

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED, HE IS RISEN!



PRISONER

INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER

«And you shall
know the truth,
and the truth shall
make you free»

(John 8:32)

2(5)
april—may—june

Distributed free
of charge

«That if you confess with your mouth that Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture says, Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame»

(Romans 10:9-11).

EASTER TIME

Easter time is here again, but many do not know, What this time really means, or what happened long ago. Foiled eggs and chocolate treats, are masking the good news, We get to take its holidays, but its message we may loose.

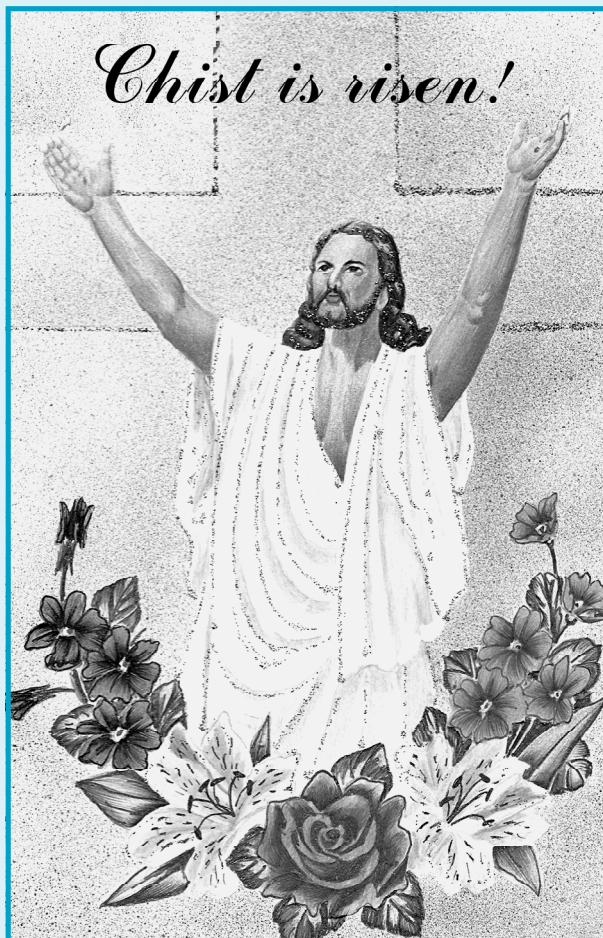
How many children know the truth, or parents teach the word, The story of Jesus as a man, who came to save the world. Our sins he bore on the cross, to save our souls from hell, He rose from death to help man, spread words of God to tell.

Let our hearts fill with joy, as its meaning's understood, To be with God for evermore, in presence of such good. Our fleeting life upon this world, is just a moment past, But taking God's wondrous gift, it won't be our last.

By Bill HOENEVELD.

«Christ is risen! Indeed, he is risen!» These words are said in every Christian gathering on Easter Day. Believer or nonbeliever greet each other with these words. How can we deny Christ's resurrection after all of that? Have you ever wondered what makes a nonbeliever repeat these affirmative words, confirming the truth of The Holy Gospel?

I've been thinking about these words for quite some time about this and couldn't find any answers immediately. At first I searched through the Scripture, I tried to find answers. However, I came across more and more assertive places which emphasized the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but nothing more. Once I was lucky to say these words on Easter Day to an



nonbeliever: «Christ is risen!» The answer came immediately to me: «Indeed, he is risen!» Of course, I smiled and asked him: «Do you really believe in Christ's resurrection?» The man answered without thinking: «I believe, but I can't imagine how this could happen?» Then I asked: «Yet you still believe in the

existence of God?» And to my surprise he calmly replied, «Of course I believe, for the demons believe and tremble of the sound of his name, my grandmother told me that in my childhood».

Then we had a long talk with him regarding why he hasn't turned to God in repentance and didn't accept Jesus Christ as a personal savior. Today I praise God, for he is now a religious person and he with determination glorifies the Lord for his salvation and forgiveness for his sins. Nevertheless, over 10 years ago, I asked him «Why don't you repent?» and he — now a brother in Christ — replied briefly: «I'm tied down with my sins, and God will not forgive me». And, despite of the fact that I was trying to explain to him that God forgives all sinners, his repentance came much later. However, all these years, until he became more acquainted with Jesus Christ, on Easter Day, his mouth affirmatively continued to answer: «Indeed, he is risen!»

Glory to God that faith lives today in many hearts, and we proclaim the greatest Gift that was ever given to us — God raised His Son from the dead! Christ is risen! And there is no doubt about it. His resurrection took place not only 2000 years ago, but this event takes place every day with every restored man. Christ again and again rises in every repentant heart. It does not matter that Easter day falls on a different date this year (March 31st and May 5th). There isn't a day in a year when it would be inappropriate to say that Christ is risen!

