

REPORTER

Millions of Russians for Christ



The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire **Expanding the Magazine Ministry**

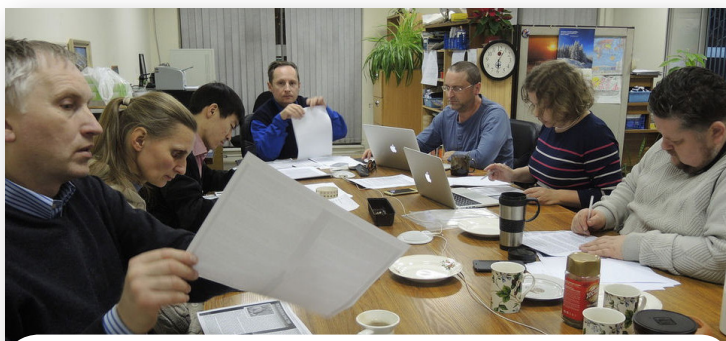
“Blessings,” “The Narrow Gate,” “Liberation,” “Who is My Neighbor?” “Guilt,” “Family,” “Heroes of Faith,” “What’s Next After This Life?” “The Fear of the Lord” – these are just a few of the topics covered by *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* magazine for prisoners, which we have been publishing for 22 years.

Our goal is to help our readers understand what is happening to them and why, and most importantly, to show solutions that God offers in the Bible. In these crowded places of confinement there is no shortage of “expert teachers and psychologists” among the prisoners, but, unfortunately, their effectiveness is very low. All these wounded, suffering people need the life-giving Word of Christ and not merely human advice. As the Word of the Gospel completely transformed us, today we

witness how this same Word of God works in the hearts of the prisoners. “Predators” who are cut off from society, become “sheep” of Christ’s flock, and begin to appreciate the words of the Good Shepherd.

Over the past 22 years we have published 130 issues of this magazine, with a total circulation of 1 million copies! The magazine has penetrated almost every correctional institution in Russia; there are now about 700 of them. Every prison minister knows about this magazine and has held it in his hands. And now, anyone can subscribe to it through the Russian Post mail order catalog, which is available at any Post Office branch in Russia.

We are grateful to the Lord for His calling and His help in this ministry and we are thankful to everyone who helps with prayers and support. (continued)



The Editorial Committee in the RCR Moscow office reviews the magazine before it is published.



Expanding the Magazine Ministry...

In the last few years, a new type of partner ministry has emerged – working with prison ministry centers that correspond with prisoners and also distribute *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* magazines in prisons.

- The first distributor of the magazine was Boris Bukhtoyarov, a former KGB military man (in Khabarovsk). In 1993, he organized regular correspondence with a large number of prisoners and we still send him a large package of each issue of the magazine, which he then sends to prisons in Eastern Siberia and the Far East of Russia, which contain about 170,000 prisoners. He also visits many prisoners. His work is very helpful to us, so we can give more attention to the individuals that prison ministers do not reach.
- A correspondence center for *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* magazine was organized up North in the Republic of Komi by a small church pastored by Vyacheslav Kozlov, who is also the head of our first “Pirkko Home” in Emva, Komi. They correspond with prisoners due to the restrictions on visiting prisons in the North.

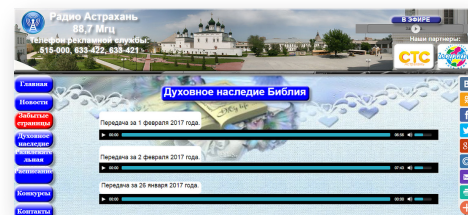


- We have recently begun working with a passionate young prison minister, Alexander Gochweiss, in the city of Novosibirsk, Siberia. Despite many prison prohibitions, he was unexpectedly given a signed contract for 2017, allowing him to visit correctional facilities throughout the region. Local churches have agreed to financially support him in his daily prison ministry work. He has a great need for our magazines and other spiritual literature for distribution to the prisoners.

