Mission Eurasia’s Next Generation leaders deliver food aid, medical supplies, and Scripture to those in need. “Bread of Life” bakeries have also been established in Armenia and Ukraine as part of the “I Care” program to provide for the ongoing physical and spiritual needs of their refugee communities.



- **Scripture & Christian literature publishing–2012:** there is a tremendous hunger for Scripture throughout the former Soviet Union/Eurasia, and we are providing millions of copies of Bibles, New Testaments, and other Scripture pieces to unreached children and adults each year.

In addition, through our National Christian Authors initiative, Mission Eurasia cultivates and publishes new works by national Christian authors each year which address critical issues affecting the church and society in Eurasia.

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- **Unreached People Groups Initiative (UPGI)–1991:** since its founding, Mission Eurasia has been working to reach unreached peoples living in the territory of the former Soviet Union. Today, through its Unreached People Groups Initiative (UPGI), Mission Eurasia’s Next Generation leaders are receiving specialized training and mobilizing the national church to reach the partially reached or unreached people groups with the gospel, including the people groups living in Russia’s Far North, the North Caucasus region of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia. There are 120 unreached people groups in Russia and 300 unreached people groups in Eurasia overall. This ministry represents a strategic opportunity to mobilize the national church to fulfill the Great Commission.



- **Family as Mission Initiative–2017:** families in Eurasia are struggling as a result of poverty, alcoholism, divorce, and other destructive forces. Through this initiative, Mission Eurasia trains and equips national pastors to help build strong, healthy families and marriages throughout Eurasia, contributing to the well-being of the church and society overall.



- **Biblical stewardship/generosity focus–2019:** in order to support and sustain the expansion of our ministry programs and promote giving from within the national evangelical church, Mission Eurasia is developing and presenting new models of biblical stewardship to national evangelical leaders and national churches. This biblically based teaching on stewardship is designed to promote the long-term sustainable growth of our ministry training programs and the national evangelical church by decreasing dependence on external sources of support, eliminating vulnerabilities, and multiplying ministry impact throughout the countries of the former Soviet Union/Eurasia.



- **Religious Freedom Initiative–2012:** Mission Eurasia began this initiative in response to growing religious restrictions and persecution in the countries of Eurasia. Its goals are to create awareness and mobilize prayer among the global Christian community as well as advocate on behalf of specific churches and Christian leaders in Eurasia who are facing persecution for their Christian activities.



- **Emergency Response to the COVID-19 pandemic–2020:** when the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, Mission Eurasia quickly refocused its ministry efforts to bring hope and healing to the people of Eurasia who were affected by this unexpected crisis. These emergency response initiatives included strategic training events for young Christian leaders on how to minister effectively during the pandemic; development of new, strategic resources, including a special prayer guide (Molitvoslov); delivery of food, medicine, and sanitizing products to the elderly, sick, poor families, and those living in the war zone in eastern Ukraine; and the activation of a 24/7 hotline through which our young leaders could provide spiritual and emotional support to those in need.

“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations.”

— Ephesians 3:20-21

Where we are today.

Today, God is still unfolding that miracle and is using our ministry to accomplish amazing things.



Growing up during the Cold War years of the 1950s and 60s and learning to pray for the persecuted believers in the countries of the Soviet Union, I was stunned by the turn of events in the 1990s that led to the massive changes in the Soviet system. I remember

being invited to Moscow and attending the first Christmas celebration that followed the political collapse. I also remember the pioneering work of Peter and Anita Deyneka before, during, and after Soviet communism and the rush of excitement the gospel enjoyed after glasnost. But today, in a way, the challenge to proclaim the gospel and make Christian disciples has its own degree of difficulty. And yet MISSION EURASIA is rising up to meet that challenge. I am so grateful for this generation of workers who are fully committed to God's call to reach the countries of Eurasia with the only hope we have — our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

—Wayne Shepherd, Board Chairman

We are so grateful to God for His leading and guidance as we introduce innovative concepts to the mission field, equipping the national evangelical church for more effective ministry. In addition, during the past 10 years, we have grown significantly, with a threefold increase in donations and ministry impact. This would not be possible without God's miraculous blessing and the generosity of our donors and ministry partners.

We are also deeply grateful to our Mission Eurasia board of directors whose guidance and direction have helped us to restructure and realign our ministry. We especially appreciate the continuing service of our co-founder and Director Emeritus Anita Deyneka, who serves on the board in a non-governing capacity, and Wayne Shepherd, who serves as the chairman of the board. Under Wayne's leadership, our current passionate, generous, and well-balanced board of directors is using its abilities, knowledge, and experience to provide excellent governing leadership for our ministry.

