



# REPORTER

## RCR – 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

Last year was a very fruitful year for RCR. With your help, we continued to bring the Good News to prisoners (there are about 524,000 of them in Russia alone) through *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* prison magazine, and we expanded our prison ministry to three areas in Russia with correspondence centers (besides Moscow).

Our studio released 156 video programs – testimonies, topical and family-related programs – and we greatly increased our audience via social media announcements and subscriptions to more than 340,000 people! We also published Earl Poysti's sermons online on Yandex, with an audience of over 100,000.



In 2019 we expanded our Pirkko Home ministry, not only with a new rehab center in Plavsk (Tula region) where, after much reconstruction, we began ministry this past fall, but also with more outreach activities. Our Pirkko Home "Liberation ministry" leaders and assistants meet regularly and many receive Bible training, so some of them are now preaching in their local churches. We accepted 247 residents at our 10 centers; 3 of the centers also minister to women.

**In addition, you gave generously to special requests for needs** such as the 2019 magazine

supplement (a special issue with some of Earl Poysti's sermons), new vehicles for the Pirkko Homes, and for building repairs, household and other needs. Praise God!

However, regular donations to RCR have slowly decreased over the last few years, so we are having difficulty keeping up with inflation. Ideally, we would like to increase regular monthly salaries (especially for our Moscow staff). In 2019, we spent about \$20,000 more than what was donated, and sent \$36,000 more to Russia than the year before! But we cannot sustain this level of spending, and are unable to do much to increase staff salaries without your help. Pray with us that God will multiply our gifts so that we can reduce the hardships for those who have dedicated themselves to ministry. **Please share this need with your church and friends who might be interested in supporting our ministry. We would be happy to provide them with more information. Thanks again for your gifts and prayers.**

### THE GOSPEL BEHIND BARBED WIRE

Correspondence Centers



**Introduction:** *October 9, 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of our founder, Earl Poysti, and we would like to share a few details with you about his parents and the spiritual legacy he inherited, including his deep love for the Russian people.*

## Earl's father, Nikolai Ivanovich Poysti *"...For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21)*



*Nikolai and his mother, Anna*

Nikolai Ivanovich Poysti was born on December 10, 1892 in St. Petersburg, Russia, to Johan ("Ivan" in Russian) and Anna Poysti. His father was Swedish and his mother was Russian. Nikolai's father passed away in 1895, leaving a three-year-old boy to be raised by his God-fearing mother. Nikolai's parents, who became believers during the spiritual awakening in St. Petersburg led by Lord Radstock from England and V.A. Pashkov, dedicated their only son, from the day of his birth, to the Lord's service.

When he was 10 years old, his mother lost all her fortune and had to earn a living for herself and her son, and at the same time ensure that her son received an education. The situation worsened and two years later Nikolai had to start working after school to help his mother. He worked in the office at Westinghouse where he first met Ivan Prokhanov (an influential Christian leader), who immediately made a strong impression on him. After Nikolai's conversion, his friendship with Ivan Prokhanov developed and deepened.

At the beginning of 1907, as a young student of the Imperial Technical School, Nikolai was confronted with questions about eternity and the existence of God. In the autumn of the same year, on October 6, he later recounted that he emerged "from the oppressive darkness of doubt into a bright and joyful faith in God." His conversion was so real and definite that he could even remember the exact time and day.

In 1911, having devoted himself fully to the service of the Lord, he traveled to Germany to study at the Methodist Theological Institute in Frankfurt (Oder). But World War I forced him to return to St. Petersburg. There he worked, distributing gospel literature on Russian military ships. Nikolai was arrested for his evangelistic activities and only by the grace of God escaped death and instead was deported to Finland.

In Finland, he met Marta (Martha) Finskas who was destined by the Lord to be his faithful companion for the rest of his life. Nikolai thanked the Lord many times for this gift from God. In 1917, after about two years of marriage, he returned with his wife and their one-year-old child to the city of Petrograd (St. Petersburg) where the revolution had already left its deep mark on everything. But despite many difficult experiences and extreme hunger, the Lord abundantly blessed his ministry with the salvation of many souls.

