

## Part V

### North to Oregon – Russian Gospel Church

#### Chapter 14 – Benjamin Shevchenko

<https://rscowatzekdi.net/ben-shevchenko/> (interview, audio)



Ben Shevchenko is the Senior Pastor of the Russian Gospel Church in Hubbard, OR. He has lived in nearby Woodburn since 1974. Since the early 1990s, Mr. Shevchenko and his church were instrumental in sponsoring the arrival of new Russian-speaking Evangelical immigrants in Oregon.

The story of Mr. Shevchenko's personal immigration was set in motion much earlier, however, before he even was born. In the late 1920s his parents, who lived in a remote provincial village in Ukraine, converted to Pentecostal Christianity under the influence of Ivan Voronaev, a prominent Pentecostal leader who came to Ukraine to do missionary work. However, with the advent of the Stalinist crackdown on religious expression, the new congregation decided to leave Ukraine. First they moved to further east into Siberia, but eventually relocated to China, where they could practice their faith. In 1933 they settled in Ghulja (formerly Kulja), in the present-day Xinjiang Autonomous Region of western China. It was there that Ben's parents met and married, and there that Ben was born in 1937. Shortly after, his parents joined a small group that chose to make their way out of China and travel to America.

Ben's journey began in 1946 with a long trip across China to Shanghai with his family and others. By 1947, Ben's family had gotten through the physical and bureaucratic challenges of their journey and made their way to Shanghai, where they hoped to secure passage to America. However, at this time America was not openly accepting immigrants from China because of the increasing

prevalence of Communism in Chinese life and politics. Instead, Ben's family was classified as Russian refugees. The International Refugee Organization (IRO), a group that was assembled in 1946 to provide aid to victims of World War II and eventually to the victims of Soviet injustices, provided aid in the form of food and housing, and in due course secured passage for them to the Philippines.

The next leg of their journey began in 1947, when the IRO moved Ben and his family to the Philippines aboard a ship and then set them up in a refugee camp. They remained there, living in tents and on donated food and supplies, waiting for approval to travel to America, but that would not come. Instead, a year later an ambassador from Paraguay came to offer relocation to Paraguay on terms that included not only full legal status, but provisions for land to be farmed and equipment to use on the land. Ben's family and another family decided to take this offer and came to Paraguay in 1949. Unfortunately, the promises made by the ambassador differed from the reality – although they were given land, that land was predominantly forested and difficult to farm. Unable to engage in farming in the way they had anticipated, they resorted to work as skilled laborers that travelled to the city to work.



**Ben Shevchenko (center), Zina Shevchenko (left), Alexander Solzhenitsyn (right) in traditional Old Believer garb during his visit in 1975**

After eight years of living in Paraguay, Ben's parents decided to immigrate to America. Because the rest of the community that they had left behind in the Philippines, which included relatives to the Shevchenko family, had by this time made it to the US, the process of immigration was now easier. These relatives arranged for immigration visas for Ben's family and officially became

sponsors of the Shevchenkos, which allowed for Ben and his parents to successfully immigrate to San Francisco in 1957. The initial group that came to San Francisco had established a church (presently, the Russian Gospel Temple), and this church acted as the primary support network for Ben's family when they arrived in America. First, the church secured housing for Ben's family, which was no small task with Ben's seven brothers and sisters, parents, and grandparents. They paid for rent for the first month and helped the family members to find jobs, with Ben finding the first job as a watchmaker. Language was also a difficulty. Because Ben was nineteen years old, he was too old to attend high school. Instead, he studied language and American history at night, while working during the day.

After thirteen years of life in San Francisco, Ben got married and had five children. Eventually, his wife expressed a desire to leave San Francisco and relocate to Seattle, Washington. After his wife died of breast cancer shortly following their move, he met his second wife and they heard of a Russian presence in Woodburn, Oregon. The Shevchenkos decided to move to Oregon in 1974. Ben and his family joined some Evangelicals from the initial group in San Francisco who had relocated to Oregon earlier, and together they built the church that would come to be the present-day Russian Gospel Church.