Finally, we are grateful to our sister organization, Mission Eurasia Canada, which was founded in 1992. Under the leadership of its founding and former board members, including Alex and Carrie Kaye, Joe Biega, Sophie Martens, Ruben Friesen, Walter Litowski, Rudy and Evelyn Penner, Nellie Kudrick, and Ron Balasiuk, Mission Eurasia Canada helped to raise support for Mission Eurasia across Canada. Today, under the leadership of Paul Mercer, executive director, and Nick Tishenko, board chairman, Mission Eurasia Canada continues to help expand its base, leading to greater spiritual impact in the countries of Eurasia.



Anita Deyneka, co-founder of Mission Eurasia and director emeritus

EMBRACING A STRATEGIC FUTURE

As we focus on the future, we must acknowledge that the former Soviet Union, a region now called Eurasia, is still struggling in the shadow of the post-Soviet legacy.

This is a challenging region for mission work, due to many different factors:

- **Russia continues** to demonstrate its imperial ambitions on the world stage and gives favorable status to the Russian Orthodox Church, creating challenges for other expressions of faith.
- **Radical Islam continues** to grow in the North Caucasus region and religious freedom restrictions are increasing throughout the countries of Central Asia.
- **Uprisings and wars have produced** hundreds of thousands of refugees who are desperate for help and hope. That's why, as we look ahead, we are renewing our mandate to train the Next Generation to lead and to equip them to serve.

A recent forum in the Russian city of Ekaterinburg demonstrates our commitment to this goal.

Where tyranny & Gulags once reigned

Ekaterinburg is located in the Ural Mountains in western Siberia and has great historical significance since it is the place where the communists executed the last tsar of Russia, Nicholas II, and his family. It also served as the capital of the Gulag, or political prison system, of Russia.

However, recently, it served as the site where 300 young Next Generation leaders gathered from surrounding areas to learn how to effectively reach their communities with the gospel and ignite a gospel movement in Siberia—once a dark place of exile, executions, and political prisons.

Similar events are taking place throughout Eurasia, and I am so grateful to God that our dream to reach the former Soviet Union for Christ is coming true.

When I think back to the time that I lived in the Soviet Union, I could not have even imagined that I would not just witness such a powerful gospel movement, but that I would also now be part of it.



ESTIMATED MINISTRY IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE



39,152
Leaders

School Without Walls (SWW) 39,152 Next Generation Christian Leaders trained and equipped in 13 countries of Eurasia and Israel



166,553
Children

Summer Bible Camps 166,553 children and youth reached throughout Eurasia



72,344
Professionals

Next Generation Professional Leaders Initiative (NGPLI) 72,344 young Christian professionals mobilized, trained, and equipped across Eurasia



6,216,700
Scripture

Scripture Publishing and Distribution 6,216,700 Scripture resources and 110 titles by young national Christian authors printed and delivered throughout Eurasia



1,003,324
Children

Gift of Hope evangelistic children's outreach 1,003,324 children reached throughout Eurasia



4,464,000
People

I Care Refugee Assistance Program 4,464,000 refugees, displaced persons, victims of war, and other people in need assisted

Thank you!

Without your dedication and investment in our ministry, this would not be possible.

I would like to thank all of our ministry partners who, during the past 30 years, have shared their expertise, experience, and resources, helping our ministry and the national evangelical church grow and minister more effectively. I also want to thank all of our faithful supporters whose generosity and commitment have helped to train and equip Next Generation Christian leaders, who are taking the torch and leading the church out of Soviet oppression into the future.

Join us

Your faithful partnership has brought us to this point, and we now stand on the threshold of our fourth decade of ministry. While the challenges facing the church in Eurasia today are great, the opportunities to expand God's Kingdom are even greater, so we invite you to join us as we move strategically into the future, continuing our focus on training the Next Generation of Christian leaders who in turn, are reaching their communities, professions, and nations for Christ.

Through these efforts, we hope to see the national evangelical church in Eurasia continue to grow, transforming their nations and spreading the gospel beyond their borders, joining the universal church in fulfilling the Great Commission.



Sergey Rakhuba, President

HOW CAN I HELP?

Pray

Prayer is foundational to all purposes and plans of Mission Eurasia. Our founder, Peter Deyneka, Jr., embraced the centrality of prayer, as did his father, Peter Deyneka, Sr., who often said, "Much prayer, much power." Sign up for our monthly prayer guide or newly updated United in Prayer booklet, a 14-month guide for the nations of Eurasia at: <https://missioneurasia.org/resources/>. You also can sign up for our electronic ministry updates at <https://missioneurasia.org/enews-sign-up/>

Give

If you are not already partnering with us, please learn about the different ways you can help our ministry at <https://missioneurasia.org/donate/>

Join Kingdom Builders

Sign up for our monthly giving program, Kingdom Builders, to help fund essential ministry opportunities. This allows us to plan ahead for critical outreach training year-round. Find out more at: <https://missioneurasia.org/monthly-giving-program/>

Planned Giving

To create a legacy of generosity and support the ministry of Mission Eurasia for years to come, please prayerfully consider one of our planned giving stewardship options at: <https://missioneurasia.org/donate/>



Train to lead. Equip to serve.

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