With great difficulty, Nikolai and Martha left Petrograd, staying for a short time in Samara where their second daughter Mary was born, and then headed to the Far East of Russia. Their first child, Alice, weakened by starvation, died along the way and was buried in Irkutsk, Siberia. After they reached Nikolsk-Ussuriysk in the Far East, Earl and Daniel were born and here Nikolai Poysti organized 22 churches. Also at this time, he worked with the American Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) among prisoners of war, preaching the gospel to them as their chaplain. Nikolai Poysti was never tied down to church denominations and tried his best to help all those who preached Christ crucified.



*Nikolai on the balcony in Nikolsk-Ussuriysk*



*Nikolai & Martha, with children Daniel, Earl & Mary*

In the winter of 1922, Pastor Nikolai Poysti with his family of five moved on to Manchuria to the city of Harbin. It was the largest railway junction along the Chinese Eastern Railway, planned as an extension of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, and at that time about 200,000 Russians lived there.

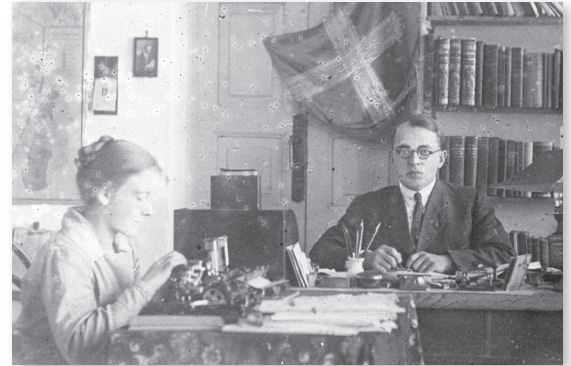
In January 1927, he and his family returned to Scandinavia, traveling through Siberia and Russia. He preached in the main cities of Sweden and then served as a pastor for three years in a large Finnish-Swedish church in Helsinki, Finland. God blessed his ministry in the Scandinavian countries. During those years, he spoke often about world missions and, sensing interest, he organized the Finnish Free Missionary Society in 1928. At the same time, he made a few missionary trips to Latvia and Estonia.





Despite the fact that souls everywhere turned to the Lord through his ministry in the Scandinavian countries, Nikolai still considered it his duty to preach to the Russians, so he left Finland again and traveled to the Far East by way of America. In the United States, he visited many churches, talking about the needs of the Russian people. He joined the Russian and East European Mission where he was appointed director of the Russian Department of the mission and traveled on behalf of the mission back to Harbin, Manchuria.

Nikolai Ivanovich Poysti and his family spent five years in Harbin. He was a pastor and the director of the Methodist Theological Institute, a Bible school which he organized, and in 1931 began to publish the Russian magazine, *The Way of Faith*. During his time in Harbin, his family and his church suffered much persecution from the Japanese fascists.



*Nikolai and Martha at work in Harbin, Manchuria*

In the spring of 1935, he traveled from Harbin to Shanghai and preached there among the Russian emigrants before heading back to America in August. Again, he visited hundreds of churches across the United States and then settled in New York where he began to publish spiritual literature in both Russian and English. The Russian believers received great blessing from his book, *The Origin and History of the Bible*.

Just before World War II, accompanied by his faithful wife, Nikolai again visited several European countries including Poland and western Ukraine, preaching the Gospel in large meetings. In Danzig, he taught at the Bible Institute of the Russian and East European Mission and then traveled again to the Scandinavian countries where he preached at a large gathering of people and again reminded everyone of the needs of the suffering Russian people. He also visited many Slavic churches in Canada.

Once WWII began, he organized help for the victims, mainly Russian believers, by sending parcels with food, clothing and spiritual literature from the office of the Russian and East European Mission in New York to many parts of Europe. He put all his efforts in helping his many brothers and sisters who were suffering.

In 1946, Pastor Poysti began to preach the Good News on two radio stations: a local station in New York City and the global HCJB station in Quito, Ecuador. He asked his son, Earl, to help him with the broadcasts.

From June to October 1947, accompanied by his eldest son, Earl, he drove through nine countries of devastated Europe, preaching tirelessly despite poor health and a weakening heart. Seeing the suffering and glaring need surrounding him, he became increasingly worried about the people and started experiencing heart problems more often, until he collapsed at the pulpit while preaching in Finland. After that incident, he only preached two more times and asked his son, Earl, to stand beside him.