**Ben Shevchenko (bearded man in middle of back row of men) presiding over the dedication of a newly arrived Soviet family at the Russian Gospel Church**

In 1978, Ben was voted to be pastor of the Russian Gospel Church in Hubbard. Ben and his church were instrumental in sponsoring the arrival of new Evangelical immigrants in Oregon. The process began with letters from the Soviet Union requesting visa support for travel to America as refugees. Ben and the church sent affidavits of support to the Soviet Union. Initially, this process was very slow and

several years passed until Ben heard from Portland immigration offices that the families he sponsored had been granted approval to leave the Soviet Union and come to America. The church was key in helping the new immigrants get settled by finding housing, jobs, and dealing with procuring official documents such as drivers' licenses. In time, the church came to rely on the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) to work with these new immigrants in these capacities. Ben's wife worked at IRCO as a job developer during this time, helping people find employment. Ultimately, this new influx of immigrants spread around the Portland area. They established their own churches and in turn sponsored their own immigrants, exponentially expanding the Russian community in Portland. None of it would have occurred as it did without the presence of the Russian Gospel Church and the involvement of Ben Shevchenko.

*This story is written by Martin Dorciak and it is based on the interview Martin conducted with Mr. Shevchenko in Woodburn, Oregon, July 2, 2014*

<https://rsco.watzekdi.net/ben-schevchenko/> (interview, audio)







**Woodburn-Hubbard, Oregon group, 1976**



2014





Church Murals painted by Mr. Garelick

**Left panel:** Издали явился мне Господь и сказал: **любовью вечною Я возлюбил тебя** и потому простёр к тебе благоволение. Иеремия 31:3  
 Jeremiah 31:3: The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: **"I have loved you with an everlasting love**; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

**Center Panel:** The Book of Revelation describes a "river of the water of life" flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb, symbolizing the Holy Spirit and eternal life. Revelation 22:1

**Right Panel:** И сказал мне *Ангел*: напиши: **блаженны званые на брачную вечерю Агнца**. Откровение Иоанна 19:9  
 Revelations 19:9: And he saith unto me, Write, **Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb**. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.



## **Russian Gospel Church, July 13th, 2025, 50th Anniversary**

### **Special guest: Alex Shevchuk**

50th Anniversary of Russian Gospel Church in Hubbard, OR

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIDvoU8ZCxU&t=2534s> (4:04:03)

### **Russian Gospel Church, July 13th 2025, 50th Anniversary**

**Alex Shevchuk became the first pastor of the newly built Russian Gospel Church in Hubbard, Oregon. It was founded in 1975.**

**During the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Russian Gospel Church, Alex Shevchuk came to participate in the celebration. He was 92.**



**Alex spoke for several minutes. July 13th, 2025**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srkr2nztvuk>



The choir sang a special song for the anniversary:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpBbtCV8M0c> (5:43)

ПРЕЖДЕ СОЗДАНИЯ МИРА,  
ПРЕЖДЕ ЧЕМ ЖИЗНЬ ПОЯВИЛАСЬ  
ПРЕЖЕ ЧЕМ Я РОДИЛАСЬ, ОН БЫЛ  
ГОТОВ ПЕРВЕНЕЦ НЕПОРОЧНЫЙ,  
ЧИСТЫЙ АГНЕЦ БОЖИЙ  
ОН ДАЛ МНЕ ИСКУПЛЕНИЕ ГРЕХОВ

ПРЕЖДЕ АДАМА И ЕВЫ, ПРЕЖДЕ  
ХИТРОГО ЗМЕЯ  
ПРЕЖДЕ ГРЕХОПАДЕНИЯ, ОН БЫЛ  
ГОТОВ ПРЕЖДЕ ГОРЫ ГОЛГОФЫ,  
ПРЕЖДЕ КРОВИ ЖИВОТНЫХ  
НЕВИННЫЙ АГНЕЦ БОЖИЙ БЫЛ ГОТОВ

**(Припев) СВЯТЫЙ СВЯТЫЙ СВЯТЫЙ  
ВОКРУГ ЕГО ПРЕСТОЛА, ДЕНЬ И НОЧЬ  
ВТОРЯТ СВЯТ, СВЯТ, СВЯТ НЕБО  
ВОСКЛИЦАЕТ, ЗЕМЛЯ ПОВТОРЯЕТ  
СВЯТ, СВЯТ, СВЯТ**

(1) BEFORE THE WORLD WAS CREATED,  
BEFORE LIFE WAS BORN  
BEFORE I WAS BORN HE WAS READY  
THE FIRST BORN BLAMELESS,  
THE PURE LAMB OF GOD  
HE GAVE ME REDEMPTION FROM SINS

(2) BEFORE ADAM AND EVE, BEFORE THE  
CRAFTY SERPENT  
BEFORE THE FALL HE WAS READY  
BEFORE MOUNT GOLGOTHA, BEFORE  
THE BLOOD OF ANIMALS THE  
INNOCENT LAMB OF GOD WAS READY