Dear brothers and sisters, the newspaper Prisoner congratulates all of you on this momentous occasion — the Radiant Resurrection of Christ! Let's allow our Savior, Jesus Christ, resurrect in our hearts every day! And therefore, let these words be alive and eternal, because they contain not only the truth, but the mighty power of God!

Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!

I. GORIK.

GREAT MISSION OF PRISON MINISTER

To write this article I was motivated by a letter, in which a daughter of the murdered father addressed this News Letter with request, to help find a location of the man who killed her father. Her request included the following: she wanted to find him, so she could help him find God. I read this letter, and I could not

believe that such desires occur in the present day. This woman prayed for several years for the murderer of her father, and now she decided to find him to help him to inherit God's kingdom. I was just beaming with delight and admiration, when I read her letter. After all, this kind of love could be given to her only

by God. For otherwise how could a daughter forgive the murderer of her father?

Sounds absurd, nevertheless, she had not just forgiven him, but also wanted to help him.

Today the prisons and colonies in many countries have church service among prisoners. It is a global revival of stumbled and lost people. Many prisoners in deep remorse find their way to God and enter into a covenant with Him (through Baptism) to live and to serve Him with a clear conscience. What pushes these people, who are completely abandoned by their society, to abandon the sinful life and take the path of truth and righteousness?! Of course, God Himself selects His new family, new sons and daughters, by the people who surrender their lives for the sake of salvation of sinners. There is a reason why the Lord said: «Those who are well, have no need of a physician, but those

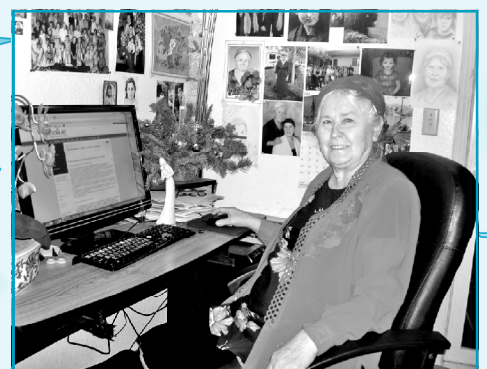
who are sick: I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance» (Mark 2:17).

The Prison ministers are people who turned away from their ambitions, neglect, and bias and took, as foundations, only the love that the Lord has commanded us all: «A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another» (John 13:34). Gratitude to the people who dedicated their lives, for even in the present day there is a mass awakening of those who turned away from the ways of this world. Such great news of the progress amongst Christian believers, is like music to their ears. Every person should realize that with every new revival of a imprisoned person, our society becomes simply better. If you carefully read the Gospel it will be clear that the Lord made any sinful people His faithful servants. The most startling is that Jesus did not condemn any sinner.

Continued on
2nd page

YOUR LETTERS

A compilation of responses to the Prisoner's editor read on Page 3



**Congratulations
on this happy and
joyful holiday!**

«Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!»
(LK 24:5-6).

**I congratulate all friends on the
happiest holiday — the Resurrection
of our Lord Jesus Christ!**

With love, Angelina MALTSEVA,
from Sacramento, USA



Prison ministers of American mission «Hope of freedom». From the left to the right: Viktor Lukianov, Sergey Madjuhin, Sergey Pronskiy, Oleg Moroz. Photographed against the background of «Stanford Creek Correction Centre» Aberdeen, Washington

GREAT MISSION OF PRISON MINISTER

Completion,
of the 1st page

Moreover, He even asked His Father to forgive sins to His murderers: «*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*» (Luke 23:34). It just that love which God loved the whole world, including all stumbled and lost. «*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*» (John 3:16).

This verse from the Holy Scripture is often quoted in the Christian world. It emphasizes the perfect love of God upon the attitude towards all sinners. Why do a lot of Christians lack this love? God loves us all and we need to love each other. However not all Christians have such love. It is simple to explain such situation. It is much more convenient to love those who love you. It is much more pleasant to do good to those who do good to you. And still it is much more convenient to judge other people than judge yourself.



Service at women reformatory in Odessa region, Ukraine

What is the value of criminals in prison? After all among them are thieves, addicts, murderers, prostitutes and others. We call them «outcasts of society».

Did the Lord think the same way when people judged others? The Gospel gives us a clear answer: «*Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, «Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?» This they said, testing Him, that they might have some-thing of which to accuse Him.*

But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, «He who is without sin among you, let him



Brothers from «Black Dolphin» after The Last Supper. To the right, in the 1st row, Aleksey Zhurba

throw a stone at her first». And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Them those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no

of God. Who knows, perhaps someone just did not attach any importance to this, although it is written: «But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same» (Luke 6:32,33).

