



# European Christian Radio

1993 - 2018

25 Years Faithfully Broadcasting the Good News!

2018 YEAR-END NEWSLETTER

*We Wish You A Merry Christmas  
Celebrating God's love gift to the World...Jesus!*

## Dear Friends and Partners,

We are quickly coming to the end of another year. The other day I heard Christmas songs playing on the radio and I was reminded of the great gift God gave us in sending his Son to the earth so that we could be reconciled to Him and one day, hopefully soon, we will live with our Father, God. Just to be called His friend excites and encourages me to share this Good News with others at home and around the world. That's why it is so essential that our Christian radio work through our ongoing financial support of Tartu Family Radio (Pereraadio) continues.

**Celebrating 25 Years...**On August 18<sup>th</sup> we celebrated 25 years of God's faithfulness. Through obedience to God's call, He provided the miracles of finances, talents and resources from various groups and individuals that were necessary to build a Christian radio ministry in Estonia. Today it consists of 7 FM stations and one 200 kW AM station. These powerful broadcasting tools allow our partners in ministry, Tartu Family Radio (TFR), to reach millions of listeners throughout Estonia, Eastern Europe, and into strategic parts of Russia; St. Petersburg and Moscow. Their Christian radio programs continue to broadcast 24 hours, 7 days a week. A recent listener preference poll taken by the Estonian Government ranks Tartu Family Radio as the number one listened to station in all of Estonia. Praise the Lord! As God so leads and provides, we are committed to continue this amazing journey that will only end when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ returns to reign throughout eternity!!! Thank you for your support through prayer and finances over the past 25 years!

## Current updates and where do we go from here?

For seventeen of the past twenty-five years we witnessed the leading of the Lord through miracles and answers to prayers as we **"Built It"**. We continue now with needing the same commitment and passion to **"Support It"**. Your financial support touches all aspects of TFR. It affirms and encourages TFR's managers, Paavo and Mare Pihlak, their dedicated staff, and scores of volunteers, in addition to addressing the needs of equipment and facilities located across Estonia.

TFR, continues to increase its presence throughout the region with Christian programs and music using social media contacts, and a dynamic website. Listener support is increasing and opportunities

for cost savings are continually evaluated and implemented. In Narva, where all of the Russian programming is produced, their staff has recently moved into a newly renovated studio and is sharing its studio space with the radio ministry of "Light in The East". In TFR's recent appeal for support from their listeners, \$12,000 was raised to meet the \$12,000 annual fee for license renewals – giving that was beyond their usual listener support!

Our own efforts to increase financial support to TFR have included appeals through Newsletters, mailings and appeals at our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. We have also posted information on our new website, [ECR25.com](http://ECR25.com), which offers the convenience of contributing on-line through a secure portal.

## Financial Challenges lay ahead.

We are faced with difficult challenges as we approach the new year and beyond. Our commitment **"To Support It"** is only realized as contributions come in from friends and supporters like you. We continue to be good stewards of what is given and entrusted to us.

This past summer, electrical rates in Estonia have soared placing an unanticipated financial strain on the operations of AM radio transmissions into Russia. In April, one of our programming partners, Voice of Hope, had to cancel their paid programming due to financial constraints. This reduced the AM station's revenues by \$6,000 annually. We have been informed by Trans World Radio, another paying partner, that due to lost sponsorships some of their air time programs will be reduced effective January 1, 2019. This will decrease revenues by \$12,500 annually, impacting overall operations of both our AM and FM stations. These financial changes make it necessary for TFR to make some difficult staff, salary, and programming adjustments next year.

Some adjustments have been made to the AM station broadcasting because of high electrical costs. The AM station is designed and capable of operating at 200,000 watts of power, however, AM transmissions into Russia run at full power only 20% of the time, mainly at night. Broadcasting continues on a 24/7 basis, however, 80% percent of the time they are running at only 50% of capacity due to air time expenses. The negative affect is that at reduced power levels, the potential listening audience is dramatically reduced. The hard truth is, if funding is not received to cover

operating expenses, it will most likely become necessary to take AM broadcasting off the air for a portion of the day. A situation referred to as “going dark” which is reflective of the “one” who would certainly delight in such a situation.

Over the years, monthly support from European Christian Radio to Tartu Family Radio has gradually decreased and is now only 50% of our initial commitment. Our situation is one of a declining donor base with a corresponding decline in monthly giving. As a reminder, all the contributions given to ECR are given to TFR less expenses for administration fees; mailings, bank fees, etc. We are a volunteer organization and do not employ any paid staff.