(Chorus) HOLY HOLY HOLY  
AROUND HIS THRONE, DAY AND NIGHT  
REPEAT  
HOLY, HOLY, HOLY  
HEAVEN SHOUTS, EARTH REPEATS  
HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Я РАСПЯТА С НИМ , ДЛЯ МИРА, И МИР  
ДЛЯ МЕНЯ РАСПЯТ ТОЖЕ  
МОЙ АГНЕЦ НЕПОРОЧНЫЙ, МЕНЯ  
КУПИЛ ЛЮБОВЬ ЕГО МОЯ ВЕРШИНА,  
ЛЮБОВЬ ЕГО МОЯ СИЛА  
СИЛА ВОСКРЕСЕНЬЯ МОЕГО

ОТ ВСЯКОГО КОЛЕНА, ОТ ВСЯКОГО  
НАРОДА ДОСТОИН СЛАВЫ ГОСПОДЬ  
СВЯЩЕННИКИ БОГА, ЦАРИ НАРОДА  
НЕСУТ ТЕБЕ СЛАВУ ГОСПОДЬ

ПРОЙДЕТ В МИРЕ ВСЕ, ЧТО В МИРЕ,  
АНТИХРИСТ ЛИШИТСЯ СИЛЫ  
ЗЕМЛЯ И ВСЕ ДЕЛА НА НЕЙ , СГОРЯТ  
ОДИН ТОЛЬКО АГНЕЦ ВЕЧНЫЙ, И  
ЦАРСТВО ЕГО БЕСКОНЕЧНО.  
ОН БЫЛ, ОН ЕСТЬ И ОН ГРЯДЕТ ОПЯТЬ

**(Припев) СВЯТЫЙ СВЯТЫЙ СВЯТЫЙ**  
**ВОКРУГ ЕГО ПРЕСТОЛА, ДЕНЬ И НОЧЬ**  
**ВТОРЯТ СВЯТ, СВЯТ, СВЯТ НЕБО**  
**ВОСКЛИЦАЕТ , ЗЕМЛЯ ПОВТОРЯЕТ**  
**СВЯТ, СВЯТ, СВЯТ**

(3) I AM CRUCIFIED WITH HIM FOR THE  
WORLD, AND THE WORLD IS CRUCIFIED  
FOR ME TOO  
MY LAMB WITHOUT BLAME, HE BOUGHT  
ME, HIS LOVE IS MY SUPREME, HIS LOVE  
IS MY STRENGTH,  
THE POWER OF MY RESURRECTION

(4) FROM EVERY KINGDOM,  
FROM EVERY PEOPLE THE LORD IS  
WORTHY OF GLORY  
PRIESTS OF GOD, KINGS OF THE PEOPLE  
BRING YOU THE GLORY LORD.

(5) WHEN EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD  
PASSES AWAY, THE ANTICHRIST WILL BE  
DEPRIVED POWERS, EARTH AND ALL  
WORKS ON IT WILL BE BURNED.  
ONLY THE ETERNAL LAMB, AND HIS  
KINGDOM IS ENDLESS. HE WAS, HE IS,  
AND HE IS COMING AGAIN.

(Chorus) HOLY HOLY HOLY  
AROUND HIS THRONE, DAY AND NIGHT  
REPEAT  
HOLY, HOLY, HOLY  
HEAVEN SHOUTS, EARTH REPEATS  
HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



**Shura Temoshenko, history of Russian Gospel Church, Hubbard, OR**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zA1XYvlc1oo&t=17s>

«Я хочу прочесть историю нашей церкви. Чудо что она сохранилась в моя архивав, где она лежала 30 лет. Я думаю **Иосиф Тирентевич Локтев** дал ее мне.

История возникновения Церкви в городе Хаббард, штат Орегон.

У Бога существует то что не знаем и не думаем. В 1971 года, приехавши в Орегон, спокойна еще жили в Калифорнии и занимался своим деле или на работе или в церкви и на мысли пришло переезжать куда нибудь. Сын Иосифа Локтева, Петя – от него начинается эта история. Петя сильна возривновал, молился на едине. Мать (Маруся) говорит ему: «Что ты один в гараже молился?» К нему соединилась вся семья, дочь и дядя. Молитва в доме Локтевых имела цель, приближение к Господу. Бог проговорил через пророчество: «На новые места!» Они хотели знать куда направить их Бог. Они решили, будем молиться и Господь откроить нам. Предложение: в Мае у нас будет отпуск, в гости к родственникам, чувствуя что там Бог откроит свою волю.

