

can learn from Dad's example and continue to fight for what is good and true – even when doubts arise.

I had the opportunity to visit my Dad only six weeks before he passed away, and we had some time to talk about a number of things. I asked him what it was like to lie there in his bed, almost helpless, in constant discomfort, preparing to die. He used a word that I had never heard him use except in the literal sense; he said, "It stinks!" So we talked about the process of dying and got into the theology of life, death and eternity. It was good to talk about the Lord. And then I asked him what he wanted most in these his last days, and he replied, "I just want peace. I just want peace." The day before my wife, Christine, and I left to return to Sweden, we knew we wouldn't see him again this side of eternity, and so we prayed together for the last time. I prayed for him and Dad then prayed a long and meaningful prayer of blessing on my life and ministry. I will cherish that moment – a son receiving the greatest gift he could ever receive from a father – his blessing.

I will miss my Dad. But now it is my responsibility to live in a way that I can pass on a godly legacy to my children. My relationship with my father has helped prepare me for that responsibility. Our relationship had its ups and downs, its joys and frustrations. And, in a sort of selfish way, I am glad Dad lived to be 89 years old. It gave us both time to come to a place of forgiveness and peace. My daughter Sonia recently gave me a novel about fathers and sons – a story of a family of preachers that reminds me of my family. This morning, I came across the following quote about the often-complicated relationship between fathers and sons. The author says: "It is worth living long enough to outlast whatever sense of grievance you may acquire." I am thankful to the Lord that both my father and I lived long enough. I wish the same for each of you. Dad, rest in the peace of Christ whom you served so faithfully.

## Run the Race with Endurance (Mark Irwin, President, Russian Christian Radio)

There are so many images from Scripture that speak to the life lived by Earl Samuel Poysti. He was a servant of God, a good soldier in the Lord's army, a brilliant and passionate preacher of the word of God and the Lord's mouthpiece to Russian-speakers around the world.

It boggles my mind to think just how powerfully God used one man to reach so many and to bring them to faith in Christ. Earl Poysti indeed fulfilled God's plan for his life in a rich and lasting way.

The apostle Paul wrote of his own time on this earth when he said, "The time of my departure has come, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:6-7). In the same manner, we can see how Earl Poysti fought the good fight,

ran the race with excellence and passion and kept the faith, calling many others to do the same.

In this special edition of the Reporter, I hope you will be challenged to continue running the race with the same excellence and passion with which Earl Poysti did. Just as this great man of God ran his race to the very end, may you too, run with endurance. As the apostle Paul wrote, "hold fast the word of life so that in the day of Christ you will have reason to glory because you did not run in vain or toil in vain" (Philippians 2:16).

## Imitating His Faith (Sergey Yakimenkov, Director of RCR in Moscow)

Earl Poysti has become one more testimony in God's "great cloud of witnesses" and today his name speaks to us, calling us to imitate his example of faithfulness to God, serving Russian-speaking people just as Earl did his entire life. The Lord revealed his favor to me in that I was privileged to serve God alongside Earl Poysti for more than two decades. His character, educational background and lifestyle are impossible to duplicate, but his faithfulness to the Lord, displayed through many years of service to Russian-speaking people is worthy to be imitated.

As an example of his faithful ministry, he broadcast his powerful sermons for decades without even receiving a response, not knowing that he was reaching tens of thousands of listeners behind the Iron Curtain. The numerous times that he moved his large family from one country to another with one purpose in mind, to preach the Gospel to Russian speakers via radio, speaks of his love for Slavic people. When the "Iron Curtain" came down and it became possible to visit and fellowship with believers there, Earl Poysti without the slightest hesitation went to preach in the USSR in more than 120 cities and he was a witness to the end of the Soviet Union. During those trips, he met hundreds of thousands of people that had been listening to his sermons all along, even though they were unable to write him. That was his reward for his many years of faithful service to God.

When the time came to do so, Earl moved the ministry of Russian Christian Radio to Moscow without hesitation where his programs could air over all the radio stations of the Soviet Union and later, Russia. His heart was filled with a sense of expectation for a great spiritual revival in Russia. With that same hope, he went to be with the Lord. He left this life having fulfilled his earthly course, and yet, for those of us who remain, it now depends on us as to whether or not this ministry will continue. Earl always hoped that the ministry which was given to him would continue until God's work among Russian-speaking people was completed. May God use you to see to it that Russian Christian Radio continues to fulfill God's plan for Russian-speakers everywhere.