**Bad news/Good news:** We continue to receive reports that Christian radio licenses for broadcasting within Russia are being denied by the Russian government. In addition, regulations are tightening on the use of satellite radio and information shared through the Internet. The good news is that these circumstances make broadcasting the Gospel from our AM station in Estonia, into Russia, a more viable and unique alternative for other prospective ministries.

God has blessed Pereraadio with committed and qualified staff and volunteers along with the equipment and the facilities to reach the lost and to encourage believers, and they are doing a fantastic job! Through your prayers and financial support, God continues to give us opportunities to make an eternal difference in building His Kingdom to bring Glory to His name in that part of the world.

The need for your prayer and financial support is great and it is immediate! Please join with us in continuing to ensure that the Good News of Jesus Christ is spread throughout Estonia and into Russia and many of its bordering countries.

**At this Christmas season, may God bless you, your family and your generosity!**

**James M. Carlson, MD**  
**President/Founder**

**Introducing our newest ECR Board Member - Piret Leonetti, PHD**

Piret was born in Estonia in 1976. She experienced first-hand the oppressive life of Soviet occupation in her country, and the freedom and independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union. She has personal experience and testimony of ECR's radio work and the impact it has had on families throughout Estonia. Piret is married and lives in Modesto, CA and recently received her PHD in Education. Here is her story;



*I grew up memorizing saying's from Lenin's propaganda and wore the mandatory red scarf, a neckerchief worn by the Young Pioneers of several Soviet countries during the socialist ("communist") era. Religious freedom did not exist. We were not allowed to worship Jesus freely in public. The communists aimed to break the power of all religious institutions and eventually replace religious belief*

*with atheism. "Science" was presented in the media and in academia to counter "religious superstition".*

*Estonia has a long history of community singing. Most people don't think about singing when thinking about revolutions. But in Estonia, songs, both religious old hymns and cultural songs were the weapon of choice. Between 1987 and 1991 Estonians united in singing those ancestral songs at various times and places throughout the country desiring to end decades of Soviet occupation.*

*I will always remember the silent prayer and worship meetings in late 1980's that took place at my church, Oleviste Baptist Church in Old Town Tallinn. Many young people asked for special permission to go and spend the night at the church. Our goal was to pray for Estonia's freedom from the Soviets and for God to provide miracles to make it happen! We felt we were on the verge of an historic breakthrough. Shortly after, the Berlin Wall was gone and Eastern and Northern Europe countries were starting to see changes in both politics and economics. The independence of the Republic of Estonia was re-established on August 20, 1991 and the Soviet Union itself recognized the independence of Estonia on September 6, 1991. Borders were open and many missionaries were allowed to come and bring Bibles and preach the gospel.*

*My pastors from Oleviste Church, Pastors Siim, Rein and Ulo, shared with the congregation the exciting news that a group from the USA will be delivering Bibles in Estonia. This was a blessing for so many, as people did not own their own personal copy of God's Word! We all prayed asking for safety for this team. Later we heard that Dr. Carlson and his wife, Laurel, who were members of the original group handing out Bibles in Estonia, felt called to establish a Christian radio station in Oleviste Church and broadcast from its steeple. I personally knew how challenging and humanly impossible it was to gain access to the church's steeple. You see, my aunt 's husband was part of the old Soviet Union's Secret Service. He was KBG's highest ranking officer in Estonia and they had stationed their headquarters for years at our church and used to broadcast propaganda from its steeple. In 1993 God answered our prayers and provided a miracle. Dr. Carlson and his team from Modesto returned and built the first Christian radio station in Estonia, and Tartu Family Christian Radio – Pereraadio, was born and on the air from Oleviste Church's steeple! For years, people were talking about this miracle with such joy and excitement! I became a Sunday school teacher the same week with the help from the missionaries from Canada, who had brought in curricula and flannel boards for bible stories. I was able to be part of the new era, where sharing God's word felt like I had won a million!*

**A Special Thanks...** to Modesto Covenant Church and staff for graciously hosting our ECR 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration! How nice it was to see fellow team members that served together over 20 years ago. It is such a blessing to have great church partnerships as an integral part of the radio outreach ministry that reaches over 60 million potential listeners in Estonia, and throughout Eastern Europe and Russia each day. Thank you!

**Reminder... you can donate online at**  
**[www.ecr25.com](http://www.ecr25.com)**