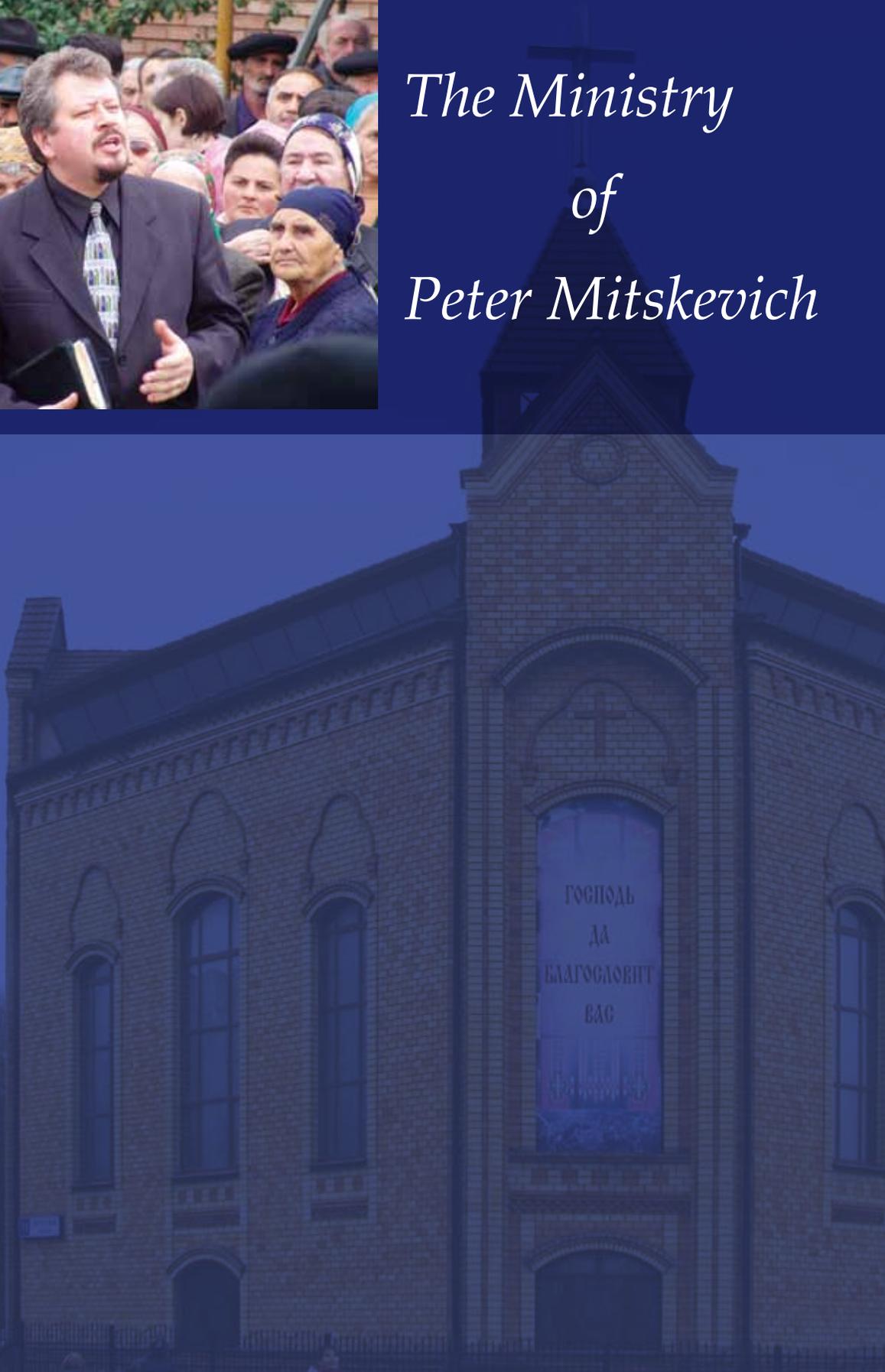




*The Ministry  
of  
Peter Mitskevich*

Insight for Living

RUSSIA





## A Century of Famine

The epic history of Russian evangelicalism is filled with both courageous heroes and tragic persecution. Communism prohibited spiritual education in the last century. Parents were not permitted to take their children to church. But the church thrived—a reminder that dictators cannot abolish the Holy Spirit from any society. Every Russian Christian family has fathers, relatives, or friends who were swept away to remote prison camps or killed because of their faith in God.