Russian Christian Radio  
P.O. Box 1667  
Estes Park, CO 80517

Phone: (770) 864-6464  
e-mail: info@rcradio.net

Visit the Russian Christian Radio  
Web site at [www.rcr.ru/eng](http://www.rcr.ru/eng)

## Notes from ministry colleagues

*"Earl Poysti lived a brilliant Christian life. Many people around the world will remember him as a passionate preacher of the Gospel, a tireless laborer in God's fields, who gave himself to serving God as a good example of one who was steadfast and committed to his calling. I remember fondly many evangelistic trips with Earl Poysti and many occasions in which we preached together. I, along with many others, learned a great deal from the example*

*of this man's life. With Earl's passing, an era of ministry has come to an end, but at the same time, the baton of responsibility for the ministries he began has been passed onto others who will walk in the same faith in which this great servant did." (Viktor Hamm, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association)*

*"Brother Earl Poysti was very clear and determined about his calling. We used to call him the Billy Graham for Russia. But he was not only a strong evangelist; he was a gifted teacher as well. Few people have reached into so many hearts as Brother Earl Poysti with the message of love and transformation." (Gosta Ak-erlund, IBRA Radio, Sweden)*

*"Earl Poysti's messages had a significant part in my personal spiritual growth. God has used Earl in a special way throughout the Russian speaking world. We praise God for him. Earl Poysti will always remain in my memory as a man of God, evangelist, teacher, mentor and simply, my friend. The Lord has done great things through Earl, especially, within the Russian speaking people of this world." (Rudi Wiens, FEBC Radio)*



# Russian Christian Radio REPORTER

In memory of Earl Samuel Poysti, 1920 — 2010

## Millions of Russians for Christ

### A Life Lived for the Glory of God: Earl Samuel Poysti, 1920 - 2010

Earl Samuel Poysti was born in Nikolsk-Ussurisk in the Russian Far East on October 9, 1920. His parents, Nikolai and Martha Poysti arrived in Russia from Finland in 1917 to begin their missionary work in St. Petersburg. However, due to the Bolshevik revolution that was occurring at that time, and the resulting famine in that part of the country, the Poystis moved to the Russian Far East.

Later, Nikolai Poysti moved his family to Manchuria, China, to carry out missionary work among Russian speakers in the city of Harbin. At the age of fourteen, Earl repented of his sins and turned to Christ in faith for salvation and committed his life in service to God.

Eventually, the family moved to the United States, where Earl finished high school and later attended the National Bible Institute in New York and eventually received a degree in Religious Studies from New York University. In 1947, Earl's father invited him to begin working with him in Gospel outreach and Earl joined the Eastern European Mission (EEM). At that time, Earl was responsible for the production and distribution of a Christian magazine, *The Way of Faith* ("Put Veri") and also participated in some radio programming.

In 1946, the Lord put it on the heart of Earl's father to reach Russian speakers in the city of New York through radio broadcasting. "One day, my father suggested that I prepare a sermon for radio", as Earl recalled. "It was not easy for me to speak in Russian, especially since our family had switched from speaking Russian to speaking English while in America. Our mother tongue was actually Swedish and we only studied Russian while we lived in China when our parents were missionaries among Russian speakers there. Nonetheless, I recorded my first radio program, even though it was difficult to do. After that, my father began to ask me to prepare radio programs more frequently."



In 1947, Earl and his father began to work together to broadcast evangelical radio programs in Russian for Russia. However, in November of that year, Nikolai Poysti passed away, leaving Earl to carry on the work that his dad had started to reach Russians for Christ.

A year and a half later, in May 1949, Earl Poysti married Pirkko Suomela, a Finn who was at that time studying at the Bible Institute of New York. Pirkko served as a vital and faithful worker in the missionary work for Russians.

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In memory of Earl Poysti's ministry, Russian Christian Radio plans to publish his sermons in print form in Russian. To partner with RCR in providing this great ministry resource, send your gifts to Russian Christian Radio, PO Box 1667, Estes Park, CO 80517 or visit our website at [www.rcr.ru/eng](http://www.rcr.ru/eng) to make donations online.



