



Russian Christian Radio №4, 2011

REPORTER



RCR Staff in Moscow in the early 1990s

John Poysti: The Beginnings of RCR Ministry in Moscow

Celebrating 20 Years of Ministry in Russia

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Mission Goal:
Proclaim the Gospel of
Jesus Christ using mass
media.

When our family arrived in Moscow in October of 1991, the nation was buzzing with uncertainty and change. Despite the material hardships of those days of standing in long lines for bread and other necessities, the doors were wide open for ministry. Our goal in coming to Moscow was to form a team of dedicated workers, who would transform Russian Christian Radio from a foreign-based ministry to an indigenous one. The vision was to see Russians reaching millions of Russians for Christ!

It wasn't long before we had a small team assembled and a simple recording studio built in a rented office space. The radio programs produced in that small studio, based on the preaching of Earl Poysti, were aired on hundreds of stations nation-wide and letters from listeners began to pour in to the RCR office. The first listener letters were answered by our staff on our kitchen table, with Bibles and other literature being sent out in such numbers that the local post office began to complain!

In time, the Lord provided better recording facilities, a larger staff and the ministry continued to grow to include prisoner rehabilitation, magazine publication and other forms of outreach. It is a blessing of the Lord to consider that the staff members that were assembled back in 1992 continue to form the main core of the RCR team today. We praise God for their faithfulness over all these years.



John Poysti initiated RCR's radio ministry in Russia

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On a personal level, when my wife, Christine, and I moved to Moscow, our daughters were eight, seven and three years old respectively. It was a time of crisis for the entire nation and we experienced many things that were not part of our plans when we answered God's call to be missionaries in the then Soviet Union. Watching tanks and military vehicles rumble by our apartment on Leninsky Prospekt was a bit more exciting than we imagined life in Moscow was going to be!

The first obstacle was finding food for our family. It was a time of shortages in the food stores of Moscow, but God always provided. We stood in long lines like everyone else, and Christine became an expert in finding groceries to feed the family. We also received packages of various food products from radio listeners from as far away as Primorsky Krai on the Pacific Coast – even fresh eggs packed in sunflower seeds in a small wooden crate! A young man from Zdolbunov in Ukraine would regularly show up at our door carrying heavy packages of food from his family's farm. After a cup of tea and a sandwich, he would turn around and travel back 18 hours by train to Ukraine. These are just a few of many such stories of God's provision through "angels" that we experienced.

Our daughters had the unique opportunity to train in a nearby gymnastics school, coached by a former Olympic medalist. We paid for a year of coaching by purchasing a video player for the school. As a result of this contact, one of the coaches, who was dying of cancer, accepted the Lord as her Savior just a short time before passing away.

Although life was complicated and difficult during those years of political and social turmoil, we feel blessed as a family to have experienced God's faithful provision, His protection and the generous love of His people throughout our time in Moscow.



John and Christine Poysti and their three girls in Red Square

RCR: Twenty Years of Following Where God Leads Us



Mark Irwin

As I read the accounts of those that God used to initiate the work of Russian Christian Radio inside Russia, I marvel at how He directed the ministry path which has grown and evolved over the past twenty years.

In the 1940s, Earl Poysti broadcast radio programs locally in New York City and internationally over shortwave radio. He broadcast regularly on shortwave over various international stations until new opportunities arose in the early 1990s to broadcast from within Russia. Over the years, Poysti's radio messages have been delivered by shortwave, then on local FM stations inside Russia and later over satellite and now through the Internet.

However, the changes that God has brought in RCR have not been limited to advances in technology or broadcasting delivery systems. In time, RCR staff members in Russia were led to begin special radio programming for prisoners who were responding to the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In addition, our staff began publishing a magazine especially to help those prisoners who were writing with deep spiritual needs. Today, the Gospel Behind Barbed Wire has become one of the primary focuses of our entire ministry.

God also led this ministry to reach out to those addicted to drugs and alcohol, leading causes that land many in prison in the first place. We rejoice that God is still in control and He continues to direct the Pirkko Home rehabilitation ministry so that today, this ministry is expanding in cooperation with local church partnerships.

