

rubber suit, into which they pumped air until his chest was so compressed he could hardly breathe.

At the age of twenty, Ivan knew that the Communists would kill him. On July 11, 1972, he wrote to his parents, "You will not see me anymore." He then described a vision of angels and heaven that God had sent to strengthen him for the last trial.

A few days later, his body was returned to his family. It showed that he had been stabled six times around the heart. He had wounds on his head and around the mouth. There were signs of beatings on the whole body. Then he had been drowned.

Colonel Malsin, his commander, said, "Moiseyev died with difficulty. He fought with death, but he died as a Christian."

Letter from Vanya (Ivan) to his parents—

June 15, 1972

"MY dear parents, the Lord has shown the way to me... and I have decided to follow it... I will now have more severe and bigger battles than I have had till now. But I do not fear them. He goes before me. Do not grieve for me, my dear parents. It is because I love Jesus more than myself. I listen to Him, though my body does fear somewhat or does not wish to go through everything. I do this because I do not value my life as much as I value Him. And I will not await my own wait, but I will follow as the Lord leads. He says, 'Go,' and I go.

"Do not become grieved if this is your son's last letter. Because I myself, when I see and hear visions, hear how angels speak and see, I am even amazed and cannot believe that Vanya, your son, talked with angels. He, Vanya has also had sins and failings, but through sufferings the Lord has wiped them away. And he does not live as he wishes himself, but as the Lord wishes."

Even in the dim light Moiseyev could the officers were amazed and confused. How could he stand such cold?

“Do you plan to stand out here all night long?”

“I don’t see how anything else is possible, and God is helping me.” Ivan checked his hands – they were cold, but not too cold. He could still move his toes easily. It was a miracle! He looked at the officers and could see that even in their coats they were already shaking from the cold. They were stamping their feet and slapping their hands, impatient to return to their heated barracks.

“You’ll feel differently in another hour,” the senior officer mumbled as they quickly turned away.

Ivan continued to pray for all the believers he knew. He sang Christmas carols. He prayed for every officer he knew and knew of. He cried out to God on behalf of the men in his barracks. But gradually his mind seemed to be floating somewhere outside of his head. As much as he tried, prayer eluded him.

Ivan was dozing on his feet when, at 3A.M., the senior officer on duty woke him and let him return to the barracks.

For the next twelve nights, Ivan continued to stand in the street outside his barracks. Miraculously, he did not freeze, nor did he beg for mercy. Ivan continued to speak about his faith to his comrades and officers. He sang about the glory of Jesus Christ in his barracks, though this was strictly prohibited. To those who threatened him, he replied, "A lark threatened with death for singing would still continue to sing. She cannot renounce her nature. Neither can we Christians."

Soldiers around him were converted, impressed by his faith.

His commanders continued to interrogate him, trying to get him to deny Jesus. They put him in refrigerated cells. They clothed him in a special

Gidenko expected Moiseyev to hesitate, to reconsider. Instead, he squared his shoulders and walked quietly to the door.

“Private Moiseyev!”

When the soldier turned around, Gidenko noticed he was a little pale. So Moiseyev had understood the order!

“You will obey my instructions in summer uniform. That is all.”

That night, as the bugle sounded, Ivan made his way down the stairs of the barracks and into the snowy street. He recoiled from the icy blast of wind that burned his ears and made his eyes water. His thin summer uniform was no help in the bitter cold. He glanced at his watch. It was 10:01P.M.

Tonight, he would have a long time to pray! But for the first time since he had been in the Soviet army, prayer did not come easily. He was worried. Could he stand out here all night? What if he froze to death? Would they let him freeze to death? What if he got so cold he gave in to their demands?

The “what ifs” flooded his mind and left it spinning. He knew he had to think of something else. Then he remembered the angel who had visited him that morning. The angel had said, “Do not be afraid, I am with you!” Suddenly he realized the angel’s words had been for tonight! Although he could no longer see him, Moiseyev knew the angel was still there with him. He began to pray fervently.

