



REPORTER

Millions of Russians for Christ

25th Anniversary of RCR's Moscow Office

25 years - is it a lot or a little? On the scale of the universe, this is only a moment. But humanly speaking, a quarter of a century is the life of one generation. I, Alexander, came to RCR when I was 25 years old and a new convert, and this year I will be 50 - half of my life has been spent in this ministry... for one person this is a lot!

My first ten years at RCR were a time of spiritual formation, and my faith grew significantly as I worked with three remarkable men, preparing RCR's broadcasts. Sergei Yakimenkov (my pastor and the Exec. Director of RCR in



Russia at that time), John Poysti (the founder of RCR's ministry in Russia) and Earl Poysti, whose sermons I started listening to in the studio, have a special place in my heart. Each of these men played an important role in my life: the first one advised me to join the ministry of RCR, the second explained how to work for the Lord – that this was not just a job, but a ministry, a way of life; and the third one, day after day, opened the beauty, wisdom and righteousness of the Holy Scripture. Those years I consider the best in my Christian life.

But nothing is permanent in this world. Each of these leaders handed over the ministry of reaching millions of Russian-speaking people for Christ to someone else working at RCR. Thus, the first generation of RCR's ministers was replaced. And now in turn, I feel the responsibility to plan for succession, to choose ministers who will take responsibility before God to continue to develop this ministry into the future.

To date, the ministry of RCR has spread far, and we have many friends and co-workers throughout the country and abroad. A variety of audio and video programs produced in our studio and a number of *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* magazines are sent to all corners of Russia. Many people download materials and listen on our website, rcr.ru. Pirkko Home rehabilitation centers, starting with one house opened in 1994, have multiplied to 12 locations, where we work with men, women, and mothers with children, helping them to adapt to living without dependence on drugs and alcohol. It is good to hear the testimonies of these people now standing strong in the Lord, who have finished our rehab program. And despite new laws preventing evangelical prison ministers from visiting prisons, these people do not sit idly by, but try to bring the Gospel message to prisoners in other ways, as God provides opportunities. The mercy of God has not diminished!

I believe that we are on the threshold of even greater achievements of the Lord in Russia. We will ask God to extend the days of grace for the salvation of sinners and for the workers in His field.

- Alexander Zakharov, Exec. Director of RCR in Russia, and pastor of "Ark" Church, Moscow



The Moscow RCR office is located in this corner of the office building called the Christian Center



John Poysti's Memories of RCR's First Days in Moscow

It was a foggy, rainy day in October in 1991 when Christine and I and our three daughters arrived in Moscow. Our mission: to see how the newfound freedoms of *glasnost* could be used to expand the radio ministry begun by my father, Earl Poysti. From the 20th floor apartment, where Sergei and Olga Yakimenkov welcomed us to stay for our first days in Moscow, we heard the noises of the traffic below, but couldn't see anything because of the thick fog. The fog was symbolic of the uncertainty and anxiety we felt in those very first days.



Very quickly, however, things began to fall into place. A simple radio studio was built, a team of coworkers was formed, contracts with the government radio networks were negotiated – and thousands, perhaps millions of people, could hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their homes, work places and eventually even in prisons throughout the nation.

God's sovereign hand of blessing was on the ministry of RCR in Russia, from that very first, foggy day. It has been 25 years now since RCR was officially registered in Russia and it is a celebration of God's faithfulness and provision. From a "foggy" beginning, it is evident that God's love has shone faithfully through the ministry of RCR.

Special recognition goes to the team of God's chosen servants, who have faithfully and sacrificially served His purposes as members of the RCR team. Christine and I would like to express our thanks and respect for our colleagues in Moscow and their part in making those short years we had in Moscow some of the most memorable in our entire lives. May God bless the continued ministry of these faithful servants!