Members of Golgotha Baptist Church in Moscow, Russia, listening to Peter Mitskevich's sermon during a Sunday-morning worship

## Soul Mates and Ministry Partners

In the late 1990s, Chuck and Cynthia Swindoll sought a qualified pastor to carry the distinctive Bible-teaching ministry of Insight for Living to Russia, a nation decimated by a century of crimes against both faith and conscience. Of course, God had never ceased raising up people to strengthen and lead the church. One of those leaders—whom God has used mightily in church, seminary, radio ministry, and in the circles of national leadership—is Dr. Peter Valterovich Mitskevich.



Peter Mitskevich with Chuck and Cynthia Swindoll during his visit to the United States

Since 1998, Peter has translated and broadcast the expository sermons of Chuck Swindoll on the Russian radio program, *Svet Zhizni* ("Light of Life"). In fact, Peter Mitskevich precisely models Chuck and Cynthia Swindoll's vision for international ministry. Their unique vision is to awaken pastors to the value of preaching the Bible expositively, teaching its doctrines systematically, and applying its truths practically. This is accomplished, not only by the radio broadcast but by entrusting every aspect of the ministry to a gifted, indigenous pastor who can personally reach "spiritually hungry people right where they live and in a language and cultural context they can understand."

Chuck and Cynthia Swindoll met Peter at a Dallas Theological Seminary event while Peter was a student there. They bonded immediately with this vibrant Russian pastor. With a common vision for missions and a shared passion for God and His Word, Insight for Living and Peter Mitskevich began a providential partnership.

## Early Years, Calling, and Vision

Russia has changed a lot since Peter Mitskevich's grandfather, Arthur, established correspondent Bible courses in the Soviet era amidst communist persecution and spent more than 10 years in prison for his Christian faith. Peter's father, Valter, was fired from his job as a dentist after committing his life to the Lord, but he went on to serve as academic dean of a Bible school.

Peter himself began his spiritual pilgrimage at age 14 when he put his faith in Christ, fully aware of the dangers of making such a decision under Soviet rule. Years later, he became a medical doctor, but his professional



life changed when he assisted the Gideon International Bible distribution ministry. People who received the Bible would ask Peter to help them understand Scripture, but he was not equipped to do so. This motivated Peter to study at the Moscow Bible Institute, where he graduated in 1989. Sensing a need for deeper theological understanding, Peter and his wife, Tatiana, moved with their children to the United States so that he could study at Dallas Theological Seminary. He received his Master of Theology degree in 1997.

Peter has served in an unbelievable variety of leadership roles in Russia, much like the ministry of Chuck Swindoll in the United States.

“My dream for Russia,” Peter says, “is that *each town* will have its own evangelical church, that *each pastor* will be theologically educated, that *each church* will have its own place of worship, and that *each citizen* of Russia will receive the Good News.”



Peter Mitskevich speaking at Dallas Theological Seminary

## Pastor of Insight for Living Russia



Peter Mitskevich recording a *Svet Zhizni* broadcast in the new *Svet Zhizni* studio at Moscow Theological Seminary

Radio ministry in Russia has taken numerous drastic turns in the years since communism fell. After many political setbacks limiting coverage across the nation, *Svet Zhizni* in Russia is developing and expanding its reach again. Currently, the Russian-language program of Insight for Living is aired by FEBC two days a week in Moscow and in St. Petersburg by satellite, on local church FM radio stations in a growing number of small communities, as well as in prisons. The broadcast is heard one day per week in eastern Europe through Trans World Radio.

Peter began a biblical-counseling ministry for listeners in October 1999, responding to letters and now e-mail. Currently, Moscow Seminary professor Nikolay Kornilov and his wife, Marina, work as *Svet Zhizni* biblical counselors.

In 2009, *Svet Zhizni* set up an office and recording studio on the premises of Moscow Seminary and was officially established as a registered ministry in Russia. The first meeting of the advisory board, including Cynthia Swindoll, occurred in February 2010.

Peter’s lovely wife, Tatiana, is as spirited as Peter and works diligently as the executive director of *Svet Zhizni*, coordinating all of the administrative tasks required of a Russian charity.



Church leaders, broadcasters, Moscow Theological Seminary leaders, *Svet Zhizni* board members and staff during the opening of the *Svet Zhizni* studio and ministry office at Moscow Theological Seminary in Moscow, Russia



Peter Mitskevich with his wife Tatiana and two of their children, Lisa and Paul

Two of Peter and Tatiana’s sons also partner with them to produce the Russian-language program. Paul Mitskevich (age 23), married in 2009, works as the ministry’s recording engineer and program producer, and Elijah (age 25) assists in translating messages and other materials. Their other family members include their daughter, Mary (age 22), who lives and studies in the United States and was married in 2010; their youngest son, Timothy (age 15), and their youngest daughter, Lisa (age 3).



