



REPORTER

Preaching the Gospel in the
Russian Language since 1946

7500 PRINTED
6 TIMES/YEAR **15** COUNTRIES
**THE GOSPEL
BEHIND BARBED WIRE**

The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire

“... but the Word of God is not imprisoned.”
(2 Tim. 2:9)

The Lord has allowed us to minister and bring His Word to people in deep trouble. Even during the total lockdown, when all prison ministers were banned

from visiting prisons throughout Russia & other countries, our prison magazine, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, kept reaching the darkest and most remote places. The pins on the map show some of the places our magazines are delivered.

Every other month our staff prayerfully prepares, designs, and then publishes and mails 7500 magazines. Praise God that we can serve those who need it most. Please, consider supporting this ministry if you haven't yet; the prison magazine ministry takes a little over half of our budget. Special thanks to all our supporters!

As the lockdown started to ease in May - July, RCR's Moscow office received 329 handwritten (!) letters and our staff responded to each one. Here are a couple excerpts:

Elena V. (prisoner in Primorsky Krai, Russia): “I was so happy when I received your magazine. Thank you very much. I will give it to everyone who wants to read it (there is already a long line for it).... I would like my son to also receive some Christian children's magazines. Ivan will be 10 years old in August. He is in an orphanage.”

Mikhail K. (prisoner in Gomel Region Belarus): “Your magazine, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, is very necessary in prisons, as it has a very positive effect and influence on prisoners. The prison itself has not yet transformed a single person. But *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* has made real people out of many convicts!!! - With the love of the Savior and prayers for you, your brother in the Lord, Mikhail.”



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Introduction: October 9, 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of our founder, Earl Poysti, and we are celebrating by sharing with you about Earl's life and ministry. His son, John Poysti, who also worked many years in the ministry of RCR alongside his father, has written this article highlighting some of the main events and periods of ministry in Earl's life. In the next Reporter John will share some personal recollections of his father.

Earl Samuel Poysti – Founder of Russian Christian Radio

Nikolsk-Ussuriysk, November 23, 1920

Dearest Pappa!

I need to share some news. A little more than a month ago, God gave us a precious son. His name is Jarl Samuel...

With a thousand kisses, Martha

With these words, a young missionary informed her father back in a small village in Finland of the birth of Earl Samuel Poysti – better known to the Russian people as Yarl Nikolaevich Peisti. As I hold in my hands the very letter that my grandmother Martha wrote 100 years ago from a small town north of Vladivostok in the Far Eastern region of Russia, I offer thanks to God for the life of my father, God's faithful servant.

We don't get to choose where we are born nor most of the circumstances of our lives, but our sovereign God orders the lives of his children and uses us for his good purposes as we choose to follow him. Earl Poysti's life was uniquely ordered by the Lord whom he served faithfully all his life. His life in ministry can be divided into three general periods or phases: his early years of formation and pastoral ministry; his middle years of focus on radio ministry; and his latter years of travel and public evangelism.



*Nikolai & Martha Poysti's family in 1927.
Earl is in the center.*

period, Earl worked with his father, Nikolai, in Christian publishing, sending aid packages to people affected by the war (World War II), Russian language radio broadcasting locally and internationally



*Nikolai and Earl working together, probably
on a radio script, in New York in 1947.*

Earl grew up on the mission field, first in the Far East region of Russia and then in Manchuria, China, where his father pastored a Russian church in the city of Harbin. But, faced with the increasing threat of invasion and war between China and Japan, the family left and eventually moved to the United States in 1935. It would be more than 25 years before Earl could return to Russia, the land of his birth.

Those early years in the United States were dedicated to finishing high school and university as well as some formal Bible training. During this period, Earl worked with his father, Nikolai, in Christian publishing, sending aid packages to people affected by the war (World War II), Russian language radio broadcasting locally and internationally (beginning in 1946), and much more.