In addition, we have experienced changes in leadership over the last twenty years. Earl Poysti's oldest son, John led the mission after Earl retired, followed by John's brother Robert, then Sergey Yakimenkov and now I have been carrying that responsibility since 2009.

With all of these changes, some things have remained the same. First and foremost, the message that we proclaim day in and day out is still the same — the Gospel message that Jesus came to save sinners. Another constant in this ministry is God's use of our team to bring about spiritual growth and transform lives. Every day, we receive letters from listeners and readers thanking us for the way God has touched their lives through the ministry of Russian Christian Radio. You can read the article on the last page of this newsletter from Soslan Karayev that details the truly miraculous way in which God worked through RCR to transform his life.

We have experienced a lot of change over the past twenty years, but God's purpose and call upon this ministry continues to be singularly focused on proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Lamb of God so that millions of Russians will be reached for Christ. We praise the Lord for all those that have been reached with the Gospel through the various means of outreach which we have used over the past two decades. At the same time, we are acutely aware of the need to continue to proclaim Jesus until He returns.

As always, we see you as being key to this ministry. Thank you for your partnership with us as you pray and support us financially. Join with us in our twenty-first year of ministry that together, we might reach millions more for Christ!

Mark Irwin, President, RCR

Sergey Yakimenkov: "The Lord Always Has Given Strength To Carry On This Ministry"

As I look back over the past 20 years and the path traveled in my service to the Lord through the ministry of Russian Christian Radio, I can reiterate the words spoken by Samuel, the prophet, "Thus far the Lord has helped us". These past 20 years have taught me to see that the Lord always accomplishes His will. When we began in 1991, all programs produced by Russian Christian Radio in Moscow were recorded on magnetic tape and hand-carried to the radio station. Today, programs are recorded on computers and in a few minutes they are broadcast over radio stations over 10,000 kilometers away.

The Lord has blessed the ministry of RCR with faithful people, most of whom continue to serve with us despite the financial difficulties and pressures from the government. But, in spite of this, there have been many changes in mission staff. Some have gone to be with the Lord, such as Pirkko Poysti, mother of ten and faithful companion and partner in life and in ministry of Earl Poysti; Tatiana Kurakova, the founder of The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire magazine; Mukhail Logachov, pastor and host of several RCR radio programs; Earl Poysti, the founder of our mission and evangelist, who for over 50 years proclaimed the Gospel over various Christian radio stations. In addition, Natalia Ivashkina, the host of many RCR programs, had to leave ministry because of an incurable illness. Natalia Ermilina, who handled all of the mission's mail, was also forced to leave ministry because of health reasons.



Sergey Yakimenkov

In 1995, after the death of Pirkko Poysti, whom the Lord used as a witness to many prisoners, the prison ministry of the mission was started. Also, the first rehabilitation center was opened for spiritual and physical assistance to prisoners, released inmates, drug addicts and alcoholics, and those desiring spiritual deliverance according to the power of Jesus Christ. In the same year, the The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire magazine, which provides inmates with spiritual help, direction, and the opportunity to fellowship with other Christian prisoners, began to be distributed. This year, we published the 100th edition of the magazine. The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire comes out six times a year and is distributed to inmates in many prisons in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and other countries, and also to missionaries and churches who are evangelizing to prisoners and drug addicts.