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The Poysti family lived in Europe from the mid-1950s to the early 1980s as they served the Slavic people, working with various other ministries to produce radio programs. They and their ten children lived in such diverse places as Germany, Monte Carlo (Monaco), Austria, and Sweden in Europe, as well as New Jersey and Colorado in the United States.

During the 1960s, Earl produced a program for youth known as "Word of Life" which was broadcast over shortwave and which had a great impact on many young people living through the repression of the Soviet Union. The simplicity and clarity of his programs helped many to understand God's word and come to faith in Christ. Many people reported how they repented right where they were as they listened to the radio programs.

The ministry in Moscow began in 1991 and has continued to the present. Today, known as Russian Christian Radio, the ministry has expanded to include the publication of a magazine designed especially for prisoners, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, as well as working with former prisoners, alcoholics and drug addicts through rehabilitation centers in various parts of the country. These Christian "liberation" centers were named in honor of Earl's wife Pirkko upon her death in May 1994.

After Pirkko's death, Earl married Natalia Makarenko (from Kazakhstan) in October 1995. Natasha was a significant help in his ministry of evangelism through radio and other means and continues to serve the Lord with RCR after his death. Earl Poysti always maintained a non-denominational approach to ministry and never aligned himself with just one particular group of the Christian faith. As Earl pointed out, "My dad was always a great example of a committed and faithful servant of God. The spirit of denominationalism was foreign to

him, as he firmly believed that it did not matter how one referred to himself as long as he was born again by God. That became my conviction too, and for that reason I do not pay special attention to the denominational name that someone carries around. I rejoice in being able to fellowship with anyone and everyone that loves God and has had a personal encounter with Him."

## Ready to Rise Up and Work for the Lord

(Natalia Poysti)

Earl's entire life was very active and brilliant, but that does not mean it was easy. His full commitment to the Lord and fervent ministry produced much fruit for the kingdom of God. His mind was sharp, as was his memory, to the very end and he was ready to get up and work for the Lord until his last day. Earl went to his eternal home in full peace and rest, without pain or suffering, having lived his last days at home surrounded by his family and loved ones.

The Lord wonderfully blessed our lives together, as we lived in agreement with one another and were united in spirit for the 14 ½ years of our lives together. Even in spite of the difference between our ages, our different cultures in which we grew up and our family situation, we experienced much blessing. Our marriage immediately raised questions, as some people supported us, while others did not understand us or judged us. Nonetheless, it was of God and he gave us complete peace in our hearts.

The first five years of our marriage, Earl was especially active and we traveled a lot together as he preached the Gospel. He was so committed to the ministry that it was even a bit uncomfortable for me to

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 My email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please send me a copy of your monthly prayer bulletin "Frontline"  
 Yes, I want to put action to my faith by praying for and helping materially in the following area(s):  
 Where needed most in the mission: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Projects: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

ask when we would have a vacation to rest! However, by faith, the Lord gave us more than we asked for, as friends helped us to have wonderful vacations.

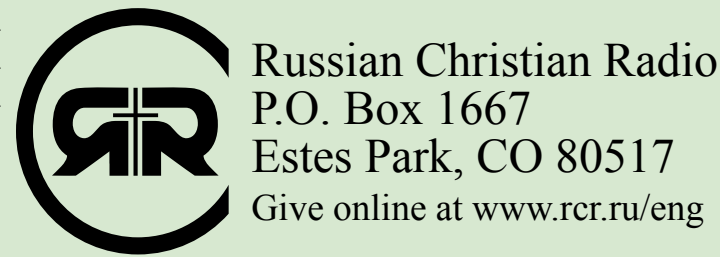
For the last ten years or so, we spent most of our time in our comfortable Colorado home, as Earl was no longer able to travel due to his stroke which occurred in 1999. At the same time, our ministry was able to continue as one guest after another would come to visit. We also studied the scriptures with various Russian scientists, talked and prayed with many people on the phone and prepared various articles for publication, among other things. In addition, Earl had a large family, for which he constantly cared and prayed over.