We are looking for a means to transport Christian literature from our Moscow office to these regional centers to help them work with prisoners. We ask you to pray with us for the development of more such centers to help the *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* reach as many prisoners as possible. - Alexander Zakharov, Executive Director, RCR in Russia

RCR Radio Programs in Astrakhan In our Reporter №3, 2016, we asked for prayers about spreading the Gospel in the city of Astrakhan. The Lord has heard our prayers - today in Astrakhan a local FM station broadcasts the preaching of the Gospel every morning. People can look up the RCR programs on the city website, www.radioastrakhan.ru, under the “Spiritual Heritage” section. Please continue to pray for the spiritual revival of the residents of Astrakhan.

- Alexander Zakharov



New RCR Video Program - “Foundations of Faith” Mikhail Ivanov, PhD (professor at Moscow Theological Seminary, and pastor of 2nd Moscow Church): “By working more than ten years in the Russian Baptist Union, I saw that our churches often lack knowledge about basic theological truths. This is especially true of converts. I really wanted to make a simple, affordable, informative guide on this topic. I am glad that it has materialized as a video series called “Foundations of Faith” - 20 programs recorded by RCR. The continuation of this topic will be a series called “Practical Christianity,” where we will discuss the issues of the everyday life of a believer: a relationship with God, relationships with others and personal evangelism.”



Solnechnogorsk. On January 15, 2017 we began to hold worship services in Solnechnogorsk Church. This location is important to our rehab ministry, as it will also become the new Pirkko Home administrative center and provide training for new leaders. God keeps affirming us - on February 19 we plan to conduct the baptism of two men who graduated from Pirkko Homes, who are now taking a Basics of the Faith course. With the help of brothers from the church and a nearby Pirkko Home, construction of the building is continuing. We are very thankful for God’s assistance and guidance, and warmly thank you for your prayers and support! – Dima Gusev

Introducing the Lgov Pirkko Home

We opened the Lgov Pirkko Home (rehab center) in Kursk region in 2008. The house was originally a small shed, completely uninhabited. We prayed and went to work. And so far, we are still working and ministering here. For us it is very important to help those around us. Many neighbors are glad that we are here, and turn to us for help. We can witness to them how God changes our hearts, our minds and our thoughts. They do not even believe that we are former drug addicts and alcoholics!



We prayed a lot about how we should work and provide for ourselves. We posted ads, and God sent us a job to provide us with basic income. We cooperate with the town administration, who hired us to clean the town - where everyone knows who we are and we can witness. Even the police bring alcoholics, drug addicts and former prisoners to us! We also work on pig farms and do gardening, painting and handyman jobs. Besides these jobs, we also unload train cars of coal. This work is not easy, but it keeps us strong! The head of the coal-fired power plant is very kind to us and brought us coal for the winter. During the winter, there is little work, but there is plenty of time to dive into



the Word of God. Guests come to visit, and we share the Word of God and testimonies. This is the abundant life, which Jesus Christ taught!

Sometimes it is hard to work with the guys, it even can bring us to tears; you put your all into the soul of a man, you sleep in the same house as him, eat at the same table, but he goes away and dies in his sin. Some leave, but others come, and we must once again learn to understand each other. We do not stop to wonder about how God changes a person, but we



see the changes. The first days that a person is at the center, he is very reserved and suspicious, in his eyes are only emptiness and disappointment. But when the Holy Spirit touches someone's heart, and he repents of his sins, there is a transformation; his eyes start shining with a joy that cannot be concealed. The Lord starts to restore ruined health, dreams, and of course the relationships with family and friends. Our goal upon completion is not just to let the person out into the world, but to lead him to church, so he can find a circle of fellowship and ministry. In our local church, they ask us to minister by assisting with such things as mowing the grass, painting, shoveling the snow, and helping the church members.

More recently, by the grace of the Lord, we worked together with the Pirkko Homes in Rylsk and Zheleznogorsk, to buy a van. Unfortunately, our joy was short-lived. One day I went to pick up the guys from work and we had an accident. Thank God, there were no casualties, but the van was badly damaged, and it was reported that it was my fault. But it was not so. We all prayed to the Lord and the judge dropped the charges, but it's still under investigation. I wondered why this happened, and I think it's because we need to pray together more with the guys, to help the seeds of their faith to grow.



