

## **Crucial Choices**

I think it was in the beginning of 1962. I was the East Coast rep for Slavic Missionary Service. We were temporarily living with Betty's brother, Alex, and his family. Our faith was soon to be tested. We sensed our work was about to change significantly, but that was all.

Then, one evening, Paul Freed (founder and president of Trans World Radio) and his assistant came to our place. Their purpose was to invite us to join TWR. Of course, we told them we would pray about it. (TWR is an international evangelical multimedia organization. We were being recruited for the station in Monte Carlo, Monaco.) Three days later, an unexpected letter came to me from Los Angeles, from Bethany Baptist Church (BBC) – at that time the largest Russian Baptist church in North America. The church had been without a pastor for several months. In their letter, they informed me that they had cast lots and my name was drawn. (The only other name in the hat was my brother-in-law's – Alex Leonovich.) They said they were sure God had clearly shown them who was to be their next pastor.

Humanly speaking, we had a quandary on our hands. If we went with TWR, we would be working side-by-side with Betty's other brother, Nicolas. Nick and Rose had already been working with TWR for five years, heading up the Russian Department. But we would first have to raise financial support for our family of five. (During those years it normally took 18 months to find that support.) If we went with Bethany, we would get an immediate salary. (By the way, my parents were members of Bethany.) I wrote a letter to BBC and told them we'd pray about it. And pray we did – for two weeks – together, separately.

Meanwhile, I talked to Dr. Freed. I thought about flying to LA and mixing with the church members for a week. That might enable us to discern God's will. Dr. Freed listened to me, then said: "You don't need to go to California to find God's will." I conceded that he was right.

After the two weeks of intense prayer, both Betty and I believed the Lord wanted us back in Europe. I asked the Lord to give me wisdom to write the letter to Bethany. Until that moment, we didn't know my parents' thoughts on this subject. But before long we learned that they said we made the right choice. They didn't go into detail but it had to do with serious negative situations in the church. By the way, the Lord blessed and we raised our required support in eight months, not 18. Our fundraising slogan was: **SOS... Send Out Semenchuks.** ◊◊◊