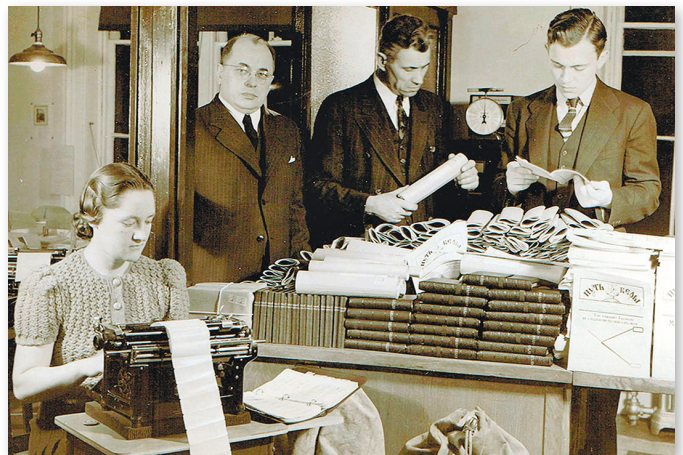
In the process of experiencing the

challenges and blessings of life in ministry, Earl developed a passion for evangelism and preaching. Several years of pastoral ministry in churches in New York and California helped Earl develop the ability to discern the heart needs of people and to apply the practical truth of God's word to those needs.

A trip to the then Soviet Union in 1961 ushered Earl into the next major phase of his ministry. Earl accompanied Jack Wyrzten, a well-known evangelist from New York, to the Soviet Union as his interpreter and guide. As they addressed

and met with large numbers of spiritually hungry young people in Moscow, the prophetic slogan of Earl's father, "Millions of Russians for Christ" kept pounding in his heart. Jack Wyrzten encouraged Earl to adopt that slogan for himself and begin his own radio ministry to Russian-speaking people. Wyrzten was confident that literally millions of people would be able to hear the gospel message through the means of radio. He even offered the name of his own evangelistic organization to become the name of Earl's first series of radio programs: Word of Life.

Meanwhile, God was preparing a Christian radio organization that would be able to reach deep into the huge expanse of the Soviet Union by shortwave radio. And in 1963, Earl and his family joined the staff of Trans World Radio in the tiny country of Monaco on the Mediterranean Sea. For seven years, Earl and the rest of the staff prepared and broadcast daily programs with testimonies, music and Bible teaching. They had little evidence that anyone was listening except for a few letters that



trickled in. It takes great faith and perseverance to speak into a microphone day after day, year after year, and not really know if anyone is even listening.

Another brief trip to the Soviet Union in 1964, however, revealed that God was indeed working in the hearts of many people who were faithfully listening to the radio programs. Earl and his colleagues came home greatly encouraged and with the needed inspiration to continue to declare good news to the Russian people. Earl was able to “see” his listeners as he spoke into his microphone and many listeners wrote and wondered how Earl knew exactly what they were going through!



As the number of listeners grew and other Christian organizations were surrounding the then Soviet Union with more and more powerful radio stations, Earl more formally formed his own organization and called it simply “Russian Christian Radio” with headquarters first in Austria, then in Sweden and finally in Colorado in the United States. Having his own independent organization gave him the opportunity to cooperate with many new partners in ministry and to broadcast not just from one station in Monaco, but on stations from many different locations. The radio audience grew rapidly and the slogan of “Millions of Russians for Christ” went from prophetic vision to practical reality.

Although God can do whatever he wants and whenever he wants, he has chosen to work largely through the prayers of his followers. The growth and spiritual success of the radio ministry did not just happen by chance; it happened through prayer. My mother, Pirkko, was

Earl’s faithful partner in ministry. And her lifelong focus was on prayer – her own private prayer ministry and her organized effort to connect churches all around the world with a specific church and region in the Soviet Union. Monthly updates were circulated in many different languages with specific, personal prayer requests for pastors, Christian workers and church members in the most remote and forgotten villages all across the Soviet Union.

And God answers prayer! As people prayed and as they prayed for specific people and specific needs, God opened new and broader opportunities for ministry. And it is my sincere conviction that the faithful prayers of God’s children led to the spiritual awakening that swept through the Soviet Union. It culminated in the great millennial celebration in 1988 of the baptism of Rus (the beginning of the Christianization of Russia).



It had been a long 24 years since Earl had last been in the Soviet Union and it took a miracle of God for him to be allowed to travel to Kiev and take part in the 1000-year celebration of the baptism of Rus. Finally, Earl was able to see for himself what God had been doing during those long years of often lonely ministry behind his microphone. God was ushering in a new phase of ministry for Earl, one of personal travel and public evangelism.

