



REPORTER

Preaching the Gospel in the
Russian Language since 1946

Being Faithful to the Ministry Entrusted to Us

"It is required of stewards that they be found faithful." – 1 Corinthians 4:2 (ESV)



30 years ago, I first crossed the threshold of the RCR studio as an employee. Being a young believer filled with a "first" love for the Lord, it was not a question for me whether to serve Him or build a career in a prestigious job. When an offer was made to start helping in the newly opened Russian Christian Radio ministry in Moscow, I immediately agreed. Then I was worried about only two things - will I be able to be useful, and will I cope with the responsibility? John Poysti, who was assembling the first team of RCR ministry staff, needed someone who could record and edit the programs before sending them out to be broadcast. At that time, there were only a few Christians who were ready-made specialists in the field of sound recording, so everything was learned and implemented during the process of our work with prayer and enthusiasm. With God's help, we

did amazingly well. The ministry grew, in view of the huge spiritual demand of the population of the former Soviet Union. In addition to broadcasting to Russia and adjoining countries, beginning in 1994, RCR started opening centers to help released prisoners and people with addictions in "Pirkko's Houses." In 1995, RCR's magazine, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, was first published and it began to reach more and more prisons. Today this magazine is the most popular and recognizable Christian publication in Russian prisons.

During these 30 years, the Lord has used us in bringing the Gospel message to millions of people who speak Russian. Did we do it on our own? Of course not. God has used the efforts of many people to make His Word available to unbelievers. Those who pray for us, donors, co-workers in spreading the gospel - such as pastors of local churches and their members, those who come to the recording studio, patronize the Pirkko Homes, write articles and distribute the magazine among prisoners, and those who are directly involved in this ministry which continues to reach unbelieving hearts - all of us are part of a larger whole. Sometimes needed helpers appeared out of nowhere, as a clear answer to prayers.

But I will note one lesson that the Lord taught us over all these years: to be faithful in the ministry entrusted to us. *"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."* Luke 9:62 (ESV). God is faithful and requires the same of His followers. Times, people's preferences, and approaches to ministry are changing, such as changing from radio to primarily video programs in our studio. In comparison with the 1990s, the conditions for conducting Christian ministry have become more complicated, and many Christian organizations have ceased their activities. We don't know what other challenges are ahead of us, but we are sure of one thing - the Gospel must awaken sinners to repentance until the Lord comes for us! It is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

– Alexander Zakharov, Executive Director of the RCR Moscow Office



Alexander Zakharov working in the Moscow studio back in 2005.





RCR Studio Ministry

Geography of RCR Studio Guests

Over the past six months, guests from different cities all over Russia, and even from Ukraine and Kazakhstan, have come to our studio! See the map:

Kherson – Tahir Tsurkan is a purebred gypsy, a refugee from Kherson, Ukraine. He came to Christ thanks to the prison ministers who visited the juvenile prison colony in Mariupol, Ukraine. He came to the RCR Studio through the Moscow evangelical church. Tahir had nowhere to sleep, so we helped him with overnight stays in our office for a while. He is currently engaged in restoration of his documents.

Yakutsk – In December, 2022, we had a guest from Yakutsk, Egor Vinokurov (in photo). The Republic of Yakutia is located in the Russian Far East along the Arctic Ocean and is 5.5 times larger than France. It also contains the coldest place on earth! The Yakuts are considered an unreached people group, with less than 1% of Yakuts being Christians, but thanks to the Choice program, we can talk with those who reject paganism and shamanism, and are followers of our Savior. Egor gave his testimony and is ready to continue to preach the gospel to his indigenous people.

Vladikavkaz – Ossetian Aslan Gugkaev was also a guest in RCR's studio. The people in the Caucasus Mountains area were baptized even earlier than the "Rus" (1100 years ago), but now pagan beliefs are thriving in North Ossetia. Our guest spoke about the path that helped him to reject the false beliefs of his ancestors and accept Jesus Christ. He is now an evangelist.

In total, there are more than 190 different people groups in Russia, and almost all of them know Russian. Pray for their awakening and for us to continue to reach them and help them become followers of Jesus Christ.

For those listeners who want to learn more about God, the Bible, or Christianity, we continue to publish sermons by Earl Poysti (texts and audio broadcasts), and audio Bible study programs.

Everything we do is possible because of your prayers and support for our ministry. Thank you!