Perhaps, being a true servant of the prison is a high vocation to which the Lord puts the only selected. Today it is necessary more than ever to the whole human society that no matter how high the walls are, criminals were and are a part of every society. That is why our society reaps what it had once sowed.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Today I would like to say that your work is greatly important to prisoners. We get large number of e-mails from the convicted. I would like to quote with the words:

«Peace to you, dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

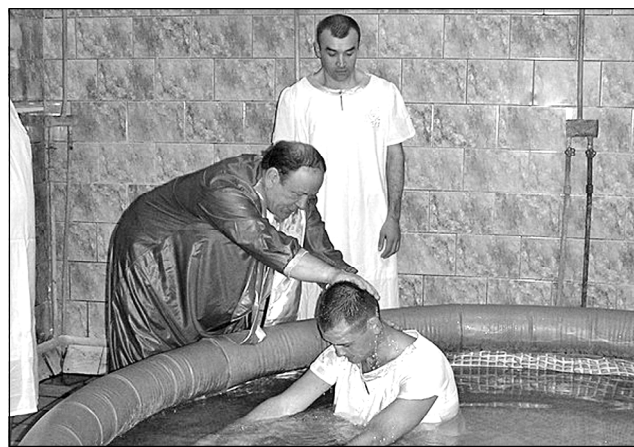
Thank you, for your diligent work in God's name, bringing the Truth and the Light. Your letters to the prisoners are like balm on the sore wounds. I am very much impressed by your work, because you don't even belong to yourselves. You put everything on the

altar for God. Thank God that he send you to hospitals, orphanages and other places. I always pray for all prison ministers to get the Lord's help and blessing in all difficulties. Pastor Viktor Tehrib often visits our reformatory with other brothers in Christ. They all are prison ministers. Sometimes I listen to his sermons and weep. He always speaks of love and simplicity.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Your labor are is not in vain to the Lord, He needs you. There are a lot of prayers about your ministry. God will not leave you! You are blessed because you save the doomed from the eternal damnation. A lot of people are saved with through your help. God bless you all! Amen.

Brother in Christ Aleksey ZHURBA. Prison «Black Dolphin», Russia».

There is a large number of such letters in our newspaper office. Revived Christians need your service. Moreover, it is always interesting to know how the prison service passes in the other colonies and prisons. This information encourages people greatly. They literally boast because they know that God does many



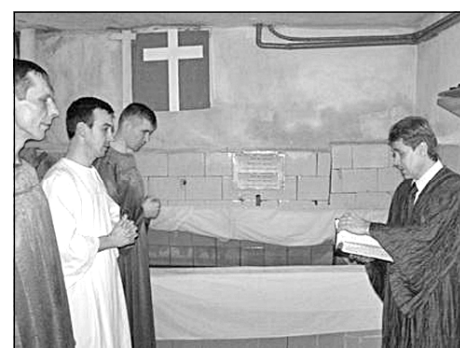
Service at reformatory in Smolensk region, Russia

miracles at numerous prisons.

The thing is that the world of imprisonment to sin is a solitary world where people are pulled

to one another if they see that the majority moved to one particular side. A global revival of lost souls which were pulled with all their hearts to Christ by repentance began on this day. And we can improve the results of this revival through the spirit of our prison ministry. If prison ministers from other countries give us some materials for publication, it shouldn't be difficult.

There are only two issues that directly relate to the prisoners in



Service at reformatory in Tula region, Russia

gives them the right to self-expression. Therefore I call upon all prison ministers to cooperate with the newspaper «Prisoner». If we unite, we will distribute «Prisoner» to every prison ministry. All of the difficulties we have encountered, with God's help, are next to nothing without any cooperation



Service at reformatory in Dnepropetrovsk region, Ukraine

former Soviet republics: a magazine «The Gospel of the Barbed Wire» and the «Prisoner», loved by many prisoners. It is very important to report conducted prison mini-

from you.

Let's contribute our labor to the most for the Lord this year! As the editor of «Prisoner», I honestly tell you that this newspaper is not only mine, but is also yours. That is why any prison minister can send his material to our e-mail and address. We can only produce one hundred percent result for the Lord by combining the love of God and his followers.

Unfortunately, we cannot please even the smallest part of the interested people, who send letters with requests. That is why I urge you to unite and approach the issue of serving at larger scale through publications in the «Prisoner».

The editorial staff of the newspaper «The Prisoner» wishes all prison ministers God's blessing in the difficult and crucial service! You are God's chosen servants and your work is priceless. I want to finish my message with words from the Bible:

«Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins» (James 5:20).

I. GORIK.



Prison ministers and guests from the USA after visiting prison museum «Alkatraz»

YOUR LETTERS

100,000th edition to you!

Dear brother in Christ! I wish peace to your soul and heart! Peace to all who work on the field of God with you, who are involved in the creation of the newspaper «Prisoner».

Brother Igor, I have two issues of the newspaper in my hands, and the Lord permitted me to write a brief comment of «Prisoner». This is a newspaper made simply for us! Praise to God He sent it to our hands through this great publication. It is a God's miracle! I have never seen such newspaper. I hope that this edition will increase to one hundred thousand copies.

