

Conversion story of Dr. Nicolay Koshelyaevsky

I would like to share with you a personal experience about sharing the gospel – in helping a colleague come to Christ. In April 1989, the year the Berlin wall came down, I was the US representative for the National Bureau of Standards attending the Consultative Committee for the Definition of the Second at the International Bureau of Weights and Measures near Paris. My wife and I met and made friends with the Russian representative, Dr. Nicolay Koshelyaevsky. We learned that his grandfather had been a bishop in the Russian Orthodox church. We gave him a copy of the Book of Mormon and shared with him many of the beautiful truths of the restoration. He invited me to visit his laboratory at Mendeleevo, north of Moscow, which I did the following August.

He told me then that he was struggling with the English in the Book of Mormon. For example, he could not find a translation of “stiffnecked” into Russian. I told him that I would get him a Russian translation of the Book of Mormon as soon as I got back to the states, which we sent to him along with a couple of other books that the church had in Russian. He got them just before Christmas, and took them with him on holiday. I could tell from his e-mails that he had been deeply touched by the Spirit.

Being on the executive committee for the Precise Time Time-Interval conference, I invited Dr. Koshelyaevsky to give a paper the following December in Washington D.C. Even though he had his paper written for the talk and his visa, the last minute his trip was canceled. He sent his paper with a colleague who was coming to the meeting. As the executive committee met the night before the conference, we discussed what to do since his paper was part of the opening session of the conference. One of the members turned to me and said, “Why don’t you give it; you know his work?” I kindly obliged, and took the paper to my room to prepare. I nearly fell off of my chair when I read the quote at the top of his paper. Often, a scientist will quote from some famous person to highlight the essence of their message. Dr. Koshelyaevsky’s quote was from Alma 40:8 “...time only is measured unto men.” This phrase is most profound, , and my friend, Nick Koshelyaevsky recognized it.

I invited Nick to come to the Bureau of Standards in Boulder, CO the following April to give a talk to our Division. While hosting him in Boulder, we took him to the mountains and to our church meetings on Sunday. He was deeply touched by the open sharing of the brethren during High Priest’s meeting. He showed me mistakes in the translation of the Book of Mormon from English into Russian. He obviously had read it carefully.

Several years before this occurrence, I was in the home of one of our bishops in the stake visiting with his son, David Wilsted. I asked David what he was studying in school. Among other things David said he was studying Russian. I asked him why. He said that he hoped to go to Russia on a mission. This was long before the Berlin wall came down. I said, “You will have that opportunity.” Bishop Wilsted looked at me aghast, and I thought to myself, “What did I just say?” – As that seemed impossible at that time.

When David turned 19 and his mission call came; it was to Russia. I e-mailed Nick and asked

him if he would receive a friend of mine to further share the message of the restoration. Nick e-mailed back a famous Georgian phrase, "A friend of my friend is my friend." Nick gladly received the missionaries.

The next time I saw Nick was in Den Hague, Holland at an International Astronomical Union meeting, where I had invited him to give a paper in conjunction with a session on millisecond pulsar timing. After the session, he came up to me and handed me an envelope. I opened it and there saw a picture of him dressed in white at his baptismal service. He threw his arms around me, and we rejoiced greatly.

The next time I saw him was at a San Diego meeting. I invited him to bring his genealogy, which he did. He had about a dozen family group sheets. I took him to the family history facility and we got them recorded and made friends with a Russian gentleman convert, who helped a lot in the friend-shiping of Nick.

The last time I saw Nick was at a meeting in Hawaii. He had been a member more than a year, and I invited him to get his temple recommend and we would take him to the Hawaii temple to take out his endowments. As fate would have it, I was privileged to be the veil worker to bring him through the veil. We again threw our arms around each other and greatly rejoiced, as we felt the Spirit of the Lord in that Holy place. This was the first time a Russian had taken out their endowments in the Hawaii temple. The temple presidency had their picture taken with Nick and it appeared in the Ensign.

Nick has sent me many e-mails thanking me for helping him to come to know the Lord. I know that no matter what is our occupation, that as we pray and reach out to share, the Lord will prepare hearts to receive His "message of gladness," and great will be our joy. I bear witness of these things and pray that we may delight in so sharing this most important message of peace, love and joy.