I, like many, recognized the name of Earl Poysti from my childhood, as well as his distinctive radio voice. My father would gather us children around our big radio receiver and we would listen to the songs and sermons with awe, as they deeply touched our souls with the message of salvation. Of course, I never dreamed that one day I would become Earl's wife and his helper in ministry. Indeed, it has been a great privilege for me, given to me by the Lord, to be with such a man as Earl Poysti – a man of faith, wise and strong in the preaching of the word of God, intelligent and loving. Now that he



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## Memories of my Dad

(John Poysti)

My father's death at the age of 89 was not a tragedy. He lived a full, long life and he passed away peacefully and without pain. But his death would be a tragedy for me, if my father's life did not leave me with something to learn from and to cherish as I continue through my life.

Dad was a man of extremes. Perhaps that is why he liked bathing in a Finnish sauna. First he would sit in that extreme heat and beat himself with birch branches, and then he would love to jump into icy water, preferably in a frozen lake where he had chopped a hole in it. Dad never did anything halfway – he always pushed the limits and went for the extremes. He didn't just father a family; he fathered an entire tribe. He didn't just become a missionary; he became a roving nomad and dragged our large family with him around the world. Over the years, I think I have lived in 9 different countries.

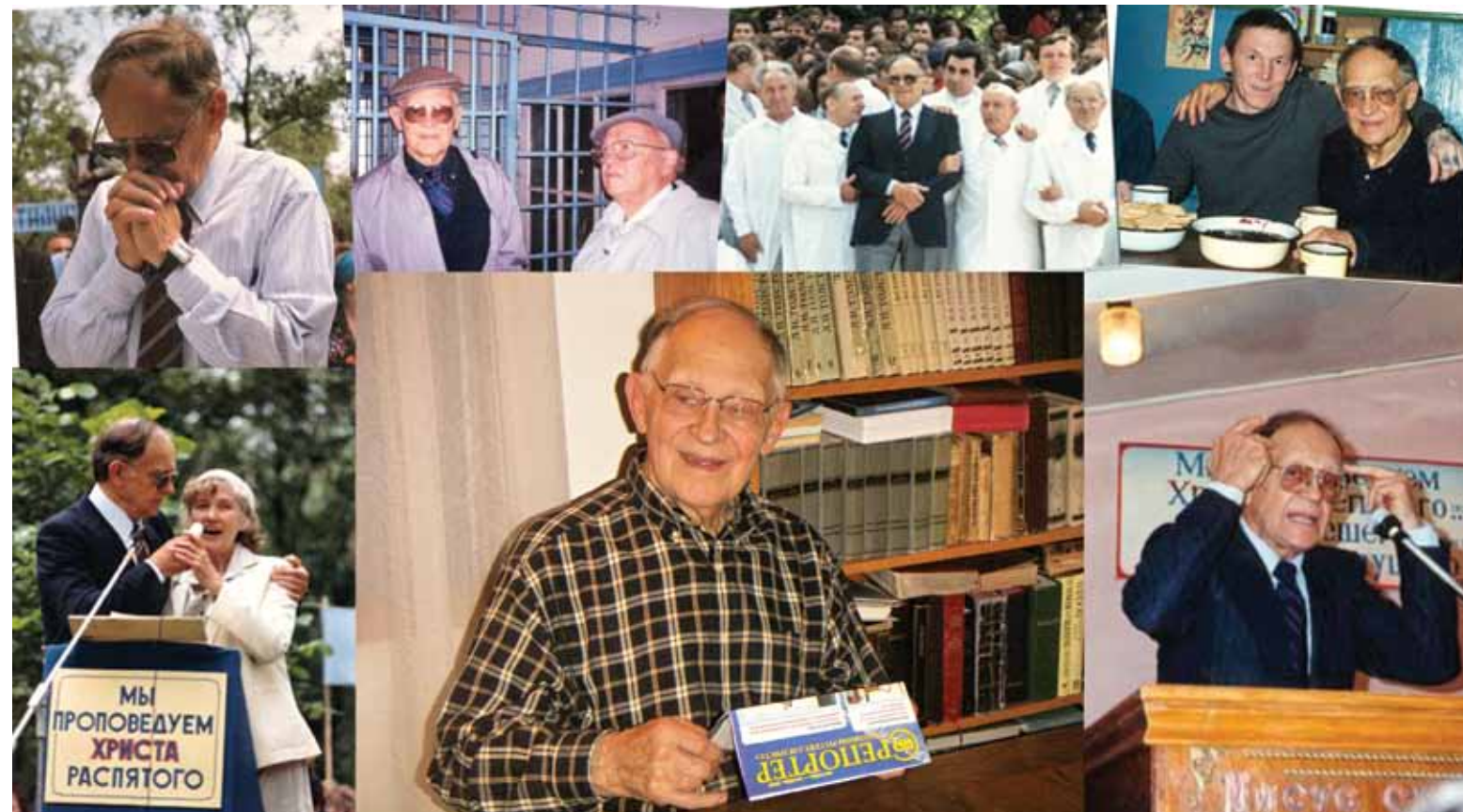
Dad was extreme in his physical habits and when he took up biking, he did it to the maximum. In his mid 70s he was still biking up the Rocky Mountains to altitudes of over 3700 meters (12,183 feet). He also covered the extremes in his religious life – he was ordained not only as a Pentecostal, but as a Baptist – just in case. You can never be too safe. It seems as if Dad was always searching for something more. Maybe he didn't always achieve it with his extreme outlook on life, but he didn't want to settle for "good enough". He liked to say, "If it's good enough, it isn't good enough." That attitude was sometimes carried to the extreme, but there might be something for all of us to learn from my Dad in that regard. I wish he had learned to relax more. But he left us a legacy that certainly wasn't one of apathy and laziness.

