



REPORTER

Preaching the Gospel in the
Russian Language since 1946

25th Anniversary of *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* Magazine!

Dear friends, this year we celebrate a quarter century of the publication of our magazine! We are very grateful to the Lord for His blessings and we also thank you, all of our friends, who prayerfully and financially support this ministry!



The magazine began with a black-and-white publication and several dozen recipients, and now the circulation has grown to 8,000 and has a missionary distribution network. This is a magazine especially for prisoners; it's not just a brochure, but a government approved periodical. In recent years, correspondence centers to help with the distribution of the magazines have opened in the Komi Republic, the Novosibirsk region and Vladivostok in the Far East.

During the years of publishing this magazine, many people turned to God, and it marked the beginning of their spiritual life. Many prisoners have grown spiritually and now they themselves minister and pass along magazines to other people in prison.

Thanks to the magazine, many contacts have been made, even in different countries, with people who have provided correspondence, spiritual support and a little practical help to prisoners (such as Christian literature, medicine, and clothes for when they are released).

“Hello, my favorite editor - of The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire! I am writing to you to thank you for your work in the field of God, and that you are always there for us. By the way, my spiritual journey and my life began with your magazine. The seeds had already been sown, but it is your magazine that prepares the good soil. It is your articles that strengthen our faith and help us discover clear and unmistakable truths. Thanks to your magazine, I have many true Christian friends, sisters and brothers, since we are all children of the same Father, the Father who is real, loving and reliable.” - Yuliya S., prisoner in Chelyabinsk, Russia.



For a number of churches, the magazine served as the tool to begin their prison ministries and in many ways helped to stir up the wave of prison ministry among believers. When there are no visits from believers or relatives, the magazine also provides discipleship and softens the feelings of loneliness.

"I am eager to receive your magazine, because I really need to be taught and disciplined in the truth. It reveals many things to me that are beyond the reach of my mind; it's hard for me to study the Bible without it. The last issue I received was number 142 with the subject "Light and Darkness". Please, send me the subsequent issues of your magazine!" - Viktor P. prisoner in the Kirov Region, Russia.



Last fall we published a **supplement to the magazine called "Repentance That Leads to Life."** We received feedback from prisoners telling us how important this was to them, and still is:



"I thank you for your letter and for "Repentance That Leads to Life." It is just what I needed. Not just a magazine, but a treasure! I have not yet met people who are addicted to drugs and were able to cope with this problem, but thanks be to God, I read about many such people in this magazine supplement. And it gives me hope and incentive. I thank you for being a part of my life and for the hope that is beginning to flare up in my soul. Pray for me. Upon release, I am going to go to a rehabilitation center, as I understand that I need help. Please advise me where to go. Maybe you have rehab centers where you specifically work with drug addicts, and I would love to learn the Word of God with knowledgeable people. God bless you! July 1, 2019." - Georgiy Y., prisoner in the Arkhangelsk Region, Russia.

At the end of this year, we again plan to publish an illustrated magazine supplement; this time it will include sermons of Earl Poysti. By sending some sermons in brochures or leaflets, we have seen how important it is to preach the Word of God to prisoners and people undergoing rehabilitation. Approximately \$5,000 will be needed for the publication and distribution of this 2019 magazine supplement.



Friends, we briefly mentioned this in May and now we can announce that **we have another matching gift this year for the magazine ministry**, which will allow us to double any donations received **up to \$5,500** for the magazine ministry and the new 2019 magazine supplement during the months of **September and October**. This timing will give us time to print the supplement before Christmas. Two donors are offering this match which will greatly help our magazine ministry, and we hope you will consider giving during this time.

May the Lord bless everyone who takes part in the preaching of the Gospel in prisons, prison camps, pre-trial detention centers and juvenile detention centers using this magazine, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire!*

Correspondence Bible School for Prisoners (CBSP)

Since the beginning of the summer, in the framework of *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* magazine ministry, work has been directed towards preparing lessons for independent study of the Scriptures for people in prisons. The need for CBSP became apparent after a ban was imposed on holding religious meetings in many of the prisons. Pray that these lessons will help prisoners understand the Bible and help them in their spiritual lives.