You gave a unique opportunity to all prisoners — to share their experiences in this newspaper, testimonies and all subjects which concern us, the prisoners. Dear brother, I really want to receive «Prisoner» constantly. If it is possible, please send your newspaper to my email. I will pray for the success of this newspaper to our God.

May God bless you all! With Christ's love and prayers for you, His lowest servant,

Alex ZHURBA,
Prison «Black Dolphin», Russia.

Well done!

Peace to you given by the God and our Lord Jesus Christ! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ from far away and from our native Ukraine!

I was born in the Soviet Union. And that is why I cannot imagine you as foreigners. I got the newspaper «Prisoner» a month ago. Read it by myself and gave it to three people interested in it, and also we pray for the continuation of the issue in our gatherings. Bringing together the views of the newspaper, I can express them to you in one word: «Well done!» However, I think it would be nice for you to perhaps tell us what motivates you in your work. **«Not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men»** (Ephesians 6:6,7).

Therefore the Lord leads me to pray for you, that your work reflects commitment to God and served God's glory! Hallelujah!

I send you some poems written at different times; I hope to work with you for the glory of the Lord!

Best regards, your brother in Christ

V. ZASKOKIN,
ФКУ ИК-2, St. Production, 18, с. Kazan,
Tatarstan, 420021.

Thanks to the newspaper I found a job

Hello, dear and beloved ministers of the newspaper «Prisoner»! I welcome you all to the world of God and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ! With all my heart I congratulate you on the New Year 2013 and Christmas. God bless you and strengthen the field of his!



Thank you so much for the newspaper «Prisoner». I also thank you very much for what is printed about what we do for God. I received from you a small parcel of thread, needles, and your letter on January 10th. I was genuinely glad and gave glory thanks to the Creator! I still knit socks for children, large families, and those who are in need. And I am glad that I can serve God and praise His holy name by doing these small things. Many people ask who did it when they are given socks and surprisingly to hear the answer. They say, «Thank God!» As for me it is better than any award, as they praise and thank God.

If possible, please give my gratitude to those who have provided money and came to you with a request to buy and send a thread here. I thank them very much. And may God bless them! With Christ's love, praying for you, your brother in Christ

Sergei BOGATIREV,
БНК-70, Detachment 12, st. Nizhuretskogo, 1,
Berdichev, Zhitomir region, Ukraine, 13306.

Full of God's Blessing

Glory to God, the Father Almighty! Dear editors of «The Prisoner»!

I want to thank you for this excellent newspaper. I wish you prosperity to every newspaper edition with all my heart. God's grace to you and your families! Peace and love to your homes! After all, the newspaper does wonders that

come from the Lord. And it is truly divine. Thank you for it.

Your newspaper came into my hands by God's will. It was given me to from one woman. It is simply impossible to be indifferent to it, because when you read it, tears appear in my eyes, and it radiates God's warmth. Such publications are necessary in places of imprisonment. It's a pity that I cannot make a donation. After all no one writes to me, but my faith in God helps me to overcome this. And now, as I am writing this letter to you, I leave my burden with the Lord, for he helps me. I want Him to open your hearts, and hear the cry of my soul. I ask you to print my letter in your newspaper, as well as my address under the heading «Looking for spiritual fellowship with Christians». Because you know, I'm alone and not young, I am 63 years old. All hope in God! May God protect you!

With love, your sister in Christ

Vera TSURCAN,
Dobryvody, 63/1 Zbarazh district,
Ternopil region, Ukraine, 47341.

Publicity is Great Power

I have two issues of «Prisoner» from Ukraine. It's very good and interesting newspaper. It carries a lot of useful and new information for me, and for all those who read it. I am pleased that the newspaper «Prisoner» is interesting for people in prison and for all in Christ.

I read the opinions about this newspaper with pleasure. Thank God that there are people on Earth who care about our fate and the salvation of our souls. I read in the newspaper «Prisoner» the poems that prisoners send. «Searching for spiritual communication» column has appeared recently, with which I was greatly pleased! There are a lot of different examples of how people came to God and believed in Him. There is also an interesting



section «prisons around the world». I thought that the worst prisons are in Russia, but there are still worst prisons in Mexico, Africa, and even in America! Thank God, there are prisons which look like hotels and resorts. I cannot believe it!

A delegation of Italians and French came to us recently in Lozvy. They were filming a documentary about the Gulag and the IK-56. These guests were with us two weeks. We were fed very well for the time of their being, and praise God, we still are fed rather well. Warders stopped beat us, we get letters, go for walks, read the Bible, and most importantly — pray.

I thank to God for all he did! Everyone really like the newspaper «Prisoner».

Artem CHAKRYAN,
Lozvisky, ФКУ-56, Ivdelsky district,
Sverdlovsk region, Russia, 624579.

