

Christmas: Time to Proclaim the Good News!

by Victor P. Akhterov

Christmas is the best time to evangelize in Russia and Ukraine.

“I came to church for the Christmas concert that you talked about in your programs,” said Veronica from St. Petersburg. “I was amazed at the sincerity of the people who were singing. They obviously believed that Jesus was really the son of God, that He was their Savior.”

Veronica is a Christian today because she became familiar with Christ-centered Christianity through FEBC, and was then brave enough to come to church.

You can help us tell the story of Christmas to 10,000,000 Russians and Ukrainians.

Evangelical churches are being ostracized and marginalized by the Russian government. This year, several churches were closed, church buildings demolished. Hundreds of Christians were fined and interrogated. There were numerous negative publications and TV programs about Jesus followers in the government-controlled media.

All this creates fear and uneasiness among the people of Russia in regard to evangelicals. We at FEBC Russia do all we can to help people understand that biblical Christianity is what they need to live a vibrant Christian life.

This Christmas season, we'll promote dozens of church events throughout Russia to our listeners.

While most Russians celebrate Christmas on January 7, more Ukrainians are switching to December 25. For us, the FEBC Christmas season is a month-long opportunity to inspire people to visit a church on Christmas.

Pastor Viktor from Eastern Ukraine says, “Most of the new members in our church came in for the first time during the last year's Christmas celebration. We held one concert outside, and then one in church. Both were promoted by FEBC radio, and we are grateful for that.”

According to recent research, 16 percent of the people who live in Eastern Ukraine listen to FEBC broadcasts! That's more than



From Vladivostok in the East to Donetsk in the West, millions will hear the Good News.

250,000 people, wounded by the war, and open to hearing the Good News.

We ask you to pray for all those who hear the call from God to respond in faith, so this Christmas may be merry for them as well.

Dr. Victor P. Akhterov
is leading FEBC's ministry in
Russia and Ukraine



Victor P. Akhterov:

“As a ministry, we work for the Church. Our goal is to inspire people to follow Christ and be connected to a local church. 10 million unchurched listeners to be reached this Christmas!”

Four Questions:



Irina Korolenko

Morning show broadcaster, FEBC-Ukraine

Listener interaction is important to you. How do you prepare for this response?

We have 7 FM stations and broadcast our programs online as well. There are millions of potential listeners. And some programs will have thousands of views immediately after being aired online in addition to our radio broadcast.

People call in, text, and respond over social media. The hosts communicate with people during and after their programs and we have experienced follow-up counselors who call or write back to listeners who need more extensive help and to ensure that everyone receives the help they need.

One listener said he was suicidal. Our follow-up worker talked with him and ultimately connected him with the pastor of a church in his city so that they could meet and talk, and the listener agreed to try attending the church.

What kind of show do you host?

I co-host a variety breakfast show with Igor. We want people to start off their days on a positive note, so we give them a thought or a quote and talk

with our audience about it throughout the program. They call in or write in through social media to discuss. We want them thinking about things they would never normally consider throughout their days.

Our main goal is to build a connection with our listeners. We give out prizes and gifts and give an open invitation for anyone to come by the studio. We want listeners to feel like they are family.

How did you feel when your own family first began attending an evangelical church?

I was going to university in Kiev when I heard that my mother and my sister had been going to a Christian church. I was 17 at the time. I was a little worried, so I came home during my break to see what kind of church it was.

I went to church with them that Sunday and saw that it was okay. It wasn't weird. A month later I was already plugged into the church. It was what I was looking for without knowing it.

What is one thing you would like for your listeners to try?

To attend a local church. People have many preconceptions about the evangelical church, so we first get them comfortable with us. We give them a glimpse of our lives through the broadcasts.

They get to see what having a loving community around you is like. How we support each other and live life together. I also post videos from my church services so that people can see what they are really like.

The full version of this interview, other articles with additional pictures and videos are found here:

www.febceurasia.org



Rev. Igor Popov

RAISING A CHILD WITH CHALLENGES

“I listened to your program about raising children with special needs, and I was so inspired! It feels like no one understands those of us who are struggling every day with our little ones who have challenges. I was listening to Igor and saying out loud – yes, yes, that’s how I feel! I was amazed that it was a group of evangelical Christians who were sharing their experiences. I became a regular listener since that day, and was so amazed when **you responded personally to my comments and reached out to me.** I don’t think anyone ever prayed for me before your counselors did.”

- Oksana from Belgorod, Russia

WOUNDED BY THE WAR

“My wife was killed during the war here in East Ukraine during the military conflict. That was five years ago. When you began talking about unhealed wounds of the soul, I knew that you were talking about me. I am raising my son alone, and I cannot even think about the passing of my wife without tears and anger. When I wrote to you, you responded. That hour-and-a-half conversation changed my heart. **I am so grateful that you took the time to talk to me.** I never talked about this with anyone in the past five years—not about my feelings. Thank you for praying for me. I feel like God, if He exists, lifted a huge stone of pain from my soul...I don’t know how else to describe it.”