At 12.30 A.M. he was distracted from his prayers by the crunching sound of footsteps in the snow. Bundled in their overcoats, hats, and boots, three officers were slowly making their way toward him.

“Private Moiseyev, have you changed your mind yet? Are you ready to come in and get warm?”

“No, comrade officers. As much as I want to come in and go to bed, I cannot. I will never agree to remain silent about God.”

“So, God talks to you? Who is this God of yours?” As soon as he has asked this question, Gidenko regretted it. Ivan leaned forward in his chair, his face glowing with joy at the opportunity to share his faith.

“Sir, He is the One who created all the universe. He greatly loves man, and sent His Son— “

Gidenko interrupted. “Yes, yes I know the Christian teaching. But what has that got to do with being a soldier? Do you disagree with the teaching of the glorious Red Army?”

“No, sir.”

“But you do not accept the principles of scientific atheism upon which is based our entire Soviet state and the military power of the army?”

“I cannot accept what I know to be untrue. Everything else I can gladly accept.”

“Moiseyev, no one can prove the existence of God. Even priests and pastors agree on that.”

“Sir, they may speak about not being able to prove God, but there is no question about knowing Him. He is with me now, in this room. Before I came here, he sent an angel to encourage me.”

Gidenko stared intently at Ivan. At last he spoke wearily, “I am sorry, Moiseyev that you will not be reasonable. your persistence will do nothing for you except bring discomfort. However, through the years I have found that men like you often come to their senses with a little discipline.

“I am ordering you to stand in the street tonight after taps are played. You will stand there until you are willing to reconsider this nonsense about talking gods and angels.

“Since the temperature is likely to be thirteen degrees below zero, for your sake, I hope you quickly agree to behave sensibly. Tomorrow we shall make a plan together for your political re-education. You are dismissed.”

## **Ivan “Vanya” Moiseyev, 18 years old**

Although he had never been there before, Private Ivan “Vanya” Moiseyev knew what awaited him at the major’s office. The Communists were endlessly calling him to headquarters for talks, trying to “re-educate” him, to talk him out of his faith in God.

It was lunchtime. The sun was shining brightly in the blue sky, and the snow was glistening. As Moiseyev walked along the snowy sidewalk, he praised God for this time alone, time to sing and pray.

The morning was so bright that at first Moiseyev didn’t notice; suddenly, it caught his eye. A bright star began to fall from heaven. Like a comet, it came closer and became bigger and bigger.

He looked up to see an angel above him, bright and powerful. Moiseyev’s heart was filled with joy – and fear.

The angel did not descend all the way to earth, but hovered about 200 years above the ground. He walked in the air above Moiseyev as though walking along the same road. Then the angel spoke:

“Ivan, go. Don’t be afraid. I am with you.”

Ivan couldn’t speak, but his joy was like a fire within him. Somehow he made it to Major Gidenko’s office and knocked quietly on the door. Major Gidenko, head of the Political Directive Committee, looked up as the young soldier entered. Ivan Moiseyev had been interrogated again and again by many others and had never backed away from his faith. Still, Gidenko was certain he could solve this problem.

“Moiseyev, you don’t look like a poor pupil to me. Why are you not learning the correct answers?” he asked.

“Sometimes there is a difference between the correct answers and the true ones,” Ivan answered. “Sometimes God does not permit to give ‘correct’ answers.”

*Revolution is not a dinner party, nor an essay, nor a painting, nor a piece of embroidery; it cannot be advanced softly, gradually, carefully, considerately, respectfully, politely, plainly, and modestly. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another. - Mao Zedong*

This revolution starts within.

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup>For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup>What good will it be for a man if **he gains the whole world**, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? Matt. 16:24-27*

Many settle for far less. Money, a relationship, career, bitterness, fear.