That day in 1988, more than 20,000 people gathered along the Dnieper River in Kiev for a celebratory meeting and baptism of 89 new converts. The skies were gray, and the weather was gloomy. But the people came, and the people prayed for God’s blessings to fall on them. One of the largest crowds of people that had ever gathered for a public Christian meeting in that part of the world waited to hear their favorite radio preacher in person. As Earl approached the temporary podium along the banks of the Dnieper, the skies suddenly cleared, and the sun shone brightly on God’s people. And Earl responded with these words: “God is smiling on his people today!”

Over the next years, Earl was able to travel extensively throughout that part of the world and meet personally with many thousands of the people he had previously only been able to “see” in his heart from behind his microphone. By God’s grace, Earl lived long enough to personally see and experience some of the fruit of his faithful ministry of God’s word.

God gave the gift of a precious son to a young missionary couple serving in the Far East region of Russia 100 years ago. God invested in that young son and grew him into a faithful and effective servant for God’s purposes. And by God’s grace, He will raise up many other precious sons and daughters to carry on the vision of “Millions of Russians for Christ.”



A family listening to the radio.



ALEXANDER – from homeless to a heavenly home!

The Pirkko Home “Liberation centers” are full of incredible stories of people, a large palette of how God led each person to Himself – through pain, darkness, personal choices and life circumstances. Some defy human interpretation, and only God knows how and why these things happen.

In April 2019, literally a year and a half ago, we received a call that a homeless man named Alexander was on the streets of a nearby village and needed help. Neighbors reported that the man had been eating from trash cans for a long time and because of his bad appearance, no one had come close to him. We immediately took him to the Rummyantsevo Pirkko Home. We found out that Alexander had already suffered a stroke twice, he had no home or documents, and he physically suffered from bladder & bowel incontinence.



We cleaned him up, gave him a haircut and food to eat. Then the long process of Alexander's restoration began. We carried out treatment right on the spot with pills, injections, and the constant watch of the leaders at Rummyantsevo. Recovery was slow. At first, he was in our 8-month program, like everyone else; then, due to the fact that he had no family and nowhere to go, he continued to stay with us in the center, becoming more like family. During his time at the center, we jointly worked on restoring his documents. At the same time, we tried to formalize his disability and his pension so he could get admitted to a hospital or a care center of some kind. The onset of the pandemic postponed the resolution of these issues. We decided that Alexander would stay with us even if we could not get him somewhere else to live.

We were confused by only one circumstance connected with Alexander, he would not repent. He sang songs with us when we studied God's Word. Often tears came to his eyes when God's Word was read and explained. He did not miss a single meeting and learned to write and copied down Bible verses. This good, cheerful 49-year-old man, a former paratrooper, found himself in such a situation of helplessness, rejection, weakness and needing Jesus, but he was not repentant. It was so sad!



July 14, 2020, Alexander felt ill and collapsed. We called an ambulance. They came and examined him and did a cardiogram; they gave him an injection and some pills, but decided to leave him in the center and not take him to the hospital. Everyone was concerned and prayed for Alexander. Then a miracle happened! Alexander made a decision to repent before God. With tears in his eyes, and with difficulty in pronouncing the words due to his stroke, Alexander repeated a prayer of repentance. Everyone was overjoyed! Then he lay down and fell asleep. At 5:00 am the next morning we discovered that he had died.



Ruslan Z. and Alexander

Dear friends, this is how the story of one common man ended - a man who needed help, compassion, repentance before God and our attentive patience as we showed concern for him. Praise God for saving Alexander's soul! What did God teach me? Take care of such people. No matter how hopeless a person is, keep working and do not give up. God is great! “Your labor is not in vain!” – *Ruslan Z., Assistant Director, Rummyantsevo Pirkko Home*

Nikulino Pirkko Home property taken to court! Please pray!

Recently a Russian government official retired in Nikulino. He doesn't like the Pirkko Home ministry and has involved the fire department and local prosecutor, who wants to re-classify this property as a commercial property, not residential. This would make it subject to much stricter fire safety requirements which we cannot handle. A court case was then filed against the Pirkko Home to impose these requirements. Court was held twice in July and once in August, but the situation was not resolved as of this writing. The prosecutor added new requirements in order to **achieve the closure of the Nikulino Pirkko Home**, where ministry has been done for Christ for 22 years. Please pray for Nikulino, wisdom for our lawyer, for God's will to be done... and for God's work in this new neighbor's life. The tension is growing, and so are the legal costs. We are trusting in God's help.

