



REPORTER

**Preaching the Gospel in the
Russian Language since 1946**



30 YEARS of *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* Prison Magazine Ministry

In 1994, the first issue of the magazine The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire was published. Eric Brugger, our graphic designer for the magazine, shares how it all began:

30 years ago, the idea for this magazine was revealed to my mother, Tatyana Kurakova. From early childhood, my mother read a lot, was fond of literature and tried to write, and when she believed in Christ, her most ardent desire was to tell everyone around her about Christ. She also corresponded with prisoners. Possessing a literary gift and refined taste, my mother dreamed and prayed for a special publication in which she could realize her gifts and serve God. Her prayers did not go unanswered - she became the initiator and creator of the magazine for prisoners called *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*.

Russian Christian Radio received many letters from listeners all over the country, and among them, more and more letters came from places of imprisonment. Therefore, Tatyana's idea for a magazine slowly found the support of RCR's staff. Expanding horizons and starting evangelism through the publication of a magazine in addition to the release of radio programs did not seem obvious at first. But the need for God among prisoners was obvious, and the idea of such a magazine was a great solution. In such an environment, the first issue of the magazine was published, then the second. I began to help my mother with the design and layout of the issues.

People rejected by society were looking for God, and Tatyana read these letters with great love, concern, care and trust. And she answered them, drawing inspiration and materials for the magazine's columns. Her creative ideas for the columns made the magazine so interesting and instructive that it began to also be in demand outside of prisons.





Mom showed a keen and genuine interest in the fate of people cut off from society. She recognized and respected the human dignity of those who stumbled, committed a crime and found themselves behind barbed wire. She saw the need in these unfortunate people and conveyed to them the message of God's love in the pages of the magazine. They felt her attitude and reciprocated.

In 2002, Mom went to be with the Lord, but the work she started continues to this day. This precious legacy has been preserved in our family. My wife Irina took up the ministry and has been the editor of the magazine for more than twenty years.

30 years is a long time, but this is only a step toward further growth and development. During this time, the magazine has grown and matured, blossomed (initially it was black and white), acquired its own identity and admirers throughout Russia and even beyond its borders. A professional editorial board has been formed. The magazine has its authors, poets and artists, and there are even critics. There are those who pray and support it financially, as well as those who sacrifice their energy and finances by corresponding with prisoners. When we started the magazine, we could not even imagine how much it would be loved by readers!

We say thank you to the Lord and to everyone who cares about this magazine. Thank you for being with us! We are happy to work in this field and will continue this work as long as God prolongs the time of grace. Only the Lord knows how many souls have found peace with God during this time, how many knees have bowed on the concrete floor and how many tears of repentance have been shed in sleepless nights!



How many today think about the fate of those who are in captivity? Quite rightly, many believe that those in prison deserve their punishment. But God does not show partiality. "... God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). He died for all people without exception! And every person on earth has an equal chance for salvation and eternal life.

There is a skeptical opinion about the hopeless callousness of the soul of a criminal, but the Lord testifies to something else - His Spirit burns out dirt and filth in the souls of villains, cleansing, sanctifying, giving them new birth and new life in Jesus Christ, and accepting them into the flock of God.

I thank God for my ministry work in this field. I see the fruits of the magazine *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*. "Come to Me!" calls the Savior. This call is the main theme of each issue of our magazine.

- Ernest Brugger, Graphic Designer for The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire

Response to *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire Magazine*

This magazine is the only one of its kind, and the demand for our magazine is difficult to overestimate. During its 30-year history the magazine has reached all the prisons of Russia. The magazine accompanies and instructs many prisoners throughout their entire term of imprisonment and then after their release. Every month we receive about 100 letters, and in response we send Christian literature with our letters, which answer their questions and help them grow spiritually. Here is one of the letters:

"I became acquainted with the magazine while in prison, and now I eagerly await each new issue of the magazine. "Why," you may ask, "since there are so many Christian spiritual publications now?" I answer: The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire is mine; it is about me. Everything the magazine contains directly concerns my life. Honestly. I get tired of everyday worries, of the daily hustle and bustle, of information about what is happening in the world. I withdraw, sit down, and read the issue that has just arrived and I come to life. I often reread old issues. I give many away, but there are special ones that I keep. While rereading, my soul rests, I cry and cleanse my soul, I pray and rejoice, I learn and understand, I grow spiritually and gain strength. Thank you! Child of God, Sergey." (Sergey G, Altai Territory, Russia)

Praise the Lord for all His blessings! Thank you for your prayers and support for our work.

- Eduard Zavedeyev, responsible for publishing the magazine and for correspondence



The RCR Studio Ministry - New Challenges

Over the several years of posting our Christian video programs on YouTube, we have done a lot of painstaking work:

- created our YouTube channel: RCR-Videos
- post several new programs weekly
- work with the audience, responding to their comments and questions
- collect regular viewers: over 173,000 subscribers, so far

RCR Studio is on the threshold of a new challenge: our YouTube channel is slowing down in Russia, because the YouTube server equipment is no longer being updated here. Most viewers watch our programs on our YouTube channel. So far, this has primarily affected views with 4k video quality (Ultra HD). Our audience mostly uses a smartphone or computer for viewing, where viewing has lower video quality, but the problem is already noticeable. For 30% of our Russian-speaking viewers, those who live outside Russia, there will be no problem, but within Russia, we will have to find additional broadcasting channels to broadcast our programs.