В Сиатле, Иосиф узнал что в городе Портланда какая группа старо-обрядцев, посетить и познакомится с ними. Было пророческое слово:

«Сейчас туда ступай и к кому обращайся. Одна сестра дала адрес одного молоканина.

Приехали в Вудборн, остановились возле городского парка, увидели большую группу молодежи, старообрядцев. Побеседовали с ними. Остановились на ночлег в мотеле. Господь сказал через пророческое слово: «Вот это место!»

Второй раз поехали в Орегон выбрать место. Всю дорогу, в атмосфере радости, и непонятных планах Господа. Приехали в город. Или купить участок земли – все согласились купить участки земли (для каждой семьи) и один участок был зарегистрирован на (молитвенный дом) этом месте, организовавший церкви «Живых Воды» в штате Орегоне.

Иосифу Локтеву было пророчество: «Даю, возлагаю тебе ответственность в организации церкви, и содействие моих детей построить на этом месте молитвенный дом. Здесь у меня много избранных, и в этом образе управлял самых людей.»

В начале 1974 года, когда все уже приехавши решили сделать заседание, участвовало 17 человек. В сердцах братьев и сестер зарегистрировали это место «Ассембли ов Год» (Assembly of God). На постройку церкви люди начали жертвовать, и нужно было уставить человека на управлении церкви. Кто будет выбран пастором?

Заместителем церкви Вениамин Шевченко и Леонти Думановски, и другие братья вошли в состав управления церкви. За постройку молитвенного дома, он (Иосиф) вышел на раннюю пенсию к этому делу. А рука Божия, дело велось. Бог располагал начальствующим и встречу. В покупке строительного материала было большое чудо: строитель отпустил на пол цены с условием чтобы заплатить \$9,000. Кассирщик сказал, мы можем только разчитывать на одну тысячу!

Но Бог расположил на сердце некоторых как раз нужную сумму. Ни чудо ли то!?

С города Вернон, Канада приехали, они служили бесплатно, как для Господа. Всю работу они делали – что вы видите здесь. Братья и сестры



усердно участвовали в финансовых, по разным денационациях помогали. . . в каких займах для постройки, долгов. Слава Богу!

Постройка молитвенного дома была закончена. Сдружили Брат Илин, Рувин Локтев, а после него Александр Шевчук на протяжении приблизительно трех лет.

В 1987 году, на Пасху, по предложению Ивана Илиина, стал пастором Винамин Шевченко. Он служить пастором по сей день.

И теперь у нас брат Борис, новый пастор. В основном были иммигранты второй волны, с Сан Франциско, с Сиатла.

Некоторые из старообрядцев обратились к Богу. И единственная церковь полного Евангелия. Она стала главным центром для третьей волны из Советского Союза начиная в 1988 года. Оказала великую помощь приехавшим в новых условиях, помогали иммигрантам. Это краткая история.

### **English translation:**

"I want to read the history of our church. It's a miracle that it was preserved in my archives, where it lay for 30 years. I think Joseph Tirentevich Loktev gave it to me.

The history of the origin of the Russian Gospel Church in the city of Hubbard, Oregon.

God has something that we do not know and do not think about. In 1971, having arrived in Oregon, we were still living in California and were busy with our business either at work or in church and the thought came to move somewhere. Joseph Loktev's son, Petya - this story begins with him. Petya was very zealous, prayed alone. His mother (Marusya) said to him: "Why were you praying alone in the garage?" The whole family, daughter and uncle, joined him. The prayer in the Loktevs' house had a goal, to get closer to the Lord. God spoke through prophecy: "To new places!" They wanted to know where God would direct them. They decided, we will pray, and the Lord will reveal it to us. Suggestion: in May we will have a vacation, to visit relatives, feeling that God will reveal his will there.

In Seattle, Joseph learned that in the city of Portland there is a group of Old Believers, to visit and get to know them. There was a prophetic word: "Now go there" -- and who to contact. One sister gave the address of one Molokan.

We arrived in Woodburn, stopped near the city park, saw a large group of young people, Old Believers. We talked with them. We stopped for the night in a motel. The Lord said through a prophetic word: "This is the place!"

The second time we went to Oregon to choose a place. All the way, in an atmosphere of joy, and incomprehensible plans of the Lord. We arrived in the city. Decision to buy a plot of land - everyone agreed to buy plots of land (for each family) and one plot was registered (a prayer house) on this place, and they organized the church of "Living Waters" in the state of Oregon.

