



REPORTER

Reaching Millions For Christ



Testimony of Dmitry Gusev – Pirkko Home Ministry Coordinator

Our God is an amazing God who works extraordinary miracles in the lives of ordinary people. There are many people whose lives have been utterly ruined by drugs. Oftentimes it starts out with a small compromise: a smoked cigarette, a bottle of alcohol, or a one-time use of a recreational drug, just for the sake of the experience. Too often, the end result is a person who is unable to live without drugs, and who must reap the consequences. Dima Gusev is one of those people who has been down that mad path. His life is a living testimony of God's miraculous restoration of that which had been hopelessly and mercilessly destroyed.

I was born into a typical family, in Dedovsk, near Moscow. My mother worked as a pharmacist and my father as an electrician. Mom originally came from a Christian family, but married an unbeliever - my dad. I had been in church throughout my childhood, but it was only superficial. Even though I was a different person depending on whom I was with - family, friends, church - there were no negative tendencies in me that really stood out... until my freshman year in college.

After being accepted into an aviation technical college, step by step I started making decisions that led to my "new" life: cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs. Life seemed like a game.

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However, as I was getting sucked in deeper into a life of drugs, everything started crumbling to pieces.

I started having issues with school, but somehow was able to finish the technical college. I even transferred to an academy, but in a little while schooling just came to a stop. Issues with my family and my girlfriend started to arise. My life began to crack, but I did not understand that. My philosophy was that there was no life apart from drugs. Getting convicted and going to court as a result of stealing with my friends was my first serious warning. At that point it was difficult to hide how serious a problem drugs had become. The judge sentenced my part-

ners to jail, but gave me a probation period. That sobered me, but not for long. My habits got the best of me and eventually I ended up in jail as well. I remember that when I was being taken away to be incarcerated, deep inside I was thankful to the police for stopping my mad lifestyle; glad that my previous senseless life was now over. I was 20 years old, and my character was forming. I soaked in the rogue, "cool" lifestyle and mindset of prison. Jail didn't have too bad an impression on me, and I slowly began to relax. After some time, though, I started realizing the depth of evil that was present in that subculture: the inability to forgive, complete lack of sympathy, the holding of people responsible for every word they said. Conflict between the principles of this rogue lifestyle and of real life started becoming apparent. Behind bars everything was defined in terms of drugs and other goods that were considered valuable. Possession of those things could solve all problems. Romanticism of the tough prison life darkened, and I started yet another search for meaning.

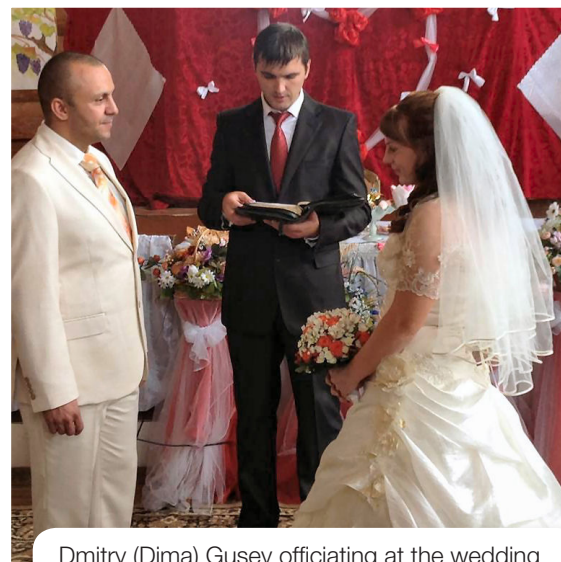
The first person who happened to get close to me at that decisive moment in my life was a man who had lived a life of drugs and rehabilitation. I'm convinced that this was the time when God began to change me. We talked a lot about God and about our lives; we prayed and read the Bible. However, after he was moved to another jail cell, sin returned into my life.

The following event made me realize my weakness. During the time of my incarceration I became physically unaccustomed to drugs and I expected life to be different once I was discharged. Not long before being let out, I was offered drugs about five times in one day, but I rejected them. Later, when I was sitting alone, I realized that if I was offered them one more time I'd give in. That put me into a state of fear. I saw that my hard work of self-improvement could be easily destroyed. It was with this feeling of an inward trap that I came back out into freedom.