Testimonies Encourage Repentance

Hello, dear brothers and sisters, the editorial staff of the newspaper «The Prisoner»! I Greet you all and all the readers by love of our Lord Jesus Christ! Glory and praise to Him! Thank you for the work on God's field, carrying in the hearts of readers the Word of Truth, which is giving us a drink of Water of Life.

This letter is written to you by a man who is serving a life sentence in Russia. I have recently come across your paper, and I read it in one breath. This is very useful, educational, spiritual and informative publication. It fully complies with words spoken by Christ in Scripture (Mark, Ch. 2, v. 17).

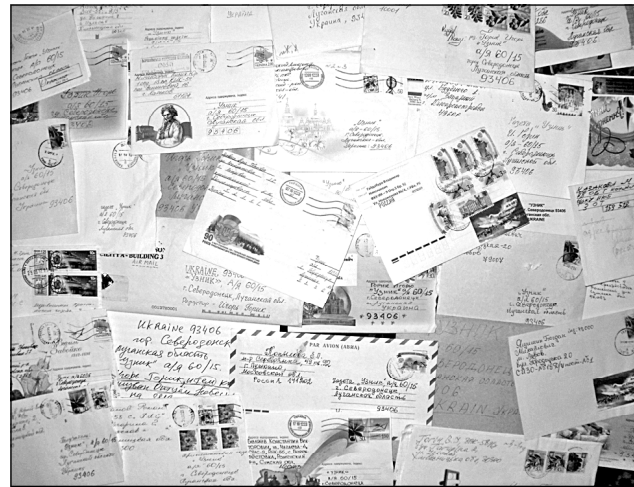
The newspaper calls through the testimonies of people that believed and repented, to urge others to repent, if they had not already done so, and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior in their hearts. At the same time, the paper helps the believers themselves and to stand firm in the faith and be spiritually enriched.

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to get your newspaper regularly. If possible, I ask you this as favor, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you and let the joy be in your hearts!

A. GOLOVACH,
ФКУ ИК-18, Kharp, Priuralsky district,
Yamal, Russia, 629420.

A Ship for the Rescue

Hello, dear workers in the Lord of the newspaper «The Prisoner»! A big repentant sinner Victor is writing to you, who believed with all his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ now.



I was lucky enough to read the first issue of your newspaper thanks to the kind people. A huge heartfelt thank you! I am interested person and I want to say that we need a newspaper. This is very interesting, wonderful edition. It is sad that it is a lack of Christian newspapers for the prison system. Last sinners are collected in this system. Here's a field, which is in need of farmers just as Jesus Christ come to save us **«I did not come to call to righteous, but sinners, to repentance»** (Mark 2:17).

With all my heart I thank God for the fact that there is one more ship for the rescue which is equipped with all kinds of gear to rescue drowning, lost all hope of rescue. Rocks, reefs, strong winds and rough waters dispossessed them of the debris that somehow helps to keep the surface of water. White sails of your ship come in sight of the horizon. And we all want to wish you good sailing and a good catch.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, a prisoner convicted of a particularly serious crime to 11 years of imprisonment in a penal colony is writing to you. Being free, I thought that all talks about God were talks of crazy insane people. I couldn't even listen the conversations on that topic. They caused aggression in my damaged mind. There were no ethic and morality for me. All kinds of terrible crimes I have not committed in his madness.

But it would be appropriate to say about the miracle of my conversion from darkness to God. I found faith! Faith has made me happy. And it covers all the joyous feeling of gravity, which leads to depression. It is like a breath of fire or ice cold from the fire! Who can say that it's not a miracle? Have faith in the word of the Lord! Do the works of faith! I ask holy prayers of my sinful soul. Best regards to you, the repentant sinner.

Victor SMELICH,
ФКУ ИК-43, Bach, 3, Mine Yagunovskaya,
Kemerovo, Russia, 650905.

This is a Topical Publication of a Newspaper

Love the Lord Jesus Christ! I greet all the employees of the newspaper «Prisoner»!

By the grace of God, we have the actual paper that is not afraid of controversial issues, that is honest and compassionate. Taking this opportunity, I want to say that I have no way to help you financially, but be sure to pray to our Lord Jesus Christ for your desired for all newspaper. Glory to God!

I would also like to note a few items in a Russian charity project «Christmas Tree Angel». Brothers, let us pray for the equivalent of such a project to be appeared in Ukraine. It's a remarkable testimony that our God — is love! Many people can come to terms with the family and God. There is also very true and important article «Panic Room». It is impossible to conceal, we need to shout as loud as it Joanna Jessen does. It's scary, it's inconvenient, but it is



necessary to shout. If this article is to stop one woman, it will be a victory. I'm sure that by your article and by the witness of Joanna our God will stop many people from this madness. I got a huge edification from a brother in Christ, Yuri Markov. I'd like to say some words to Yuri Markov:

— Dear brother in Christ, once I took the example of those who have lived life full of crime. I even had a dream of going to «covered». It became true — I am a life sentenced now. Everything I have experienced here and passed... But the Lord, in His mercy touched my heart. Your testimony supported me. Answer me, please.