Joseph Loktev had a prophecy: "I give, I entrust you with the responsibility of organizing the church, and the assistance of my children to build a prayer house on this site. Here I have many chosen ones, and in this way I managed most people." At the beginning of 1974, when everyone had already arrived and decided to hold a meeting, 17 people participated. In the hearts of the brothers and sisters, they registered this place as "Assembly of God". People began to donate for the construction of the church, and it was necessary to appoint a person to manage the church. Who will be chosen as the pastor?

Deputy of the church Benjamin Shevchenko and Leonty Dumanovsky, and other brothers joined the church management. For the construction of the prayer house, he (Joseph) retired early for this matter. And the hand of God, the matter was conducted. God arranged for the leaders and the meeting. There was a great miracle in buying building materials: the builder let us have half the price on the condition that we pay \$9,000. The cashier said, we can only count on one thousand!

But God placed on the hearts of some the exact amount needed. Isn't that a miracle!?

They came from Vernon, Canada, they served for free, as if for the Lord. They did all the work - what you see here. Brothers and sisters diligently participated in the financials, in different denominations they helped. . . in what loans for construction, debts. Glory to God!

The construction of the prayer house was completed. Brother Iliyn, Ruben Loktev, and after him Alexander Shevchuk worked for about three years.

In 1987, on Easter, at the suggestion of Ivan Iliyn, Benjamin Shevchenko became pastor. He serves as the pastor to this day.

And now we have Brother Boris, the new pastor. They were mostly second wave immigrants, from San Francisco, from Seattle.

Some of the Old Believers turned to God. And this was the only church of the full Gospel. It became the main center for the third wave from the Soviet Union starting in 1988. It provided great help to those who arrived in new conditions, helped immigrants. This is a short history.



This map shows the way the original plan for the settlement was drawn up. The land was located west of S. Meridian Road in Hubbard, Oregon. The houses were built along Hope Avenue; Stanley Wigowsky's house was at the end of the road, Joseph Lokteff's house was closer to Meridian Rd. The church was built between Hope Avenue and Berry Lane. Originally, there was a sign at the entrance to Hope Avenue which said, "Dead End." My superintendent at nearby 91 School joked with us, saying, they live on Hope Avenue, but they have a "Dead End" sign posted at the entrance. That is ironic!

Later I asked my brother Adolf Wigowsky, who remembered the story of the church's beginnings, said told me that the order of pastors was: "Alex Shevchuk, John Iliyn, Ben