"Here, in the prison for those with life sentences, I read the New Testament for the first time in my life and realized that I needed to repent of my sins. But I don't know much about spiritual life. All I have for literature is the New Testament, which I took from the prison library, and a couple of prayers, which I wrote down from magazines. I read them, and I pray as I can. I just don't know if I pray correctly, as no one here can explain things to me. Please help me and send spiritual and educational literature." - Ilya O., prisoner in Perm Territory, Russia.

"Thank you very much for your serious work. Thanks to you, I became a Christian. In prison I began to read the New Testament, but I found some things incomprehensible, and thanks to your work I find answers to the questions that come up when reading the Gospel." - Artem A., prisoner in Khabarovsk Territory, Russia.



Update: Vehicle for Pirkko Home Ministry in Solnechnogorsk

Special thanks to all who gave an extra gift to help purchase a vehicle for the Pirkko Home Ministry based in the Solnechnogorsk Church. The total donations, including the \$5,000 matching gift, came to \$12,375! They decided that this 5 passenger hatchback, a 2016 Toyota Fielder Hybrid with low mileage, directly from Japan, would best meet the needs for the rehab ministry in terms of price, reliability and efficiency. Praise God!



New Pirkko Home near Plavsk (Tula Region)

The past couple years have not been easy for our ministry of rehabilitation – there were interruptions in the women’s ministry, the relocation of activities from one Pirkko Home (at Lgov, which was sold, and the ministry there moved to Zheleznogorsk until a new location is ready), and the exit from the Pirkko Home network of another center (Rylsk).

However, the purpose of the ministry remains the same: “to rescue those being led away to death” (Proverbs 24:11), and we try to help as many people as possible. Periodically, there are proposals to open new rehab centers, and we pray for God’s will for each situation and proposal, as we seek not just quantity, but quality.



Several years ago, a Moscow church acquired a property with a house on a lake south of Moscow and expressed the desire to use it for ministry to help drug addicts and alcoholics. (It is located in the village of Berezovo near the town of Plavsk, in the Tula region.) The building needed a lot of work, as the house was built before the Revolution, and in terms of the rehab program, we were also concerned about the location since the Christian community in Plavsk is small and it is not very close to the property. But the Lord is sovereign over everything, and now things are coming together.



He has already prepared two brothers from the Solnechnogorsk Church who are willing to serve on the team here in the rehab ministry. Plus, our brother Peter Pitsurenko, who was the leader in the Komarichi rehab center (Bryansk region), has dreamed of serving at a center closer to his home in the Moscow region, and he will take on the leadership of this new Pirkko Home!



The Plavsk Church has partnered with us, and is helping us as much as possible. Interestingly, this region has a long history of evangelical heritage. It was in Plavsk that the estate of Princess Vera Gagarina was located, who became a believer while listening to Lord Radstock’s sermon in 1874 at the beginning of a revival in St. Petersburg among the aristocracy. When believers in St. Petersburg were strongly oppressed, Vera Gagarina moved to her estate in Plavsk and was actively engaged in charity and evangelism. Thus, a large congregation of evangelical Christians was founded in this area. She also conducted major community projects: she opened a “Handicraft House” to teach sewing to village girls, a craft workshop for teaching young men, an excellent school and an exemplary hospital, which operates to this day.

Here, in such a place, the Lord has now placed us. We are working hard and pray that we can finish redoing the exterior of the building before the onset of cold weather, and complete the 1st floor shortly thereafter, so we can start accepting those with addictions. Of course, we don’t yet have enough funds for all the building materials, but donations have started coming in, and many volunteers have come to help. We see God’s blessings and we believe that He will take care of all the necessary things. Peter Pitsurenko asks,

“Please support us with your prayers – we are aware of our complete dependence on God. Pray for the completion of the construction work, the cohesion of our team, for needed transportation, for the possibility of starting a farm here, and openness of the locals to the Gospel. We thank God that we can be one team together with you.”