I would like to encourage the brothers in Christ from the Berdichev city, who knits socks for orphans. Brothers, well done! God showed that there are a lot of His children in torture chambers. I will pray for you, a low bow to all of you from me. Let the God fill your needs your service. I also thank Michael Pravis for his work. God gave me comfort in the form of the newspaper «Prisoner» by this man. Let our Lord pour out His good and will fill all your needs! With a sincere heart, your brother in Christ

Sergei MUSIENKO,
ЗНК-58 ПЛС, Gagarina str., 2, Izyaslav,
Khmelnytsky region, Ukraine, 30300.

Looking for spiritual communication

Tokach Miroslav Petrovich, Svobodi avenue, 51-38, Uzhgorod, Zakarpatska region, Ukraine, 88005.

Baboshin Nikolay, reformatory № 1 Sosnovka, Mordovia, Russia, 431120.

Budakov Sergey Vladimirovich, Repina street 2, Novoaltaysk, Altaysk region, Russia, 658081.

Neskoromniy Nickolay Evgenievich, Ostrovskogo street 2, Vinnitsya, Ukraine, 21001;

Romanov Sergey Valerievich, the same address;

Buloh V.U., the same address;

Ilenko V.I., the same address;

Vishtachenko A.P., the same address;

Petriga S.N., the same address.

Iluhin Maxim Vladimirovich, Nizgureckogo street 1, Berdichev, Zhitomirsk region, Ukraine, 13306.

Saveliev Mihail Ludvigovich, reformatory № 85, urban-village Bucha, Irlansky district, Kiev region, Ukraine, 08289.

Kartynnik Vladimir Vladimirovich, Kirova str., T-1, Grodno, Belorussia, 230025.

Omelchenko I.V., Vatutina street 172, Zhitomir, Ukraine, 10001.

Pastuh Vasiliy F., Budenogo street 1, Zapadnyy, Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, 49600.

Kovtun Nikolay Ivanovich, ПИК-56, ПЛС-2, Perekestovka, Romensky district, Sumyska region, Ukraine, 42073.

Tsurkan Vera Grigorievna, Dobrovody 63/1, Zbarazh district, Ternopil region, Ukraine, 47341.

Tolkachev Sergey Genadiyevich, Gagarina street 2, Izyaslav, Khmelnytsky region, Ukraine, 30300.

Tarasenko Oleg, Gagarina street 2, Izyaslav, Khmelnytsky region, Ukraine, 30300.

Ivanov Sergey Vyacheslavovich, СИЗО-19, Gorodotskaya street 20, Lviv, Ukraine, 79007. (He asks to respond to him his pen friends from Germany, Russia, America, Ukraine. He used to live in reformatory 47, urban-village Zhvirka, Sokalsky district, Lviv region, where the fire happened).

Lazarev V. R., Korotchenko str. 31, YBH-31, Novgorod-Siversky, Chernigiv region, Ukraine, 16000;

Fedoruk Andrey Leonidovich, the same address.

Sholohov Denis, reformatory 18, Harp, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Russia, 629420.

Yakovlev Igor P., reformatory 18, Harp, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Russia, 629420.

Nikulin S. V., reformatory № 56, Perekestovka, Romensky district, Sumyska region, Ukraine, 42073.

Sizko Konstantin Ivanovich, Nikitovska reformatory, Zhivopisnaya street 1, Gorlovka, Donetsk region, Ukraine, 84635.

Semirazum Ivan, ФКУ ИК-6, Sol-Iletsk, Orenburg region, Russia, 461505.

Sergey lived for a long time, living for his own pleasures. He started go in for sports since juvenile age. He wanted to attain power and importance among his peers. Having started to take an alcohol since the age of 14, he has come to the conclusion that he won't achieve great success in sports. Being able to take a leadership, he organized a group of robbers.

Thanks to the amnesty, he didn't serve his time. Caught for the 2nd time, he

— Brother in Christ who came to believe being imprisoned said once: «Sergey, you are ready, go repent!»

In November 1994, Father found His son who **«was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found»** (Lk 15:32). Unbelievable court decision was the first miracle for all his friends.

Sergey decided to tell the truth at the trial for the first time in his life, knowing that his words may lead to 5 year sentence. As

Loving Father provided all essential for young missionary family with two children. They had already have a transport for serving.

Sergey wanted to get a long-time permission for visiting prisoners, but Mordova's reformatories closed for visitors in a half of the year. Sergey didn't lose his heart and continued to knock at the doors. At last he was sent to the juvenile delinquents. Sergey had to deserve management's confidence.