Peter has developed pastoral training through Moscow Theological Seminary and the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (UECB), and Insight for Living plans to partner with these institutions. This pastoral training includes a master class for the leadership congress in September 2010, and Peter plans to provide a counseling course based on *Counseling Insights*, a comprehensive manual of biblical counseling published by Insight for Living and soon to be translated by Peter.

## *Many Roles and a Joyful Heart*



Golgotha Baptist Church, Moscow, Russia

*Senior Pastor,  
Golgotha Baptist Church, Moscow*

In addition to his pastoral and broadcast ministry with Insight for Living, Peter serves as senior pastor of Golgotha Baptist Church in Moscow. Golgotha Baptist Church is a joyful and worshipful congregation of 350 attendees with active youth and strong, biblical preaching. The congregation holds regular youth camps, leaders teach Bible lessons in the public schools, and special ministries reach local orphanages and encourage the disabled. Golgotha is known for its evangelistic outreach, using holidays and special events to take the gospel to the community's streets and to its children and families through regular Bible camps.



Peter Mitskevich conducting the baptism of new believers at the church altar of Golgotha Baptist Church in Moscow

### *Vice President of Education, Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists*

For the past several years, Peter has served as senior vice president of the largest protestant denomination in Russia, the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (UECB). The UECB consists of approximately 1,600 functioning churches across Russia and has about 74,500 members.

In 2003, Peter and UECB leaders covered 60,000 kilometers in a 221-day mission expedition across Russia in which hundreds of Russians trusted Christ as their Savior and more than 50,000 New Testaments were distributed. Church leaders have visited 440 prison institutions in 54 regions. Prisoners are able to study at correspondence Bible schools. In his role as senior vice president, Peter represented the church on a public and national stage, meeting with the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, with whom he has a very constructive and friendly relationship. Peter also spoke for the church at events of national significance, such as the consoling of victims and preaching Christ to the Beslan community during the September 2004 school hostage crisis; during that time more than 1,100 people (including 777 children) were taken hostage and more than 300 individuals lost their lives. Peter represents the church with compassion and a bold voice of truth.

Peter is now vice president of education of the UECB. In June 2010, Peter represented the UECB at the Congress of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Ukraine at the Central Kiev Church. Approximately 1,000 delegates and guests attended from 2,800 Ukrainian churches as well as representatives from other countries.



Peter and Tatiana in front of Moscow Theological Seminary in Moscow, Russia

### *President, Moscow Theological Seminary*

Peter’s UECB role leverages his continuing service at Moscow Theological Seminary (MTS), where he was elected president in 2007 after serving as a teacher and academic dean. MTS currently has 721 students at the Moscow campus and its satellite centers and another 700 students in Bible correspondence school. In the fall of 2010, 43 students graduated from MTS.

### *Leading with a Joyful Heart*

Of all the leadership gifts that Peter Mitskevich possesses, the most compelling is his marvelous outlook on faith. No doubt, the reason he is constantly sought after for roles of influence and leadership is the joyful and optimistic attitude he models. Every conversation with Peter will find him praising God for His goodness in times of celebration and in times of struggle. He frequently ends his conversations with a glowing smile and a warm encouragement, “My friend, you are wonderful! Praise God for you!”

Finding even greater motivation in times of trial, Peter epitomizes the spirit of an undaunted voice of reason, a contagious passion, and a heart of faith in uncertain, even chaotic, times.

## *Building the Church of Jesus Christ*

In a new era of “openness,” enormous challenges continue. With the Russian Orthodox patriarchy entrenched in the highest levels of government, the evangelical Baptist church is viewed as a threat. Consequently, it is greatly restricted in its activities. While Muslims are granted permits for mass public prayer services — as Dr. Ron Harris wrote in the September 15, 2010, edition of *NRB Today* — Evangelical Christians-Baptist church buildings are being closed, and freedom of worship is being targeted and systematically threatened.

Even before communism fell and before new freedoms (and repressions) emerged, God has nurtured men after His own heart to lead the body of Christ in Russia. The ministry of Peter Mitskevich is an unfolding and passionate mission to proclaim the gospel by every means possible and to lead the leaders of the Russian church.



Peter Mitskevich in St. Petersburg, Russia during a visit