Peter Pitsurenko: *The Joy of Serving the Lord!*

Each person's life has a great story to tell. Here's mine. I am 46 years old. I am a fourth generation evangelical Christian. I grew up in a large family and was baptized at the age of 16. With other young people, I visited hospitals and nursing homes, where we told others about Christ. I've always been a leader, and always wanted to learn. I graduated from music school and served in the army in a military band. I married, and my wife and I went to church together. A wonderful life had begun. I thought it would always be like this.

But then I became discontented and wanted to try something new. I tried drinking alcohol - I didn't like it. I lit up a cigarette, but I didn't like that either. Someone at work offered me a drug that promised to lift my mood, improve my thinking, and allow me to work harder. I was interested in this. This drug was not injected, you just had to sniff it. I sniffed the drugs once, and became addicted for 15 years. I felt a surge of energy, and felt very

motivated. When I came home, I didn't tell my wife. I tried to hide it, because for her it would be a big blow. She would not allow such thoughts about me into her head, even though others told her the truth. I thought I could quit, that I could overcome it later on my own. I no longer thought of the Lord; I already had another lord. After two years, when I felt completely addicted, I finally opened up and told my wife.

My wife Olga is very good, she always prayed and asked relatives and the church to pray for me. She suggested that I go to the rehab center, but I didn't want to listen. Sometimes I came to church and prayed, and then after church took drugs again. I had no fear of God. People saw me go to church and said "what a fine fellow." What people said was important to me. I wanted to repent in church, but it didn't happen.

By the time I had been injecting for 8 years, then 10, then 13, I realized that I could not quit. I was ready to die, so as not to disturb anyone. I overdosed, but always woke up again. My father had already accepted that I was going to die. It was hard for him to look at me. I only weighed 45 kg (100 lbs). Going to hospitals didn't help.

My wife cried a lot, but hoped that I would be strong and quit drugs. She was growing very weary of me and asked me to go to the rehab center for a month or two so she could take a break from me. During these 15 years, she did not shout at me, did not fight me, did not drive me out of the house. She often searched for me. I respected my wife very much and agreed to go. I arrived at the Lgov Pirkko Home, Kursk region. There was a special atmosphere there - the brothers constantly talked with you and if any situation came up, they prayed.

One winter day, a little bird flew to the window, it looked in and tapped the window with its beak, and I thought: "She is like me, looking for warmth and food." For this bird I made a feeding trough and constantly poured crumbs into it. I thought: "This bird wants to live, and you are a man - why don't you want to?"

One night, after two months, I woke up in tears, but couldn't understand why. Around me was darkness, but I saw the Light. I fell to my knees and began to pray, sobbing, "I praise you, Lord, for giving me life!" In the morning, I was a joyful man running around the rehab center saying "Brothers, I saw the light! I repented last night!" My life had changed.

Eight months in the rehab program passed. Then I really wanted to return home, to start earning money, to provide for my family. There's a hope, now that you are different, that you can do anything! But at home, Olga did not complain about the lack of funds, instead, she said: "Don't you want to serve the Lord? He saved you and kept you these eight months." We agreed to serve with the Pirkko Home ministry for a year. And one year turned into more than ten years!

My first responsibility was the Pirkko Home in Lgov (Kursk region), then in Komarichi (Bryansk region). I love innovations, new places. My father told me, "Do not hold on to a place. If there is an opportunity to continue to serve, to go forward - go. It gives joy!" And so now the Lord has brought me to the village of Berezovo, near Plavsk (Tula region) to begin a new ministry. There is an old house there that needs to be completely rebuilt. [See page 3.] But God gave assurance that He would help me. Brothers responded at the right time and came to help. I already have two ministry assistants. The desire of our hearts is to serve the destitute and lead them to salvation in Jesus Christ. - *Peter Pitsurenko, leader of the new Plavsk Pirkko Home*

Peter Pitsurenko's testimony is recorded on the "Choice" program, available on our Russian website: rcr.ru.