- Sergey from Slavyansk, Ukraine

Listener Responses

DISCOVERING GRACE

“I became a Christian not long ago, and was always trying to be a good girl to make sure that God loved me. I was listening to your program on Galatians, and I was shocked and inspired at the same time...for the first time **I realized that God loves me just because.** He loved me first, He opened His arms for me before I knew that He existed! I think I carried a lot of my relationships with my parents into a relationship with God, just trying to earn His love. Thank you for the message of grace! I am growing as a Christian through your broadcasts.”

- Veronika from Central Russia



PRISONER'S WIFE

“My husband is a prisoner. He committed a crime, but I still love him. I thought that no one would ever understand what it is like to be a wife of someone who is in prison, until I heard your program. **You were so real, so honest, so compassionate!** As I listened to the stories of other women like me, I was amazed that God can be a part of our lives. I worry about my husband, and sometimes I hate him for what he did to me, and I cry for him, and write him letters. But until now I never prayed for him! I don't know if I am praying properly, but I talk to God about him now, and it is an amazing feeling...”

- Natalia from Pskov



ATHEIST – AGNOSTIC – BELIEVER

“I began listening to your programs in the beginning of this year, when I was a complete atheist. I am a professional, life is good when it comes to money and my job, but I always felt like life was about more than that. After listening to you for several months, I could not call myself an atheist. **I began thinking about God every day.** Is it really possible to believe in God in the 21st Century? For someone like me, age 32? Recently, I began praying, just by myself, and those are the best times of my day now.”

- Alexandr from Ukraine



GRATEFUL FOR SON'S SALVATION

“When I gave my life to Christ, I continued listening to FEBC, and my number one prayer need before God was the salvation of my teenage son, **Zakhar**. I called in and asked you to

pray for him on several occasions, and you reached out in return and talked to me. God protected my son from drugs when his ‘friends’ pushed it on him. Step by step, God was drawing my son to Himself. It was a wonderful day when my son told me, **‘I think I also believe those radio people.’**

I am writing this letter to thank you. I am home alone, because my son is part of a missionary trip with our church here in Siberia. How can I thank you, friends?”

- Natalia from Siberia

Among the thousands of responses that we receive, there is a lot of pain, joy, and newborn hope.

POWER OF TESTIMONY

“I was listening to the program about books, because I love to read. It was a program where a teenager, Dasha, was interviewed. **I am not a religious person myself, but I could not hold back my tears listening to Dasha telling everyone about how God was a part of her life.** I was listening with a pen in my hand, recording the names of the books that you recommended, and with tears in my eyes. I still don't know what was happening to me, but it was a great feeling. I had to write to you about it.”

- Tatyana, 27

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE

If you'd like to help us touch the lives of 10 million listeners in Russia and Ukraine this Christmas, please contribute to account **#680**.

PROJECTS, NEWS, AND PRAYER NEEDS:

PRAY FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS IN RUSSIA

Please pray for those Christians who received fines and were interrogated throughout Russia this summer, particularly in the southern areas of the country. The usual reason is for small groups gathering in people's homes. Pray for God's protection and strength.

EVANGELIZING FAMILIES OF PRISONERS IN RUSSIA

"I know that only Jesus can truly change the life of someone who spent years in a Russian prison," says Natalia, and that's why I am so glad that FEBC allows me to reach these people through radio."

Natalia Pronina has many years of experience working with prisoners, former prisoners, and their families. Millions of Russian people like these are often overlooked.



DAILY PRAYER CALENDAR: FEBCEURASIA.ORG

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KIEV MEDIA EVANGELISM CENTER

Many of you have responded in support of FEBC-Ukraine's Kiev Media Evangelism Center project - thank you! We are close to our goal of purchasing a space that will serve as a hub for the media ministry in Ukraine as well as Russia.

Please pray that God would provide the needed resources.



FEBC STATIONS IN EASTERN UKRAINE

As Ukraine is going through this testing period, FEBC is bringing the Good News to the most difficult areas in Eastern Ukraine, where the killing continues.

We operate several stations that broadcast to the areas that suffered most in the war. People are responding from both sides of the conflict - rebel-controlled, and government-controlled cities and towns. Thousands of lives have been lost to the fighting and lawlessness.

More than a thousand Ukrainian soldiers have taken their own lives during this conflict.

FEBC is serving the suffering people of Ukraine not only through radio, with more than 250,000 actual listeners, but also by visiting soldiers and refugees, distributing radios and help to those in need, and helping people connect to local churches where possible.

Currently, we are working with hundreds of suffering people one-on-one, and hundreds of thousands are listening throughout Ukraine. Please support them in prayer.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE

If you'd like to support FEBC's ministry in Ukraine, please contribute to account **#68065**.