



# REPORTER

Preaching the Gospel in the  
Russian Language since 1946

## RCR's Magazine, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, and Prison Ministry in Novosibirsk

*"... God's Word is not chained." (2 Tim. 2:9)*

The distribution of *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* and DVDs with Christian audio and video programs in prisons has been and continues to be an integral part of prison ministry in Russia.



At the top, center of the photo of prison ministers are Alexander Gochweiss and Eduard Zavedeyev.

In mid-February, Eduard Zavedeyev, who is responsible for RCR's magazine, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, visited the Novosibirsk, Siberia region. This is one of the few regions of Russia where the prison administration is open to our ministry. He and other prison ministers visited two strict security prisons, where they had warm fellowship with some close-knit groups of men.

Our active ministry in Novosibirsk began after the testimony of prison minister Alexander Gochweiss (who is from that area) was published in RCR's prison magazine and local churches there were flooded with letters from prisoners. It was decided to organize a center to correspond with prisoners. A former prisoner, Brother Denis, was appointed to answer the letters - he himself became a believer two years ago while in prison, then was released, baptized and joined the ministry. Letters received revealed a great spiritual need, because many prisons do not allow believers to visit, and some do not have Christian literature. In situations like this, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* magazines, the pamphlets with sermons by Earl Poysti, and the disks of RCR's programs are very helpful. Many prisoners do not have the opportunity to buy paper, envelopes and stamps for correspondence. So in letters sent to prisoners, we include everything necessary for a person to be able to respond. In April, we were able to send several packages and letters to prisoners which included magazines, Christian literature, essential personal items and gifts of sweets.

Alexander Gochweiss said: "I want to share my joy with you! A few months ago we began visiting the prison colony IK-14, which is 130 km (78 mi) from Novosibirsk. This was preceded by several years of attempts to visit there, but the door was closed. This colony was never visited by anyone. But recently it became clear that God began to act according to our prayers - He changed the hearts of the administrative staff there.



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“During several visits it was possible to distribute more than 300 copies of various issues of *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* magazine and other Christian literature. Every time we go, there are meetings with dozens of prisoners who willingly take a magazine and other brochures for reading. The guys exchange magazine issues and brochures with each other, reread them, and ask when new ones will come. There is such a thirst! In IK-14, a Bible study group has already been set up!”

A team of prison ministers headed by Alexander Gochweiss visits detention facilities five times a week, each time distributing 10-20 magazines, taking care of 12 prisons total in the Novosibirsk region.



In some prisons, there are special stands in libraries - prisoners can take and read magazines and other materials and then return them.

In April, an agreement was made with the administrations of several prison colonies, to let the prison ministers hold Easter concerts with a tea party following. Everyone who attended was given a small gift. Thank God that those who are already believers regularly evangelize other prisoners, and use the magazine, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, for this purpose. In one prison, a prisoner named Alexander has a personal collection of the magazines and preaches to others according to the topics of the magazines.

- Please pray for our work regarding the distribution of *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* magazines and the development of prison ministry in the Novosibirsk region, so that many more hear the Good News;
- Pray for the financial means to continue the ministry of correspondence centers - for corresponding with prisoners, for sending packages to them, and for transportation and office expenses;
- Pray for the production and circulation of the magazine and an increase in the number of DVDs. Six months ago, we increased the number of disks to 1200, but there is a need to increase them to 2000.

- Alexander Zakharov, Executive Director, RCR in Russia

### Alexander Otto (632527 Novosibirsk Region, Ubinsky District, Raissino Village, FKU IK-13, Ot.1)

“One day, at the staging area where prisoners are transferred, they were making tea. People were uneasy. Guys came to the hot water pot, and one man had a piece of paper holding tea leaves; he sprinkled the tea into mugs, the guys added hot water and left. Watching this, I paid attention to the guy with the tea leaves and in his hand I saw a picture of Jesus Christ, crucified. I asked what it was. He held it out to me. I read *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* at the top. I asked him if I could read it and he said to me: “While we are still waiting, go ahead.” So I began to flip through it. And I read: ‘With His stripes we were healed!’ ‘The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.’ ‘Repent and turn so that your sins will be blotted out’.... After reading this, hope began to appear in my heart. There was a desire to learn more about Jesus, about His teaching. I also noticed that in your magazine the guys talk about Christ, they tell about their lives and God’s miraculous influence on them. I copied down the address of the editorial office, and now I’m reading the Bible. Only because of this, I’m now saved and it helps me live each day. I really want spiritual contact with others, to grow in faith and be forgiven! Please, if you have such an opportunity, send me at least one issue of your magazine - thanks to it, I learned about Christ and about your ministry! Thank you! - Sasha”