— We have 60 orphans

«Dear brothers in Christ! On October 7th many of you responded to call for pray and joined to intercession for God placed at www.uznik.net. We prayed about what coordinator of Mordovia prison serving Sergey Trocenko asked. We, Nickolay Zanirov, Aleksandr Khokhlov, Sergey Arkhipov, living in the same Sosnovka's prison cell, are witnessing that God indeed heard our prayers.

On 20 March 2012 we accept Baptism, entered in Holy Gospel with our Lord!

Prison Minister Sergey TROCENKO

was welcomed at the prison like at home. He was happy for that and said: «Prison is my home!» Soon the happiness changed to the void, friends became enemies and he had to sleep with a knife in hands.

By God's will, there was a man sentenced for belief in Holy Gospel. Sergey respected him for his boldness of saying truth at anyone's face. Sergey repeatedly protected him from other spiteful prisoners.

At that time he wanted to change his life. He wanted to stop his criminal activities. But Sergey did another crime, having beaten two men. The management of the reformatory decided to give him the last chance and sent him to the solitary cell.

Sergey started to prepare to for his admission into a university. He studied English. After being released, he entered a university and became the monitor of the group. He didn't know about **«for nothing is a secret, that shall not be made manifest, neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad»** (Lk. 8:17).

Harmful habit to take drugs that he got in confinement, made Sergey to start again his criminal activities. He found the Holy Gospel at another burglarized house. Burglar left the house with apprehensiveness having not stolen anything.

— I was put into prison again; there is another life somewhere, but I can't find it, — said Sergey.

Awareness of his powerlessness has led him to attempt suicide. Loving Father waited His «wandering son», wishing to save him.



a result, he was sentenced for 1.5 years only.

Sergey was sent to the reformatory except being really free man. God blessed these years. The management allowed him to conduct meetings twice a week.

His first days at large were really hard. There were his partners in crime at his flat. God blessed His son's zeals in search for work and didn't let him to turn to crime again. Having freed Sergey's heart and life, God has blessed His son to serve Him.

— Where is my house? — thought Sergey. — I spent most of my life in prison.

And the prison ministry began. God granted him partner in life, very pretty and loving Olga. Together they started to visit reformatories of Kharkiv, Belgrad, Mordovia, Bryansk and Arkhangelsk regions.

After 7 months expedition to Russia prisons Sergey and Olga Trocenko replied to God's appeal and started to serve at reformatories in Saratov and Mordovia regions.

without any towels and any toilet accessories. Help them and we will talk then, — said the reformatories manager.

Confused missionary had nothing with him, so he prayed Him and get Revelation: **«The case that is given to you is Mine. Go to My children»**.

Sergey went to near Gospel churches. In a week a fully loaded bus came to the reformatory. That was a great event for unbeliever management.

— Work! Now I see that you are believer, — said manager.

After that victory God started to open the local reformatory gates of Arkhangelsk and Saratov. It is impossible to list all Sergey's actions directed for the saving mission. One of latest blessings was singing a 5-year contract for visiting prisoners in Mordovia reformatories.

I have included a letter of gratitude below, form brothers in Christ which confirms a need of evangelism at places of imprisonment:

Two brothers in Christ accepted water Baptism with us God turned us from the dark to the Light and turned us away from Satan to God. Some of us accepted and came to believe 14 years ago, being at a death chamber, but we were unable to accept water Baptism all these years.

With the God's help we accepted water baptism and believed in breaking of the bread. God be Blessed!

We thank you all! We thank those who help Sergey Trocenko and donated for this service!

We thank all management, who gave the permission for visiting us. Brother in Christ Sergey can communicate and visit us every month. Of course, we thank Sergey and all his brothers in Christ who come to us!

Recall us in your prayers to Lord's Father of our Jesus Christ strengthen our hearts with Faith and Love. And now another 30 brothers in Christ are waiting to meet Sergey.

With thank and prayer, your brothers in Christ, Nickolay Zanirov, Aleksandr Khokhlov, Sergey Arkhipov. Sosnovka, Zubovo-Polyansky district, Mordovia, Russai, 431120».

Sergey Trocenko has kind, tired and full of love eyes. «He devotes himself for serving...», «...it looks like he hurries to serve», — you can hear that from people already spoken with him. **«Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint»** (Isaiah. 40:30,31).

Dear Ladies,

When I read the articles under the heading «Christian Family» in newspaper Living Hope, and in the new newspaper Prisoner as well, I would always notice that the majority of prisoners who contact the newspaper and talk about their needs and testimonies are men. It is believed that men are less sentimental than women; however, men are the ones who contact the newspaper the most. Some of them express discontent and criticism against Christians; others seek spiritual and emotional support. There are people who have discovered God in their lives and express joy in their salvation. Why do you ladies keep silent?



