

# On Air: Luda Kinok

By Kelly Bevill



**F**ive-year-old Luda Kinok sat on the floor playing with her dolls. Across the room, her uncle adjusted the dial on the family's only radio. After delicately tuning the radio's knob he landed on a station Kinok didn't recognize.

"What language is that?" Kinok asked in Russian.

"It's English," her uncle replied. "But don't tell anybody I'm listening to it. It's coming from America."

As they listened, the announcer's voice suddenly changed from English to Russian ...

For almost 50 years, Alaska-based Christian radio station KICY has been broadcasting into Russia. Today, it is Kinok's voice that can be heard over KICY's airwaves, carrying messages of Jesus' love to her native people.

Kinok, 31, grew up in Sireniki, an Eskimo village of less than 500 people separated from Alaska by the Bering Strait. Less than 20 years ago the only access her people had to the gospel was through television and radio programming. That radio broadcast was her first introduction to Christ. Years later, as a teenager watching a Christian television broadcast, she experienced life change.

"The host of the program was using Bible language like 'redemption' and 'salvation,'" Kinok says. "Even though I had never heard these words, I was able to understand the meaning of them."

Soon after, she committed her life to Christ and prayed that God would show her at least one person in the village who knew about Jesus.

## The comic book

A few weeks later, one of her classmates brought a comic book to

school depicting the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Kinok asked her classmate if she could borrow the book, but her classmate said Kinok would have to ask her mom.

"I was afraid, but I had a hunger in my heart," Kinok recalls.

She went to her classmate's house and asked the mother if she could borrow the book.

"I thought she was going to punch me. But instead she hugged me real hard and started crying."

Kinok finished her last year of high school, and during the summer months she and her friend's mother met every night to read and discuss the comic book. Over time, others joined them and a burgeoning church found its footing.

"After three months we had more than 100 people reading and studying the comic book," Kinok says.

A few months later, a missionary from a nearby town heard about the meetings and sent a helper missionary to assist the group and give them Bibles.

## Spread the gospel

Soon after, the 19-year-old Kinok ventured to a Chukchi village with another missionary in an effort to evangelize the region. They learned fast that none of the 200 people in the village had heard the gospel.

Because the USSR had recently collapsed, the people in the village were desperate and violent. Bullet holes pockmarked the walls of some houses. One night a group of drunken men came to Kinok's house and entered it. She began boldly preaching about love and forgiveness, and to the dismay of the other men, one of the men fell on his knees in conviction.

The following Sunday the man started coming to the church and told Kinok the boldness she had in her time of helplessness broke his anger and lust. Every night after that — without Kinok knowing — the man stood outside her house so no one would bother her. Eventually he would become the pastor of the church in the village.

Kinok saw other breakthroughs that fortified her faith. The principal of the local high school let her use a classroom for meetings even though he said he didn't expect anyone to show up. Thirty-two people attended the first meeting.

Kinok spent the next five years ministering in area villages. She faced constant challenges, persecution and physical attacks, never wavering in her calling to share Christ. But in 2006 a phone call would point her in a new direction in fulfilling that mission.

## Airwaves

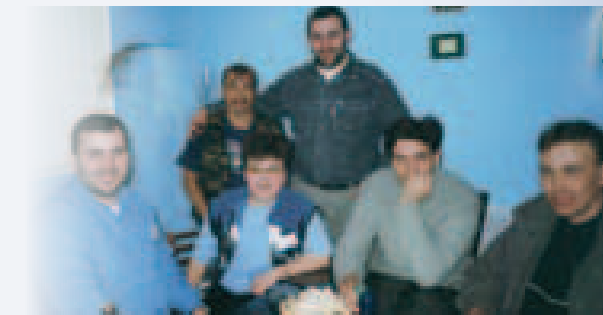
A representative from KICY — founded in 1960 and located in Nome, Alaska — called Kinok's pastor seeking someone who would volunteer as the Russian broadcaster for the station.

At first Kinok balked at the offer because she thought she lacked the necessary skills. But later that year she moved to Alaska to begin her broadcasting ministry. Today, she fills five hours of broadcasting on KICY with news, weather and worship music in Russian. Between songs she preaches. She also puts programs on the air that other radio stations and churches send to KICY.

According to the KICY Web site, the station is the only commercial

radio station in the United States licensed by the FCC to broadcast into another country in their language.

Kinok has received abundant feedback from her listeners. She advertises her phone number on the air along with her pastor's phone number so that people in Alaska and Russia can call someone to talk about Jesus. Some of her listeners are reindeer herders in remote camps who listen to her on single channel radios that run on solar power.



*Luda Kinok visits with Russian ministers at a pastors conference in 2004.*

"They send her letters and e-mails," says Henry Reiber, a missionary and pastor of River of Life Assembly of God in Nome where Kinok attends. "Anytime any of them come through this area, they call Luda, and she just opens her house to them."

In a way, she does the same for all of her listeners. Because of her airwaves ministry, the gospel is reaching people who might not otherwise hear it — continuing a vital pathway of evangelism that once touched her own 5-year-old heart. **e**

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