### Vladimir Zherebtsov (Primorsky Krai) - recently released !!!

“Hello, inspired editorial staff of *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*! Yes, yes... it is good - inspired. I may be far from you, but the light of Jesus that comes from your hearts, piercing any distance, has reached my heart. Through your magazine, I now have spiritual correspondence with my sisters in Christ. With their help, it became much easier for me to learn the Word of God. And now, with the help of your RCR disks, I will go deeper into the knowledge of Truth. Thank you for the disks. I got them safely. The political deputy for the prison, when giving me the envelope, could not hide his smile. Yes, it was evident how the spark in his eyes danced, as if he was happy for me. And in my eyes, too, which reflected mutual joy. Your Brother in Christ, Vladimir”



The ministry which I do in the RCR studio allows me to continually meet new people. I'm always finding new guests and inviting them to tell me about themselves. Our guests are people from all over Russia, from Vladikavkaz to Taimyr to Kamchatka.

It's been 14 years since I first took my place in front of a microphone in the studio (and then later before the camera lens), but I still cannot stop marveling at the wonderful deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ! During this time, a long string of people have passed through RCR's studio, all with very different stories, but despite the dissimilarities, everyone without exception has one thing in common that brings them together - Jesus, who saved each of them, took them out of the abyss, lifted them from their knees, washed and justified them. Each testimony is a great inspiration. I think about how important it is to convey the Gospel through these stories to those who have never experienced a meeting with the Savior. Our program ministers to these people, and in every program we tell them that there is a way out. Each new testimony is a confirmation of this.

Many follow our programs, watching in churches, rehabilitation centers, and in Bible Study groups. You can always find our “Choice” programs (in Russian) on our rcr.ru website, or on the YouTube channel: RCR-Videos. We regularly upload programs on Tuesdays and Wednesdays on the video channel: vera24.tv. The audio-only version of the program is broadcast on the satellite radio station: “New Life.”

Please pray about the ministry of the RCR studio, and for the financial resources to pay for the production and broadcasting of our programs and for printing DVDs to send to regions where there is no access to the Internet, as well as to prisons. The desire of my heart is to glorify the Lord more, and even “louder,” in these last, turbulent times.



At **Rumyantsevo** today there are 21 men in the program, of which 3 are assistants to the leader. This month 2 people completed the rehabilitation course, and switched to adaptation. Since the beginning of the “work season” in April, the men have been working at Ruchiyok Christian Camp. Some variety was introduced by participation in the youth soccer tournament with teams from churches in Moscow. They are grateful to believers in the United States for funds to buy a van.

At the adaptation centers for men and women at the **Ruchiyok** Christian Camp (Moscow region) there are now 18 people, including 2 ministers and 2 assistants. Some graduates are going to continue working at the camp. We are delighted that several graduates are preparing for baptism in the local churches and that they are employed.

The two centers in **Nikulino** accept men, women and women with children. The men, along with the assistant leader, work on a farm near Tver and sometimes at Ruchiyok Camp. They are grateful for the van purchased and for the completion of the men's building. Now the men and women have their own separate Pirkko Homes again. Please pray for a couple more assistants for the leaders at Nikulino.

The center in **Orel** is full right now. 2 men just completed the full course, and went on to adaptation. The men at this center started breeding sheep - now there are more than 20 animals on the farm. Please pray for an assistant leader.

There are two centers in **Dyatkovo** to accept both men and women for rehabilitation. In total, 9 people live there, including the leaders. Please pray for a new assistant leader; the former one was married on April 28 and moved. Needs include support for leader Ilya Ignatov, repairs at the center and replacement of boilers for the heating system.

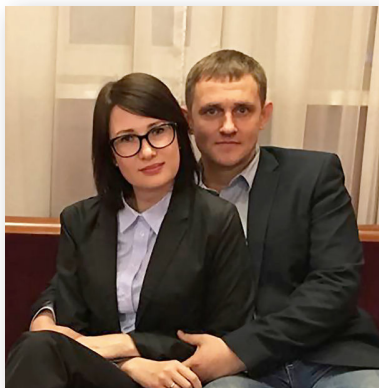
At the rehab center in the city of **Kimry** there are 11 men, including one leader and two assistants. Please pray for the leader, Andrey Bavykin Kholodov, who will be married on June 9.