My friends greeted me and started making plans. Inside, though, I had a clear understanding that with them all that lay ahead would be drugs, jail, or my grave. I did not want any of those things. Three days after being released I went to a Pirkko Home. I was met by some of my buddies from my drug-filled past, who were now ministers trying to help people like me. After some time I repented, but did not feel much, which discouraged me. When I started reading the Bible, however, I realized that it is an unusual book. I could relate to experiences that were described in it. It started to come alive to me. I began to pray and after a battle inside, God granted me true repentance. That's when everything started to change. My mother repented three months later and we were baptized on the same day. I felt a calling to stay at the Pirkko Home, so I could serve there.

God blessed me with a wonderful team of helpers. We developed an effective program and gained personal experience by helping people. Over the past decade that I've spent working in this ministry, God has used me in wondrous ways. We opened ten new rehabilitation centers, some for women as well as some for men. God granted me a family - Natalia and I have been married for five years and we now have three children: Elisha, 2, and twin girls - Mira and Mila. Besides that, in 2011, the Lord called me to be a pastor in a church in Dedovsk.

The desire of my heart is to serve those who are fallen and abandoned by all; to live out Proverbs 24:11, "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter."

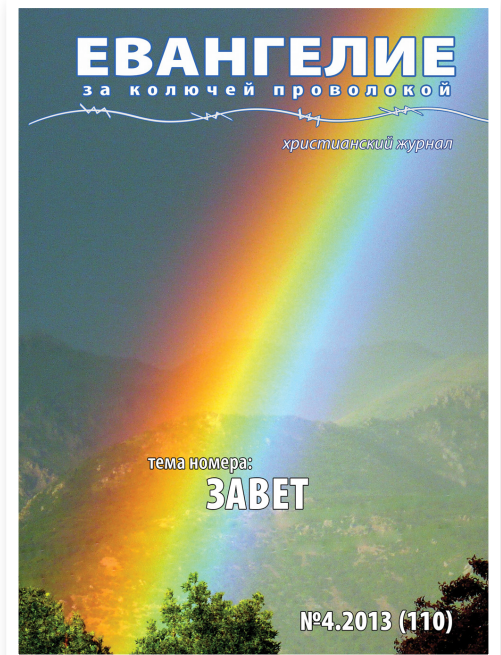


Dmitry (Dima) Gusev officiating at the wedding of Igor and Marina, directors of the men's and women's Pirkko Home in Nikulino.

Next Issue of *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*

"I have made a covenant with my chosen ..." (Psalm 88:4)

"Covenant" is the theme of the next issue of the prison magazine. This word has profound significance in the Bible. We repeatedly read how God establishes a covenant with his people and with certain individuals and seals the covenant between them. The word "covenant" is the key to the whole Bible. If you ask what is the main theme throughout the Bible, we can answer briefly, the Covenant of God. God's Covenant is based on His promises. In the Old Testament, God promised to send a Saviour, and through revelation, prophecy and transformation in the lives of the people of Israel, He prepared them to receive the Messiah. The coming to earth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Messiah, marked the beginning of the New Testament – a covenant of the shed blood of Christ on the cross of Calvary to save sinful mankind. God is faithful to His covenant. Today, he fulfills a covenant by taking care of every person who accepts the Savior Jesus Christ in his heart, and is faithful to Him and His commandments.



Sharing God's Blessings

Every month, amid the daily hustle and bustle of our lives, God moves the hearts of many people to share their blessings with people in need through RCR. Every new year is a new challenge, as RCR is fully supported by donations, but God is faithful and He helps through His people, even in difficult times. In the first few months of this year God blessed us with a few large donations for RCR's ministry, gifts coming from people in the Great Lakes area (\$15,000) and the Southeast US (\$7,500), and from a donor's estate (\$10,000). More recently, someone who loves the ministry of RCR's rehabilitation centers, and knew Earl & Pirkko personally, sent a large sum for starting a new Pirkko Home. And then there are the MANY smaller gifts - indeed, there are hundreds of people from far away Europe and Australia to all over the US who pray for RCR's ministries and contribute (often on a monthly basis).