One of my earliest memories of Dad was when we lived near the shore in New Jersey. These were my father's bodybuilding years and he was in very good shape. One day we went to the beach together and I re-

member how, together with a few of my siblings, we tried to wrestle my father down into the sand. But as hard as we tried, we couldn't get him down. I remember thinking, "what a strong father I have!" But Dad showed strength in other areas: strength of conviction, strength of perseverance, strength of faith, strength of responsibility. I could say that his was a stubborn strength, but I think I would rather have a strength born of stubbornness than a weakness born of apathy. Dad was strong and anything but apathetic, and I think we can all learn from that.

Although Dad was very conservative in most areas of life, in many ways he lived on the cutting edge; he was a pioneer. He was a pioneer in the ideas and vision he developed in the radio ministry. He was also at the forefront in using the latest technology in his work and ministry. Before most even realized the potential opportunities of new ideas or new technology, Dad was already putting them to good use. In the world of Christian broadcasting, my father was always at the forefront both technologically and also in the style and variety of the programming he produced. He was recognized by his peers as the one to emulate. But for us, he was just our Dad, who would often frustrate us with his long sermons during our family devotions. But I have to admit that when I went to Bible school, I found out that I already knew most of what they tried to teach me. I had heard it all before during those years of family devotions.

I could learn from Dad to be aware of opportunities and turn them into useful reality; to think creatively and always look for new solutions; to go for the



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best and not settle merely for the good. Dad couldn't stand to be bored or to be boring. I like that. I can also learn from his single-minded love for God's Word; that it is always worth listening to, even when we thought it went on too long.

Dad often told the story of his struggle with extreme doubt when he was in his early 20s. He was ready to throw away his faith and went through a period of deep struggle and depression. He eventually came out of it, but that experience plagued and even formed his life from then on. In his public statements and in the family, my Dad always spoke with strong conviction and didn't tolerate much discussion. This is the way it is; this is the truth – end of story. And very often, he was very convincing.

Ironically, the main focus of his ministry to the Russian people was assurance of salvation. "You can know that you are safe and secure in your relationship with God. You can have assurance because of what Jesus did for you, rather than because of what you have done or not done." But deep inside, my father struggled with doubts about the very message of assurance that he so confidently proclaimed. And in the last months of his life, these doubts came out in conversation with various people, including myself. How could this be? The truth is that Dad was the voice, not the truth; he was the messenger, not the message. And while his confidence level varied from day to day, in the end he was faithful in proclaiming what he believed to be true: that Jesus Christ is our only hope and we can rest in that truth. Dad fought his doubts, but he fought through his doubts and landed on the side of hope. I

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