Viewers like our programs. People are seeking God; so it is important for them to hear guests explain why they believe, and have the Scriptures explained in plain, everyday language. Therefore, it is important to keep our programs easily accessible to people. Please pray for the further development of the RCR Studio.

Here is a letter from a pastor, explaining how the programs help the believers in his community: *"We watch your programs and testimonies of people whom God has changed. They are very inspiring! The people from our Gypsy church often share with me their impressions of watching them. Someone will definitely call and say: 'Look at this testimony! I cried, God touched me so much.' You are doing a very blessed work of God. Through these programs, God touches many hearts, instructs and convicts, and those who have cooled spiritually are rekindled. They see how God intervenes in people's lives, how he hears prayers and answers them. God bless you. Continue to make these programs, by all means!"* - Alexander Nemtsurov, pastor of the Gypsy church in Stavropol Territory, Russia.



Pastor Alexander Nemtsurov also shared his testimony on our Choice program, and many people in his area became believers.

- Ayur Vanzhilov, director of the RCR Studio ministry

Pirkko Home Adaptation Ministry

Praise God that He protects us and allows us to continue the work of "Adaptation", which is the last 3 months of the Pirkko Home program, as the men learn to live on their own but keep ahold of faith and what they have learned in rehab.

There are 4 men in the program here in Solnechnogorsk right now, but graduates also come to visit us for fellowship. This is great for those who are almost at the finish line of the program – to hear how to build a life with the Lord, and what to pay attention to and emphasize.



Our brother Artur recently completed the program. Christ saved Artur and revealed many gifts and opportunities to him. He has a great desire to serve in the church and take care of his family. Also, by the grace of God, the Lord miraculously gave him housing; Artur could not get an apartment for a long time, due to his being an orphan, but God is good - the last court hearing determined that he will be able to get an apartment in the near future.

Our brother Vladimir also completed the program. He has a great desire to make a covenant with the Lord, be baptized, and become a member of the Truth Church in the city of Nakhabin. His testimony is on page 4.

- Artem Panin, Leader of the Adaptation Ministry at Solnechnogorsk

Testimony of Vladimir K. - "I was faced with a choice: which way to go next?

With the Lord - the road of life, or without the Lord - the road of death. I chose life."



My name is Vladimir; I am 37 years old. I was born in the Bryansk region. I grew up without a father. Already at the age of 14, I began to live independently. I worked and provided for myself. I was my own boss. Even then, at an early age, I started drinking alcohol with my friends. Then I joined the army, and remained to serve under contract. I got married and a son was born. Little by little I began to drink more. I didn't notice how I became addicted. I lost my job and my family. I married a second time and a daughter was born.

One day at work, I met a believer. His name is Fedor. He began to tell me about Christ and began to invite me to church. I did not reject Jesus Christ. I knew that God exists. But I refused to go to church. Fedor and I became friends. It turned out that he had come to God after undergoing rehabilitation at the Dyatkovo Pirkko Home. I listened to him, but didn't take him seriously; he continued to drink occasionally. Then my second family also began falling apart. So I went to church, and soon agreed to go to rehabilitation.

I couldn't pass the rehab program the first time. Nor the second time. My pride, ego and selfishness got in the way. I considered myself better than others. But really, I think it is better not to know God than to know Him and then leave Him. I tried to run away from God, but I could no longer live without Him. The problems grew worse and worse. My addiction grew stronger. Soon my second family fell apart. I was faced with a choice: which way to go next? With the Lord - the road of life, or without the Lord - the road of death. I chose life. And for the third time I went to the rehab center with a firm decision to complete the program.

So I went to the Dyatkovo Pirkko Home, where my friend Fedor, who had once told me about Christ, had also gone through the rehab program. There I sincerely repented and began to follow the Lord. Amazingly, I completed the program - with the Lord, nothing is impossible. I thought about what happened to me after I repented: the Lord gave me peace in my heart, my thinking began to change, even though there were still quarrels and disagreements with the brothers in the center. The Lord took away all my worries and my pride, which had made me leave the center earlier. He calmed my heart and helped me to move on. After going through the program, I understood a lot. The Lord, through the brothers, showed me my mistakes and who I really am. I thank God for His mercy to me.

Now I live in the Moscow region, attend the evangelical church in Nakhabino, am in fellowship with the brothers, and am preparing for baptism. This is a priority for me - to enter into a covenant with the Lord. I am learning to trust in the Lord, but sometimes I fail, and of course, I ask His forgiveness. Every day the Lord shows me what to do and gives me strength while working with people.

Now I work with calmness. Where before I was nervous, fell into a rage, got angry and swore, now this is no longer the case, thank God; I immediately reflect on the Word of God instead. Every day the Lord blesses me both at work and in church. I rejoice in such a life, I understand where I was and where I am now. I pray that the Lord will be glorified in my life among those around me. I want to be an example to someone else and I hope that someone will come to the Lord through me, just as I was told about God 6 years ago through Fedor. I have seen so many people die before my eyes, simply because they ran away from the Lord.

The Lord is great! I truly want to be a part of God's big family! I am excited and really want to be baptized, and to finally die to the world. I pray for this, and I need your prayers. I ask that the Lord will give me wisdom on how to live, so that I can learn to make the right choices in my life and no longer make big mistakes. I really want to learn and understand the will of God and to be with God in all I do.