Since the Lgov rehab center was formed, more than 200 people have come for rehabilitation. Over the last year, 30 people repented at Lgov, three of them completed the rehabilitation and adaptation programs and returned home. Two more wish to be baptized, including my good assistant, Roman.

We thank you for your prayers and support of the Lgov Pirkko Home. Pleased continue to pray for us!

- From the story of the Lgov Pirkko Home by leaders Peter Pitsurenko and Alexei Mordvinov

Alexei Mordvinov: *Priceless – A New Life, Joy & Peace in God!*



I was born and raised in Moscow, in a simple Soviet family. When I was 13 my father died tragically. After that, my mother began to attend an Orthodox church and read the Bible. She did not understand anything, but something inexplicably attracted her to God. Some time later, she was invited to a "House of Prayer," a church where the gospel was explained in a way that she could understand, and she accepted Jesus Christ as Lord in 1999. She began to pray for me. My mother worked, and I spent all my free time on the street with friends.

I tried my first cigarette, my first bottle of beer; the company was bad and I went downhill. I always wanted to be a "bad" guy, as "fame doesn't come to those who simply strive to be good." By age 17, I had tried soft drugs and worse. At first I thought that I had everything under control, but that was a mistake. I didn't even notice that I had become strongly dependent, until I was unable to cope. At age 24, I was left alone - I realized that I had no real friends, and life went further downhill. Relationships with friends were only business-like: you give something to me, and I'll give something to you. Everything in my life was destroyed, and inside me was emptiness. But I always heard the call that God loves me and can give me the happiness that I seek.

That same year, the Word of God came into my life when I saw all the human hypocrisy around me and that there was no real life. In deep despair, I got up one day in August 2011, and on my knees, with tears streaming down my cheeks, I asked the Lord to change my life; I wanted to live differently. I repented and felt such joy, that it is difficult to convey. It was hard to admit, with my human pride, that I could do nothing without Him, but I knew that my life was at an impasse. After I repented, the Lord began to change my mind and I realized that all these years God was waiting for me and I needed Him with all my brokenness and with all my misfortune. Friends came to me from the church and advised me to go to a rehabilitation center. I was thinking that I had repented and was free, and that I did not need rehab.

But a month later, I decided to go to a rehab center and check it out - the Pirkko Home at Rumyantsevo, in Moscow region. It was a simple house, with ordinary people, not what I had expected rehab to be: doctors, white gowns, injections and pills. I questioned: what is going on here? But then I saw that the people here and their relationships were different - everyone was attentive to me and I was alarmed. At first, I just stepped back and watched it all. There were all sorts of fears. As time went on, I saw the kind and selfless attitudes. Rehabilitation took eight months - in the beginning it seemed like this would be long and hard, but I had time for a good look at my life; people need to level everything to the ground and re-build their lives on God's ground. You cannot make a good repair to an old collapsing house, you need to begin to build a new foundation. The people who worked at the center were good for me to witness and observe. I thank my mentors; their lives and good attitudes affected my fate.

My mother had been praying for me for over ten years, and now she didn't need to worry about me anymore.

I was offered a position at the Nikulino Pirkko Home where I could work and mature in the faith. What happened to me there was priceless: a new life, joy and peace! I could not be silent and told others all about it. I was baptized at the local church in 2012. I was an assistant leader at Nikulino for four and a half years. It was a great time and God continued to teach me how to live in freedom from sin.

For 10 months now, I have been serving as the leader in the Lgov Pirkko Home, in the Kursk region. Ministering to such people, I find that it is impossible to make it without God, he gives insight into how to do the right thing. Years go by and I do not regret that I am in this ministry. I'm not tired, I am pleased and encouraged that good sons are returning home, and I want more men to come here, and that all would come to Jesus. But even if only one comes, I would still be happy to serve. Another joy - my assistant, Roman, a graduate of the Nikulino rehab center, will soon be baptized. Praise God for His mercy!



Alexei and the Lgov Pirkko Home residents at the Lgov Church

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