When Nikolai returned home on October 31, 1947, he was bedridden for three weeks but couldn't stop thinking about how to more effectively implement the vision God had given him of "MILLIONS OF RUSSIANS FOR CHRIST." After dictating a long letter late in the evening of November 19th to his brothers in Europe, exhorting them to guard the unity of faith in view of the imminent return of Christ, he gathered his family and prayed for each one separately and then also prayed for his many partners in ministry. That same night on November 20th, 1947, Nikolai Ivanovich Poysti peacefully entered eternity and was buried in New York at the age of 55.

*It is evident that Nikolai served as a model for Earl, who followed closely in his father's footsteps – such as in how he presented very clear sermons during which many people turned to the Lord, his burden for the Russian people, and travel throughout the US and Europe to raise awareness and support for reaching Russians for Christ, as well as his non-denominational stance. Praise God for the lives of these men!*

## RCR Studio Ministry and New Video Series

Over the past year, the RCR Studio has released many new video programs, expanded our audience, and received many good responses from our viewers! One of them, Vladimir, is in life imprisonment in Kyrgyzstan. He is able to watch our programs, and recently shared his dream: *"I believe that God can release me from prison - some other prisoners and I have hope for an early release this year! My dream is to visit your studio in Moscow someday and tell my testimony for the Choice program about how God saved me, and to meet you in person! Thank you for supporting me and sending me videos and magazines."* These touching words give us joy, and inspire us to work harder and pray for all those we serve! We thank the Lord for your support because your help produces thanks to God through viewers who watch our programs. God bless you!

### We have big plans - let us introduce two new series of programs!

**"LIFE"** video program (10 min or less): In the life of every person, there are situations when you feel completely powerless before your circumstances, when there is no one to help and you can only hope for the mercy of the Most High. The guests of the Life program talk about the miracles of God in their lives, about how the Lord showed love, saving those who trust Him in difficult situations.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." (Proverbs 3: 5-6)



**"HAGIM"** (Hebrew: "Festivals or Feasts"): In the Hagim series of programs, Maxim Ammosov, head of the Russian branch of the Jews for Jesus mission, and an evangelist and expert on Jewish traditions, helps viewers to discover the meaning and significance of the holidays of the annual Jewish calendar by viewing them through the prism of Christianity. The program introduces viewers to many Jewish traditions and symbols, and takes a fresh look at the Jewish feasts.

"So this day shall be to you a memorial.... You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance." (Exodus 12:14)

### Some comments about our programs:

Thank you for your kind words. They made me look at the gospel in a new, simple and clear way. In this hectic world we forget the holy truths. - Alexander Romanov

I am from Ossetia - I am in prison and disabled. I would like to learn more about God, I'm tired of just existing; I want to live. Help me find out about your Savior. I want to understand why and how to live without sin. - Sergey on WhatsApp

## The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire and our New Project

*"For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" Matthew 9:13.*

*"I thank our Lord for The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire! I got acquainted with the magazine while in prison, I always look forward to every new issue of the magazine. "Why?" you ask. After all, there are so many Christian publications. I answer: The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire is mine; it's about me. Everything that the magazine contains relates directly to my life. Honestly. I get tired of everyday worries, and the bad news about what is happening in the world. I read the magazine issue just arrived and come back to life. I often reread old issues. I give many away, but there are special ones that I keep. Rereading them gives rest to my soul; I cry and my heart is cleansed. I pray and rejoice, study and learn, grow spiritually and gain strength. God bless and reward those who keep the magazine coming. Thank you! Child of God, Sergey G." (prisoner in Altai Territory, Russia)*



For the past 25 years the Lord has used our magazine ministry in Russia and other surrounding countries to reach outcasts, the "dregs" of society, with the Gospel. Their calls for help come and we respond to every letter. Letters come not only from prisoners, but also from relatives who ask us to send the magazine to a family member (son, husband, brother) in prison, in the hope that he will think about his life.

This year we hope to publish a Biblical guide about discipleship and mentoring based on materials by Earl Poysti, which will be a great help to prison ministers in their work with prisoners. Praise the Lord for His blessings on this ministry, and thank you for your prayers and support.