Every gift and contribution is precious and has some story behind it. Some of these stories we know, and we would like to share one special story with you today, for the glory of God and encouragement of others. It is the story of a couple from Minnesota who generously donated to the prison magazine ministry. What's so astonishing is that they donated the money that was supposed to buy their own wedding cake! Here is what they wrote to us:

There is an episode in Tolstoy's novel, The Resurrection, where the main character, Nekhlyudov, stood with a crowd of people at the prison gates, waiting for the visitation time with prisoners to begin, when the attention of the crowd was diverted to a thoroughbred black horse pulling a fancy carriage. Inside was a young man (a student) and a lady wearing a veil. The man carried a large bundle. He came up to Nekhlyudov and asked him if and how he could give alms – rolls of bread, which he had brought. "This is the request of the bride, my fiancée. Her parents advised us to take it to the prisoners"

We can't literally bring anything to the prisoners, but we decided to give up our wedding cake, and to transfer the cost of the wedding cake (about \$300) to the magazine, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, which is distributed among inmates in prisons and labor camps.

"I was in prison and you came to Me ..." (Matt. 25:36).

Yours in Christ, the bride and groom, Valentin and Tatiana

May God bless everyone who makes this ministry possible - often at very high cost! Your gifts please the Lord and touch our hearts. May God specially bless You!

Testimony of Evgenia Yurkina

“God Protected Me & Kept Me For Himself”

Hello, my name is Evgenia, and I'm 29 years old. I was born and lived in Dedovsk, one of the suburbs of Moscow. My parents loved me very much, but were very strict, so I wanted to get out from under their care as quickly as possible. When I was 15, I met my future husband. At that time, I didn't know that he was using some drugs. But when I saw what he was doing, I also wanted to try them, which drew me into a life of drugs and discos every Saturday. Then heroin came powerfully into my life. Right from the first time I tried it (when I was only 16), I liked it and started to use it, but I never got into the “system” to get it regularly. I gave birth to a daughter at age 21 and afterwards drugs came more persistently into my life and I began to use them regularly. Ironically, in drug treatment clinics I never lied, always hoping for their strength, and always believing in the dream that maybe tomorrow things would be different, and that our family would have our own home with our own little garden and I'd be the happiest woman in the world. But, alas, drugs BROKE my family, and my husband divorced me. In 2006, I was imprisoned for 2 months. The Lord saved me from having to serve a long sentence, of up to five years. After prison, I took courses teaching me how to be a manicurist and that became my profession. At age 24, I met a man and fell in love, which led to giving birth to a second daughter. Together the two of us also used drugs and there were several overdoses. I didn't realize it then, but now I understand and I am grateful to God for the fact that He protected me and kept me for Himself.

Then came a turning point in my life, I seriously had to make a choice: rehab center or prison or death. In 2009, I decided to go to a rehabilitation center in Vyshny Volochyok (Nikulino Pirkko Home). I passed the whole course (eight months of rehabilitation)! I thought I had done it – that I had succeeded. But then I went my own way and my pride put “me” in front of God and I veered off track. I stumbled and fell without God in my life - and as Matthew 12:45 describes, it was as though the evil spirit that left me during rehab came back with seven more evil spirits, who moved in and twisted me - and this last was worse than the first. I ended up in intensive care in the hospital, and worse, the devil tore me to pieces, and was anxious to take possession of my very soul. Death was no longer breathing down my back, instead it was looking at me face-to-face! Thank God, that at this point it all became clear to me, and I realized that I needed to return to the Nikulino Pirkko Home, where I repented.

I stayed at Nikulino for a year to grow in my faith, and I believe that now the will of my Heavenly Father is for me to help in the Pirkko Home ministry. I heard the call and I wish to do His will. My God is the God of love and order. Jesus reconciled me with my daughter and with my parents. The church has forgiven me and now I am a full member of the Body of Christ.



With God I found happiness
 With God, I found peace
 With God, life is beautiful!
 I thank You for everything,
 I truly love You, God!