- John Poysti, founder and former Director of the RCR office in Moscow



A Prisoner Shares His Testimony



Magazine topic: "No Other Gods"

Hello, dear brothers and sisters! Thank you for your ministry. I myself am from Ulan-Ude, Buryatia region. We have many religions in Buryatia, and Satan misled me. I will always remember back to when I was in court, and they did not give me a long prison term. I had lain awake wondering about how and what I would say at the trial. I felt so bad inside. I don't know how it happened, but I caught myself with the thought that I was praying to Jesus, although before that I didn't even know about the Christian faith. At that moment I gave all my worries to the Lord. Six months later, I was sent to the Altai region, and here I began to think about the meaning of life, about the spiritual side of life. I began to read books from philosophy to Hinduism, but I did not find peace in my soul. In a word, I stayed in the dark - until I read your magazine. I thank the Lord for this ministry that He created. I decided to write to your magazine, and correspondence began. There were many questions, many things I wanted to know, things that couldn't have happened without the Lord, because with God there are no accidents. After the publication of my letter in the magazine, the believers at my prison approached me and invited me to attend the prison chapel service, to which the Lord had undoubtedly brought me. In 2014, I repented and accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior by faith. My life began to change. The Lord has saved me from many sins and continues to do his work in me, preparing me for His ministry.

Thank you for your help. May God bless you abundantly in all areas of your life.

- Sergey Budayev (prisoner in the Altai Region)

RCR's Recording Studio in Moscow Starts Sending Out DVDs

For the first time, a collection of RCR's video programs are available on DVD! On one disk there are five video programs of "Foundations of Faith" - with Mikhail Ivanov, PhD, pastor and professor at Moscow Theological Seminary. We have produced 1200 of these DVDs. At the end of April we sent these disks out along with copies of *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* magazine (No. 2, 2017), and to rehabilitation centers and churches. By the end of June will have the next set of DVDs ready to go.



Introducing the Orel Pirkko Home

This year marks the 7th anniversary of the men's Pirkko Home rehab center near Orel. In 2009, the First Orel Church decided to engage in helping drug addicts and alcoholics. A man from the church named Leonid had a heart to help addicts and started taking them into his own home, but he and his friends prayed, asking God about a place to start a rehab center. The church got a plot of land and a house in the village of Maslovo, ten miles west of the city of Orel. In 2010, the church asked if they could join the RCR Pirkko Home ministry. Andrey Semenov was placed in charge of this rehab center and the ministry began. (Read his testimony on page 4.)



To date, 218 people have come to the center for help. The church still takes an active part in the life of our center, providing us with material and spiritual assistance. The Christian brothers visit us, encouraging and edifying the men going through the rehab program. We are also visited by a small local church called "Grace." The primary mission is to save the souls of the men with the gospel, as it is written: "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter" (Proverbs 24:11).

At the rehab center, we study the Word of God and work. We have a small farm with animals and a garden. We also work outside the center, when there are opportunities. We have good relationships with many people who give us jobs to do, and we try to do everything with integrity, for the glorification of God.



We love the arrival of guests and we like to visit neighboring churches to participate in their services - giving testimonies, preaching and singing praise to God - this is a blessing to us! We all want to grow spiritually.

Three people minister in our center at Orel: I, Andrey Semenov, am the leader and I have two assistants, Isai Tikhonov and Sergey Bogatyr.

The main concern of the guys in the rehab center is how to make a living and continue to stay in Christian fellowship after they finish the Pirkko Home program (rehab and adaptation) and leave the rehab centers to make their own way. Therefore, this year we are planning to

launch a new ministry, a third stage of rehabilitation, postadaptation, at the First Orel Church. One of my assistants, Sergey (right), will go there to serve, to spiritually help the rehabilitated men with their first steps of living out their Christian faith. Please pray with us for this new ministry.



Please pray for our needs. We have an urgent need for a van for going to church and work. Right now we ask the brothers from the church to help us get around. Also pray for constant work; for finances to continue the construction of an outbuilding; for clothing and shoes for men who enter the center; for bed linens and towels; and for a printer and a new guitar.