#### **4. Requires an all-out commitment.**

*In a revolution, one triumphs or dies (if it is a true revolution).  
Che Guevara, letter to Fidel Castro, 1965*

Jesus would agree. You triumph when you die to yourself and physically.

Listen to Paul's all-out commitment...

*To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. <sup>12</sup>We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; <sup>13</sup>when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world. 1 Cor. 4:11-13*

God is calling us to all-out commitment. **Story of Ivan...**

*For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him. Phil. 2:13 NLT*

*Freely you have received, freely give. Matt. 10:8*

<sup>20</sup> *He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. Everyone in the synagogue stared at him intently. <sup>21</sup>Then he said, “This Scripture has come true today before your very eyes!”* Luke 4:18-22.

These people were angry at what was happening in their world and frustrated by the church not having answers just laying more rules on them.

Jesus was going to be their king elect. He was a leader and had power to back it up. They just didn't like His message, too passive.

Yet, Jesus peaceful revolution changed the world. An unstoppable, irresistible revolution.

**Jesus idea – World changed through love one life at a time.**

## **2. Changes the current situation.**

*A revolution is not a bed of roses ... a revolution is a struggle to the death between the future and the past.* Fidel Castro, speech, 1961

The crowds began to follow Jesus for entertainment and to get needs met.

*Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: <sup>26</sup>“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup>And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.* Luke 14:25-27

*“Simply put, if you're not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it goodbye, you can't be my disciple.* Luke 14:33, The Message Bible

Nothing can come before God. What current situation in your life needs to change for you to be a wholehearted follower of Jesus Christ?

## **3. Costs something to bring about the desired change.**

Through out history revolutions, whether they be political, social, or religious follow a similar pattern.

There are no rules for how to start a revolution. But there are observations we can make of similarities that most revolutions have in common.

### **1. Starts with an Idea.**

*No real social change has ever been brought about without a revolution... Revolution is but thought carried into action.* - Emma Goldman

Great revolutions are led by visionaries. With words that paint a vision of a future reality, these fearless radicals birth the new order. They paint a picture of a coming reality so bold, so compelling, that the masses stand up and join their cause. Frustration with the status quo, with the powers-that-be, with the systems of oppression and passionless existence, work like rocket fuel propelling their movement. But the prophet himself must believe in this vision so much that he is willing to go to extremes to make it real — even if it costs him everything. In most cases, it will.

Jesus came to bring that kind of revolution. But it was different than what the Jews He came to expected. Jews had been oppressed 400 years by Babylonians, Medo-Persians, Greeks and Romans.

There prophets had spoken about a Messiah who would bring liberation by leading a revolution to restore the Kingdom of Israel.

Jesus is in his hometown of Nazareth and it's His turn to teach on Sabbath.

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors,<sup>19</sup> and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.”*

## How to Start a Revolution

---

The single greatest cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door and deny Him with their lifestyle. This is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable. – Brennan Manning

**Activity:** Discuss this statement at your tables.

For every person who is following God wholeheartedly a dozen aren't.

The church needs a new image, an extreme makeover, even a revolution.

A **revolution** (from the Latin *revolutio*, "a turnaround") is a fundamental change in power or organizational structures that takes place in a relatively short period of time.

Reluctant to use word "revolution" has been tamed, commercialized and trivialized and used for marketing sports, pet medicine, perfume and games.

There have been 24 revolutions around the world since the turn of this century. History filled with 100's.

Some of the most significant ones have been:

- Apartheid Revolution South Africa (Nelson Mandela) oppression blacks
- The American Revolution- taxation
- The Islamic Revolution in Iran – western decadence
- The French Revolution – political oppression
- The Protestant Revolution – religious oppression

I am using the theme of revolution because of the radical call of Christ and the revolutionary change He wants to bring in us and the world through us.

Revolution begins with an idea a dissatisfaction with the status quo, a right that needs to be wrong, an injustice, a repression of freedom.