At the **Zheleznogorsk** men's adaptation center, they have started to feed homeless people as part of their ministry, and their work continues with unloading train cars. Leader Aleksey Dudikin is recovering from a broken leg.

The **Lgov** Rehabilitation Center is planning to move to be closer to Zheleznogorsk; Andrey Kuzmichev will be the new leader. Please pray for the opportunity to buy a house so we can move this center and for support for Andrey.

- Dmitry Gusev, head of the Pirkko Home Ministry

## ALEXANDER GOCHWEISS: Life and Ministry in Abundance



My name is Alexander, and I'm 38 years old. In my life everything was destroyed, and it seemed like there was no hope of restoring anything, but then the Almighty Lord decided to show grace to yet another dying soul.

My parents divorced when I was six, and I stayed with my mother, who drank heavily. The street became my second home. At 11, I first tried weed; at 15, I first injected drugs, and at 19, I was first put in prison. While in prison, I decided to be baptized, thinking that all my troubles were because I was not baptized. I went to the prayer room of the Orthodox Christians, but due to the fact that only a "free" priest could baptize, I would have had to wait four months, so the "procedure" didn't take place.

After my release, I again began to use drugs and after a year and a half I was in prison for a second time. There I decided I still wanted to be baptized and I turned to a man who was considered a believer. He asked me if I knew who Jesus Christ

was. I was confused and couldn't think of anything to say, but this man told me seriously that believing in God is not just wearing a cross, and he suggested that I start studying the Orthodox catechism first. I took the catechism, but I was too lazy to study it, and for many years I forgot about this desire.

There was, however, a bright period in my life when I met a girl, fell in love with her, and we began to live like an ordinary family, I even gave up drugs. It seemed like life was getting better, but it didn't last long; after a year I got bored and drugs returned to my life. Four years of living together was like hell for us, and we broke up.

After we parted, I rolled to the bottom with great speed. Due to drugs, friends around me were dying, and I was returned several times from the next world. Then one day, I was released again by the police after I spent three days in a jail cell. Experiencing a terrible drug withdrawal, I almost crawled to my friend, with whom I regularly had used drugs, rang the doorbell and slid down the wall from weakness. He came out and I did not recognize him. He was someone else: bright eyes, a happy face, and from him breathed peace and contentment, which were unknown to me. This time, for the first time in my life, I was told about the Gospel. My friend had graduated from a rehab center, he believed in God, and his life changed completely. I then left him - you could say I escaped - it was unbearable to be beside him; I realized my sinfulness and helplessness, and I did not like it.

From that moment, God started to pursue me intensely. For half a year I was told about Christ, and I was invited to church, and everything in my life became so bad that I finally decided to try to change something. Christmas Day, January 7, 2008 is the day of my repentance and the beginning of my new life in Christ. At the Christmas service, God revealed himself to me as my Savior. During the sermon I felt my sinfulness and within five minutes I was broken and sobbing. I was invited to go to the rehabilitation center. Since then, my life has been full of the wonders of God. My girlfriend returned to me, became my wife, believed in Christ and now helps me in the ministry. Then my mother, my niece and her boyfriend, and a cousin, all repented. Today we all attend the same church and all together we praise God. Back in the rehab center, I realized that God was calling me to serve Him. I began with a small responsibility: I was in charge of the bath ("banya"), then an assistant to the leader of the center. God always found me a ministry: for 8 years I took part in the opening of 3 rehab centers, coordinated 2 centers, led a Bible study at the church, organized mission trips around the region, preached in the church, and graduated from the theological seminary.

For a long time, prison ministry was not a priority for me. But one day everything changed. We held a large event in the women's prison, attended by about 200 women, and when I saw how many of them were crying during the sermon, I realized that I would do everything possible in order to minister to these people. I began to visit this prison regularly, and then another prison, where I once served time. Then one more and one more.... Now we regularly visit 12 prisons, each has groups that meet together, and some have become believers. We have built and developed relationships with the administrations of the prisons. In October 2016, the church decided to fully support me and now I visit the prisons in the region 5-6 days a week, and I also help solve many problems related to this ministry, preach and participate in various ministries of the church. I have known of the magazine, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, for a long time, but we only began ministry in prisons less than two years ago. In February of this year, Eduard Zavedeyev, who is responsible for the magazine, came to visit us and our cooperation was strengthened. Now we are permanently representing the ministry of RCR in our region.

As of January 2018, ten years have passed since I turned to the Lord, and He gave me life and ministry in abundance! My family supports me in everything. It's a very difficult ministry, but I'm sure that I'm doing God's work, which means that its success is guaranteed! It's all for God glory!

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