- Andrey Semenov, leader of the Orel Pirkko Home

ANDREY SEMENOV: *The Bible is a message to me from God Himself!*

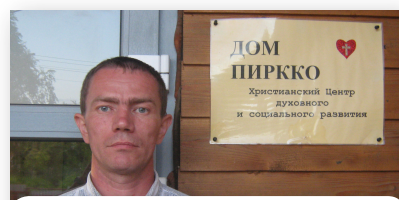


Andrey is now the leader of the Orel Pirkko Home

I grew up in a family without a father – he died when I was two years old. My older sister and I were raised by my mother and grandmother. We had an adequate income because our mother worked very hard. I am very grateful to my mom for her love for me, but I returned her efforts with many years of heartache. At age 15 I was a typical boy and did sports until I was 18, when drugs entered my life – at first light ones and later, of course, heavy drugs. I got married about that time, but I was an irresponsible man. Narcology (drug treatment) experts were unable to help me. I had a great desire to change my life, but feelings of helplessness and a sense of doom did not leave me.

My second marriage had the same aftermath. After my daughter was born I decided to quit drugs and begin anew. I saw it as a second chance and I could not miss it. For several years I was trying to lead a more or less respectable lifestyle without drugs, and thought that all the bad things were now in my past. But I was wrong, and again I betrayed my family by making the mistake of letting myself inject drugs “just one time,” despite loving my wife and daughter very much. Once again my life became crazy and nonsensical, and drugs ended up taking away my desire to live.

If it were not for God, who saw me in my misery, I probably would not be alive today. We are responsible for the choices we make. I understand now that God knocked on the door of my heart many times, but I was deaf and unresponsive to His call until circumstances led me to a Christian rehabilitation center, the Pirkko Home in Rumyantsevo (Moscow region). That is where I began to read the Bible and came to understand that it is a message to me from God Himself, and that I am a sinner before Him.



Andrey at Rumyantsevo

I was blinded by my pride and did not want to consider anyone else but me, until I was completely alone, and like the prodigal son, felt unneeded and miserable. I thank God for opening my eyes to see my own condition. Sometimes, a person needs to fall to the very bottom of the pit before he can look up and see the heavens, and in looking up I saw salvation in my Lord, Jesus Christ. The Lord granted me forgiveness and in His mercy accepted me as one of His children.

I am so grateful to Jesus Christ for calling me to ministry in the Orel Pirkko Home, the Christian rehab center for alcoholics and drug addicts in the small village of Maslovo near the city of Orel (Orel region). Now I have Christian brothers and sisters in the church as well as my fellow workers ministering in other Pirkko Homes.



I thank God for the opportunity to bring joy to my mother in her old age – she was thrilled to know that her son was now doing well. On her deathbed the Lord granted my mom repentance and she passed away with peace in her heart and peace with God. But God did not leave me alone, He blessed me with a wonderful wife. Natasha also used to be dependent on drugs, but after going through rehabilitation in the Dyatkovo Pirkko Home (Bryansk region), she stayed there to help minister to others. I frequently saw my future wife there, but it did not even occur to me that we would have a future together. However, God's ways are not our ways and His plans are incomprehensible. When we met again at the Rylysk Pirkko Home's anniversary gathering, we decided to pray regarding our future. By then I was 42

years old and Natasha was 38. The Lord answered our prayers, and the church and pastors blessed us. A year later, in 2014, we got married and now live in Orel. We have a wonderful little girl, Galina, now one year old. Natasha's daughter Sonya also lives with us and we are expecting another child. I did not expect God to so abundantly bless our family which we founded in Him. Of course, there are challenges with housing and finances, but we truly thank RCR and the participating churches for their encouragement and support. We never stop thanking the Lord for you!!!



You can listen to Russian Christian Radio Online (in Russian) at rcr.ru or use the TuneIn Radio app on your mobile device.