Comments on our programs:

- A wonderful finale of the program "Love - Affection or Freedom" based on the book of the Song of Songs! Very well done! Indeed, I want to study this deep book and understand it at all levels. - Vera I.
[In January we finished a video series on the Song of Songs, a rarely studied book of the Bible containing great treasure and important truths about true love for God and man. (17 episodes, about 7 hours, by Denis Gostev.)]
- These testimonies inspire me greatly. The Lord's presence penetrates to the depths of my heart. - Robert P.
- Wow, what a powerful testimony! I received answers to some of the questions I have, that I ask to God in Heaven. It seemed like the story of the hero had nothing to do with my life circumstances, but then the Lord spoke to me, and it connected somehow, reinforcing my hope. Thank you for your honesty, it's great! - Tatyana Vasilyeva
- What a wonderful, powerful testimony! As an Armenian, when I saw a believing Armenian, I was very happy about the next program and watched eagerly! Thank you, Natalia (Chernyakova) for your work! - Karina Mkhitaryan
- Incredible testimony! Through this program, I learned the importance of personal evangelism. - Anna
- Thank you for the programs with Pastor A.V. Smirnov. I listened to almost all of them on Yandex.Music. He explained everything very well, step by step. – P. Yaroslav
- I watch almost every program. I am very grateful to God that He shows His mercy and love through other people. Significant changes came in my life, as soon as I accepted God and left the usual worldly life. - Artem Zavyalov
- Thank you, Natalia, for this and other programs, I constantly listen to you and always "like" your program. The "Choice" program is very valuable, since the testimonies of people play a big role in terms of turning people to God. I myself turned to God in childhood, when I heard a testimony about God through a little girl, and then God led me, and strengthened my faith in Himself and let me know the truth. Thank you for your work, may the Lord bless you in your ministry. - Jeanne W.

– Ayur Vanzhilov, Director of RCR Studio

Geography of the guests of the RCR Studio



The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire Magazine Ministry

In recent years, for various reasons, the publication of Christian newspapers and magazines has been reduced in Russia, making it even more important that we continue to publish our Christian magazine for prisoners, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*.

Here is what Alexandra S. (Yekaterinburg, Russia), who has been receiving our magazine for many years, writes: *"Praise the Lord that you have the opportunity to print The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire magazine. Our correspondence with prisoners continues. Our New Life church has not published newspapers for several years and other churches have also stopped printing newspapers. Your magazine is the main spiritual literature in the ministry. There are still so many people who don't know Jesus. We want to bring them the Good News about Him. Let us all pray that the Lord will give you the necessary funds to continue publishing and distributing the magazine. May the Lord help you! Best regards, Alexandra"*

Dmitry (a host of Christian radio programs) writes: *"I believe that The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire magazine is a very important and necessary magazine. It's written for a very specific audience, but it has amazing influence. Everyone now goes towards YouTube and other videos. Please stay in print. It's great. It is very important and it helps people. Even for me, it is sometimes important to hold the publication in my hands, read and leaf through it, and even smell it. So thank you very much for continuing to publish it. Don't stop! May God bless, and you will always have readers."*

Andrei G. (Kursk, Russia) writes: *"We conduct spiritual correspondence with more than 40 convicts in prisons all over Russia. We meet those who have been released and help them to undergo rehabilitation and resocialization when they are freed. Thanks for your prayers and participation in God's work! God bless you!"*



Magazine editorial committee

Understanding the complexity of the situation, we decided to devote the second issue of the magazine this year to the topic of forgiveness. God forgives us when we sincerely repent before Him. We must also forgive each other. The title of this next issue is "As We Forgive Those who Sin Against Us." Please pray for the selection of articles to present this topic clearly, and for all the readers of the magazine.

– Eduard Zavedeyev, Director of the Magazine Ministry

Pirkko Home Liberation Ministry, Dyatkovo (Bryansk region)

Currently, my wife Tanya and I are the only leaders at the Dyatkovo Pirkko Home. At the beginning of this year, our assistant leader, Evgeniy, made the decision to leave the ministry at our rehab center. We have blessed him in his decision. Evgeniy had completed rehabilitation in 2021, stayed at the center to work, and helped me in the ministry for almost a year and a half and was recently baptized. After baptism he was asked by the brothers to preach in the local church. Now he works and lives at the flower greenhouse with believing brothers (where men from our Pirkko Home also work), and he continues to work in the church and to live for Christ. Praise The Lord!