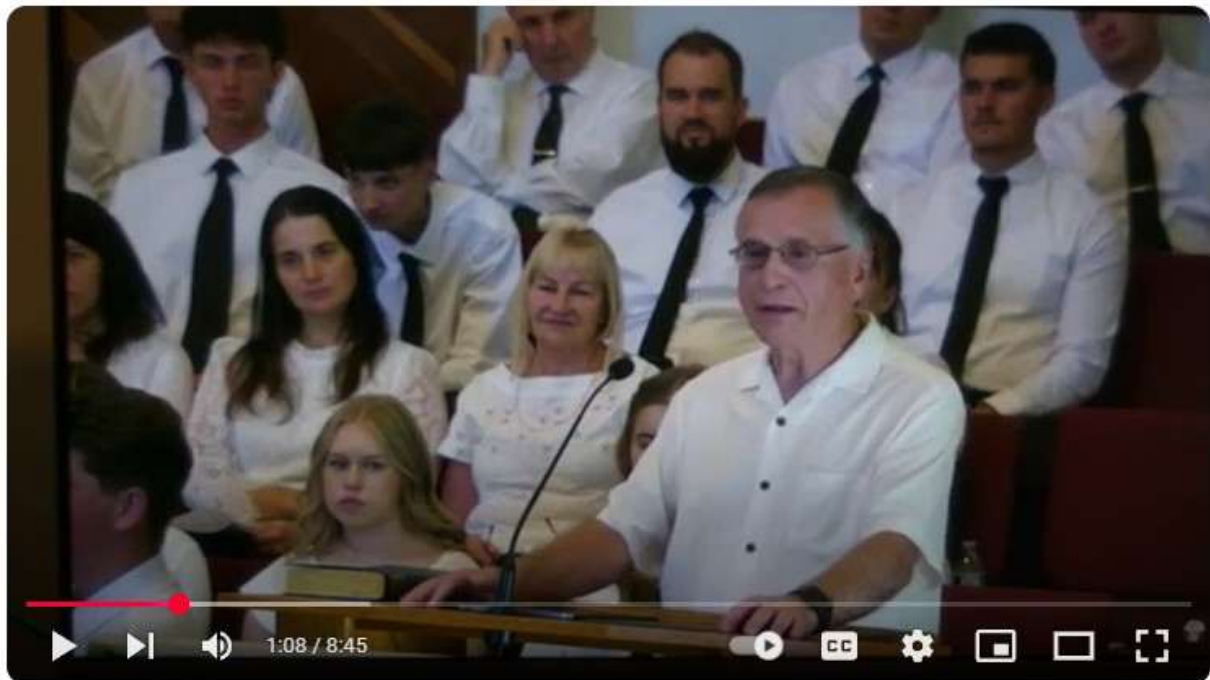
Shevchenko.” My brother went back to the preplanning stages and said that the original fathers were in the Portland Church, and our dad Ivan Wigowsky was going there in Portland when he moved to Oregon in 1973 with his son, Stanley. Joseph at that time had some friction at the 17<sup>th</sup> Church (possibly having to do with money), and he and Alexander E. Shevchenko parted ways, and the entire Lokteff family left for Oregon. Ivan Wigowsky told Joseph about the many Russian Old Believers that had settled in that part of Willamette Valley in Oregon. There was no real prophecy in the beginning. It was a schism, like the earlier one at the Geary Street Church. The Lokteffs dragged Stanley into it, because Stanley was married to Joseph Lokteff’s older daughter, Nida. Stanley had to rent a house for them. When Stanley built a house at the end of the road on Hope Avenue, the Lokteffs lived with him for a while. Other homes were built. Then they started building the church, and they brought the Assemblies of God people here, led by Alex Shevchuk, who was affiliated with them. Afterwards, he became the first pastor here. The choir that Joseph directed traveled with Alex Shevchuk to many churches in order to collect money for the building. By the way, it was Maria Lokteff, Joseph’s wife, who was doing most of the prophesizing. Later, Alex Shevchuk was pushed out as pastor, and they brought in Vanya Iliyn, who was friends since childhood with the Shevchenko family. Afterwards, Ben Shevchenko became pastor. The rest is history!



**Nida Lokteff (Wigowsky), daughter of Joseph Lokteff, sings at RGC**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2RtwXZghcY>





**Peter Iliyn, son of former Pastor Vanya Iliyn, RGC**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEpkTHuYgww&t=63s>



**Peter Lokteff, son of Joseph Lokteff, speaks**

**A slide show was ongoing on a screen during the service. It showed the builders of the Russian Gospel Church in Hubbard, Oregon.**









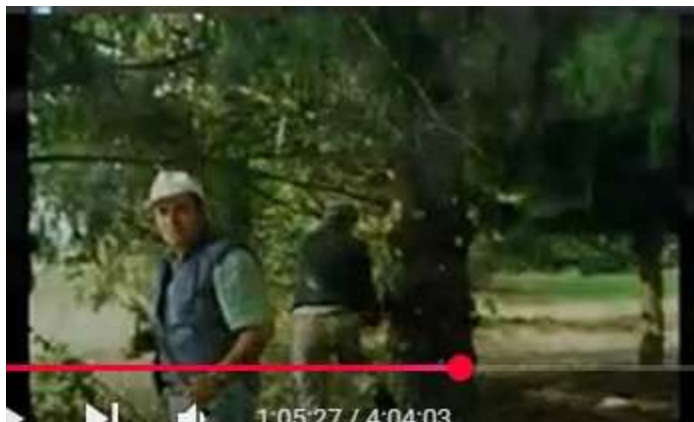




**Joseph Lokteff, Ivan Wigowsky, Leonty Dumanovsky**



This slide showed Vanya Iliyn when he served as pastor after Alex Shevchk stepped down.





30 year anniversary







Show chat replay

## Russian Gospel Church, July 13th 2025, 50th Anniversary



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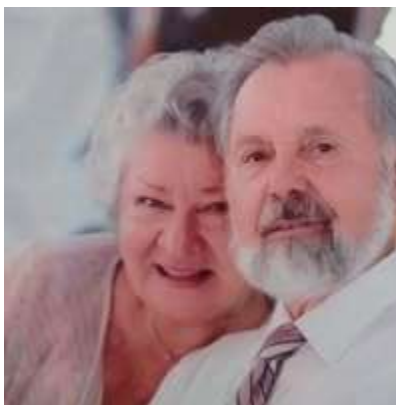


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**Ben Shevchenko's personal life:**



Ben & Zina

