



Russian Christian Radio №1, 2012

# REPORTER

Millions of Russians for Christ



Sergey Yakimenkov was the director of RCR-Russia and a long-time pastor in Moscow

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Moscow  
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#### Mission Goal:

Proclaim the Gospel of  
Jesus Christ using mass  
media.

## Characterized by Faithfulness

Sergey Yakimenkov faced many daunting tasks in his more than 20 years of ministry in Russia and was faithful to his calling before the Lord. He faithfully ministered in underground Christian publishing during the final years of the Soviet Union and served as a pastor for more than two decades. He was involved in radio broadcasting as well as prison ministries and outreach to drug addicts and alcoholics, among others.

On January 10, 2012, the director for RCR's ministry in Russia, Sergey Yakimenkov, passed into the presence of the Lord at his home near Moscow. He was nearly 61 years old. Sergey served the Lord with Russian Christian Radio for 20 years and directed the ministry there for most of that time. He was an inspiration to many people because of his life of faithfulness to the Lord and his deep commitment to serving God at all costs.

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Through Sergey's leadership, millions of Russians heard of God's love through the "Gospel Behind Barbed Wire" magazine for prisoners

He literally risked his life for the sake of Christ time and time again, undergoing numerous interrogations at the hands of local officials who were searching for the equipment used to print the newsletters that Sergey so faithfully and boldly published.

It is hard to imagine how RCR's ministry in Russia would have developed as it has without the leadership of Sergey Yakimenkov.

Sergey served faithfully as he helped establish the radio ministry of Earl Poysti inside Russia, serving with John Poysti to develop a team and build recording studios. Later, Sergey led RCR in developing a ministry among prisoners who requested more radio programming and Christian literature to answer their deep spiritual questions and longings. At Sergey's funeral, person after person gave testimony of how God used Sergey to motivate them to follow Christ and serve the Lord. Sergey helped start numerous ministries and was a faithful pastor in Moscow for more than 23 years. During the Soviet period, he distributed Christian literature while evading KGB surveillance.



Sergey guided the rebuilding of the "Pirkko Home" in Nikulino, Russia which burned down in 2010

Please pray for our staff in Moscow as they adjust to their new reality and leadership and pray that God will continue to use their efforts to reach millions of Russians for Christ. Also pray for Sergey's wife, Olga, and their children, that the Lord will give them deep peace and encouragement as they adjust to life without their husband and father.

**You can honor Sergey Yakimenkov's example of faithful service to God with a special donation in Sergey's memory by supporting the renovation projects of the "Pirkko Homes" which he so deeply loved.** Sergey rejoiced to see how God transformed the lives of those who were addicted to drugs and alcohol. Please send your memorial gift to our office, or follow the "Donate Here" links at our Web sites ([www.rcr.ru/eng](http://www.rcr.ru/eng) in the US and [www.rcr.ru](http://www.rcr.ru) in Russia.) Be sure to mark your donation for "Pirkko Home Renovations" in memory of Sergey Yakimenkov.



# New Leadership at RCR-Moscow

The Board of Directors of "Gospel Call" (also known as RCR-Moscow), met on January 18, 2012, in Moscow and appointed Alexander Zaharov to replace Sergey Yakimenkov, who had gone to be with the Lord a week earlier. Alexander has served with RCR since the early days of the mission's ministry in Moscow. For nearly 19 years, Alexander has been involved in various areas of the work, especially in radio program production and distribution. He has also been responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Moscow office and staff and has served in the same church where Sergey Yakimenkov was pastor for more than two decades. In addition, Alexander has served faithfully as a member of the Board of Directors of "Gospel Call" for many years. He is married and has five children and lives near Moscow.



Dmitry Gusev, Mark Irwin and Alexander Zaharov

In the same meeting, the Board of "Gospel Call" also appointed Dmitry Gusev to assume the role as Assistant to the Director while also continuing to lead the mission's ministry among addicts and alcoholics. Dmitry is a product of the ministry of RCR, having gone through our program in the "Pirkko Home" rehabilitation center in Rummyantsevo, Russia, outside of Moscow. Dmitry was ordained into ministry in 2011 and he and his wife have a one-year-old son.

Please pray for Alexander and Dmitry as they lead RCR's Moscow ministries and pray for God's full provision for the mission so that we can reach even more Russians for Christ. At the same time, please prayerfully consider how you could assist these men with your prayers and financial gifts.