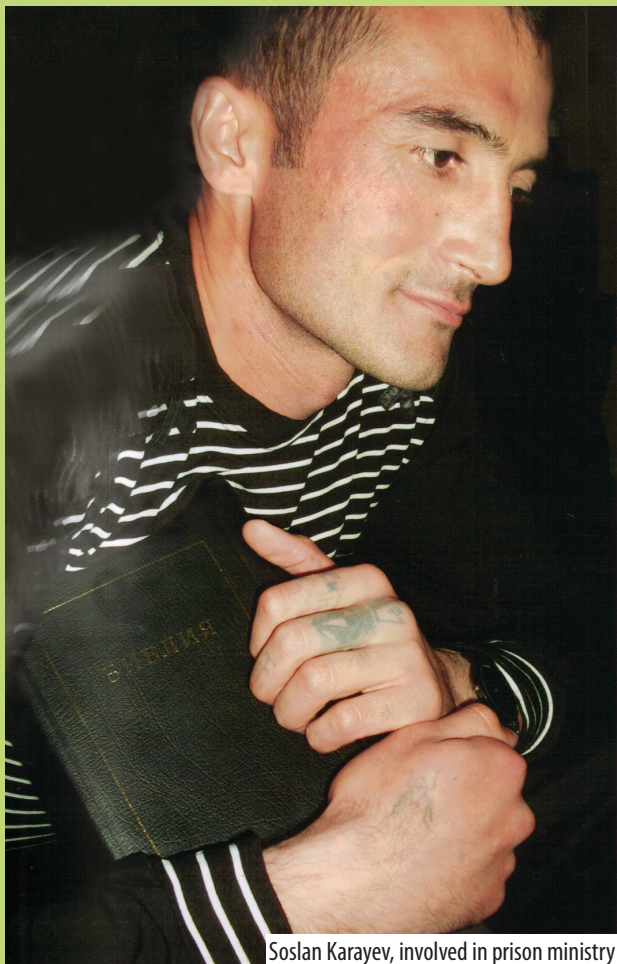
Looking back on the traveled road, I can say that the Lord never let us rely on our own strength, but always gave enough strength to carry on the ministry. We did not have a reserve of human and financial resources, but according to the measure of growth of ministry, the Lord always sent people and funding. I can only ask the Lord for strength to stay faithful in service to Him for myself and for all my fellow workers in the mission and believe that the Lord will not withhold His blessing from this ministry, as He has not left us over the past years. I ask you to pray, dear friends and fellow workers in the ministry of Russian Christian Radio and readers of this newsletter, that the Lord will help us in the future to fulfill his will in everything.

Sergei Yakomenkov, RCR Director for Russia

Letter from Soslan Karayev

(Former prisoner, now involved in rehab and prison Ministry)

From Vladikavkaz in the Russian Federation



Soslan Karayev, involved in prison ministry

I first came across your magazine at a rehabilitation center in the little village of Holst in the Ossetian area of Russia. It is located way up in the mountains, 6,500 feet above sea level. There are no stores there and buses do not go there either. The village is subject to avalanches and it is so small that it can't be found on a map. The place is written off and people, like me, who have been written off by society are brought there.

I finished school in a children's detention center but then spent my whole life in trouble with the police. I was put in prison, then released, put in prison again, then released again, etc. That was the story of my life. Five years ago I was near death and they brought me to the center. I had no will to live. I had no teeth and I battled tuberculosis and epilepsy. The veins no longer worked in my hands and feet. I was bald and unshaved, and I looked just like the communists used to say, "that man came from monkeys".

I had never once ridden a train. The only "train" I knew was the transportation hold for prisoners. I had never visited a real city. I have been incarcerated in cities, but was never able to get out and see them. I never read a book in my life. And so, the person that I was, God received into His home — that is the rehabilitation center. When the man ministering at the center saw me, he said, "Why did you bring such a sick man here? He is already dying." He said to me, "We know that God can do all things, but we don't think that we can help you, Soslan." I, myself, did not believe that anything could be done - that there would be any changes. At the rehabilitation center, I fell on my knees and cried out to the Lord with the prayer of a simple child, "If you are alive, here I am! I'm tired of living this kind of life." I laid down to sleep, and when I awoke, I no longer had the urge to smoke. I walked through the rehab center and was filled with joy. I had met God and was finally living and was thinking of how I could serve in the church.

It was there, at the center, that I came across the magazine, The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire. I read it like a famished man hungers for

food, and my joy knew no end. Through it, my faith began to grow and I began to serve in prison ministry. Today I visit many prisoners in youth detention centers, women's prisons and prisons where men are serving life sentences. During the past 5 years, after I came to faith in God, I have visited prisoners in Portugal, Spain, Israel, Holland, Belgium and Germany. In Germany, I was shown The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire magazine, only it was written in German. I was so happy to see that our magazine is known throughout the world. -- Soslan

(editor's note: We praise God for many just like Soslan whom He has transformed from the inside out. The Lord uses your gifts to Russian Christian Radio to bring new life to many just like Soslan. Who will God change next as a result of your faithful giving to RCR?)

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