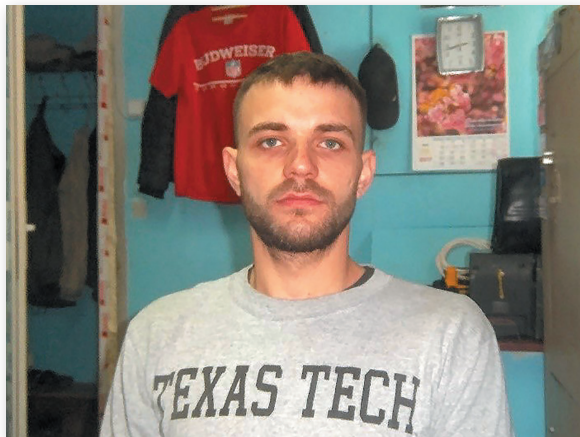
Over the past year, 28 people have applied to our center. Nine of them came for repeated rehabilitation due to relapse. Five people completed the eight-month rehabilitation program to the end (two going to Solnechnogorsk for adaptation). Two then moved on to live their own lives, but three remained in Dyatkovo for post-adaptation and found employment. One of them is now attending a church in Bryansk and wants to be baptized.

Our women's center is temporarily idle. Our family lives in this building - me, my wife Tanya and our daughter Polina (2½ years old). I would like to renovate the building so that women can be accepted again, maybe even with children. We do not give up hope on this plan. Please pray about this possibility. We thank the Lord that, despite the difficulties, His work in the city of Dyatkovo is being accomplished and bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God and His Church. Praise God!

– Ilya Ignatov, Leader of the Dyatkovo Pirkko Home



Fedor - "I realized that life without Christ is impossible"



BEFORE: 2017 - Fedor's 1st photo at the Dyatkovo Pirkko Home, where he went through the rehab program, repented, and asked Jesus to change his life.

My name is Fedor, I am 31 years old. I was born in the Crimea. After the divorce of my parents, I moved with my mother to the city of Krasnogorsk (Moscow region). Mom worked a lot. From the sixth grade, I was left to my own devices. I met older guys and started smoking and drinking. I tried drugs in 9th grade. I graduated from vocational school and started working. I got married, but even my family couldn't keep me from drugs. At first, I hid my addiction from my wife. After 3 years of marriage, my actions and behavior almost led us to a divorce. I behaved like an egoist, and often did not sleep at home. My wife alone paid for the rented apartment, while I went about "my own business." I am grateful to God that He gave my wife Olga the strength to endure everything, to not break down and to not abandon our marriage.

Once, after one of our quarrels, she prayed to the Lord for me on her knees. She told God that she could not do anything with me and that she was putting this situation in God's hands. My wife's parents were believers, but she wasn't yet. And the Lord

answered her prayer! I opened up and told Olga about my addiction. I realized that I couldn't do it on my own. We discussed it and decided to turn to the "Truth" church in Nakhabino. A week later I was already in the Pirkko Home in the city of Dyatkovo, Bryansk region. While I was in rehabilitation, my wife began to regularly attend the meetings for families of addicts and Sunday church services



Very soon I repented and asked Jesus Christ to come into my life and change it. The Lord began to change me from the inside. It was as if He took off my glasses, and turned them around so I could see myself – He showed me my whole life: where I was wrong, how I behaved towards people close to me, towards myself and, especially, towards God.

During my stay at the center, my life was changed – by isolating me from the problem, disciplining me, and turning me to Scripture. I realized that life without Christ is impossible. When I found out about Olga's prayer for me and realized how miraculously God fulfilled the desire of her heart, it became for me a great testimony of how great the power of prayer is and how merciful the Lord is to us.

When I completed the rehab program, my wife and I both began to attend church in Nakhabino; a year later I was baptized. Soon the Lord blessed us even more and gave us a wonderful daughter, but with this He also gave a test. When Eva was 1½ years old, she became very ill. As a result, she was diagnosed with a very rare disease, and with it a disability. Now she is 4½ years old, and we are still struggling with the consequences, but without Christ I would not have passed such a test, and in all these experiences I have come to know Christ more and more. Feeling joy and concerns for my child, I begin to understand how much Christ loves us.

Today in the church, I help carry out the ministry to families of addicts and try to serve in any way I can.

I thank God every day for saving my family and for my beloved wife, through whom I found salvation.

AFTER: 2022 – Fedor with his family. Praise God!