## RCR Still Going Strong

With every challenge in ministry, we have more opportunities to faithfully serve the Lord. This was the legacy of Sergey Yakimenkov – in spite of the difficulties and challenges he faced, he faithfully served Jesus Christ. The example he set helps us carry out the task of "Reaching Millions of Russians for Christ".

Every day, we see how inmates in prisons across Russia and the former Soviet Union are finding the truth of God through our publication, The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire. Every day, our radio programs are heard over satellite, on the internet and in prison cells and chapels. Every day, men and women whose lives were once trapped in addictions to drugs and alcohol are finding release and restoration in our network of Christian rehabilitation centers known as "Pirkko Homes". As you read the testimony of Alexei Selezen later in this bulletin, you'll see what I mean.

The Lord is using RCR to proclaim Christ to those who desperately need Him. We praise the Lord for those He has called to partner with RCR with their prayers and gifts to help keep this ministry moving forward.



Mark Irwin

*Your fellow worker in Christ, Mark Irwin, President, Russian Christian Radio*

# Testimony of Alexei Selezen: “If the Lord could help him, He could also help me”

*(Editor's note: The following testimony was first given in our radio program known as "Choice", which focuses on the lives of people whom God has miraculously brought to Himself and who have received new life in return. We hear many stories like Alexei's and ask that you continue to pray for and support the ministry of RCR so we can share even more testimonies of God's work of grace through this mission.)*

I spent the first 15 years of my life in the Russian Far East and in the Urals where my father served in the military. During this time my life revolved around hockey. I trained for six hours a day almost every day for eight years. Sports shaped my personality and character.

My father was later transferred to Rostov where all of our family lived. It was here that my life began to spiral downward. Why? There was no hockey in Rostov. I was left with a hole that nothing could fill. If there are not good people around, then the bad are sure to appear. I began smoking tobacco in 10th grade and later added hemp and marijuana. At 17, I was an addict. I began the first of many visits to substance abuse clinics, but my condition only worsened. On top of that, I needed to get married because my girlfriend was pregnant. I was also studying and working. I was sure that I could get everything straightened out on my own. But after three years, my marriage ended in divorce, I was kicked out of college, and I had to quit work before they fired me.

Looking back, I can say that even then God was keeping me from further harm. The city where I lived experienced many set-backs. The evil 1990's were over, and the country was falling apart. The crime rate was rising and gangs began to form. Many of my friends were now in prison or had died in gang fights. I considered myself lucky to still be alive. My circle of friends began to slowly shrink. Good, normal people walked away and I was left with only drug addict friends.

My father helped to pay for the clinics I had visited – I had been in 12 clinics just in the Rostov Region alone. He told me that it would be better if I were dead. My mother, more than any one else, believed that I could recover, but even her flame of hope had extinguished. I felt there was nothing I could do to change myself.

My constant search for money led me to my first prison sentence in 2000 for large-scale fraud. But again, I was “lucky” and the prison sentence was suspended. During this time, I tried to act better, but later I reverted to my old ways again. None of the clinics allowed me to return because I did not obey their rules. My father changed the locks on the doors at home and did not allow me to come visit them. I came to an impasse in my life.

One day at a meeting, my mother asked me to go to a rehabilitation center. She heard that it had helped others like me. I was feeling miserable and had nothing to lose, so I agreed to go. I was amazed by their method of treatment. Instead of treating me with pills, they used prayer. By the fourth day, it was working. For the first time in my life I prayed to Christ, of whom I knew practically nothing, and I received His response to my cry for help. I fully understood the meaning that the Lord hears and answers. This was enough for me to decide to stay at the rehabilitation center for the full six-month term.

One rainy spring day, while digging a drainage ditch, I listened to a program from Russian Christian Radio. A man, in similar circumstances to my own, was telling about his life and how the Lord had helped him to overcome his addiction. I thought, if the Lord could help him, He could also help me. At that moment, I was filled with joy of the dream of one day relating my story of release at your studio. There was no question in my mind that it would happen, but a deep felt expectation in my heart that it would.

Today, this dream is fulfilled and I am so thankful to God for it. After this experience, I came to know the Savior and was baptized. With tears of gratefulness in my eyes, I made the decision to minister to other people trapped in addictions. I still remember the call I made to my mother and the long silence at the end of the line when I told her that I had decided to give my life to Jesus Christ. Her response eventually came, “I’m happy for you.” I remember the changes that have occurred since that day in my relationship with my parents and family members. I remember my father’s eyes full of joy. All of this is the result of what the Lord has done in my life!



Alexei Selezen

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