What does it mean? Does it mean that you have lost your faith in the possibility that something in your life can change and it will become better for you? You might think that nobody loves you, and you have stopped believing those people who have testified how God has changed their lives.

TO WOMEN DEPRIVED OF FREEDOM:

Dear and lovely Ladies, we do see you on our television sets, how you march in formation within prisoner's boundaries in your dark and gloomy attire. We see you in prisons, during your leisure time, and at work. It is very hard for me and many other people to see you there. It is very hard to see your faces and your eyes in which one can easily see the shadows of your difficult past; however, we do believe that another woman lives inside the heart of each of you, a woman that dreams about kindness and happiness and reunion with her loved ones. We know, that deep inside your soul, there is a wish to love and be loved.

Dear Ladies, smile! Spring is coming, and it is like a kind sender of hope for a better life for you. When spring comes, nature wakes up and every creation revives. Spring can happen in a person's life, too, when the person entrusts his or her life to our Lord. Don't believe that you are not loved, or sympathized, or that others are unmerciful to you. Thanks to The One on High, every one of you has a way and hope. We humans are all His creations. As we draw nearer to Him, He will also get closer to you. It is written: **«The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you»** (2-Chronicles 15:11).

Dear Ladies, believe me! God is able to transform you beyond recognition by His spiritual content. He will revive your spirit,



Foto danlux.livejournal.com

and it will give an effect on your body. He will save you from the bad habits you may currently find comfort in. Your faces will be bright and clean, and your eyes will sparkle. Dear Mothers and Daughters, smile! Jesus is the Savior of the world. He loves you. And I wish He will be born in your hearts one day. I assure you, you will not recognize yourselves if you will have opened your hearts for the Lord.

Try to study deeply the New Testament, and it will open you the door to the world of Jesus Christ. He is the only our Savior and Hope! You will notice that your heart will be filled with joy, peace, love, peace of mind, and thankfulness to our Loving Heavenly Father. And for those people who judge the stumbled and fallen, I would like to offer a poem by Victor Hugo:

*I tell you, hush! no word of sneering scorn
True, fallen; but God knows how deep her sorrow.
Poor girl! too many like her only born
To love one day to sin and die the morrow.
What know you of her struggles or her grief?
Or what wild storms of want and woe and pain
Tore down her soul from honor? As a leaf
From autumn branches, or a drop of rain
That hung in frailest splendor from a bough
Bright, glistening in the sunlight of God's day
So had she clung to virtue once. But now
See Heaven's clear pearl polluted with earth's clay!
The sin is yours with your accursed gold
Man's wealth is master woman's soul the slave!
Some purest water still the mire may hold.
Is there no hope for her no power to save?
Yea, once again to draw up from the clay
The fallen raindrop, till it shine above,
Or save a fallen soul, needs but one ray
Of Heaven's sunshine, or of human love.*

These wonderful spring days, I wish you dear ladies God blessings! Best wishes to you for each and every new day!
Wish true love and respect to all you,

Tamara SINKEVICH, Nikopol, Ukraine.

„A HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS“

by Mikhail MARHASEV



Mikhail Marhasev

A prison is a foretaste of hell. It is the place where personal unhappiness and shared hardships are our constant companions. Here we get familiar with hopelessness when we think of our doomed dreams and destroyed plans. But I know that, in our fallen world, hopelessness comes to people on both sides of the barbed wire.

Long time ago an angel of God visited a childless family of Israel farmers and foretold the birth of an unusual boy which would be dedicated to God from the womb of his mother. He was chosen for fulfillment a special and dangerous mission, it was he was to be the judge of Israel and save his people from their enemies and oppressors — the Philistines. His name was Samson, and turbulent life of this hero was both tragic and glorious. Samson was called the Nazarene, i.e. he was a man submitted to God and dedicated to Him. The hero had great power, but also he had great self-will which resulted in interrupting the fulfillment of his mission.

Well, today we, too, know about the «Nasserites» of God. I mean the strong and talented people who prefer so called merry life and heavy partying instead of Bible studies and church worships. They spend their youth in the pursuit of girls on the other side of town. This is a very common and recuing story, and unfortunately, it rarely has happy ending.

Samson was the strongest on his streets, he was reckless and he would always get into situations that today we call the riot and disassembly. However, we learn from the Bible that God used Samson's mistakes as ways to punish the enemies of the Israelites. Of course, playing with fire results in getting burns, and Samson was not an exception. His beloved woman, the Philistine, betrayed him and sold him to her people, the Philistines. So, suddenly this great warrior discovered himself weak and helpless and in prison of his enemies. It is possible that at this moment he remembered that he should have listened to his parents, but it was too late to change anything. His enemies did not play jokes — they put out his eyes, bound in chains and made him grind in the prison house.

Instead of delivery the Israelites, Samson was ashamed and ended up being a slave and the first clown in the Philistines' circus. But as we observe, God did not forget him and did not depart from him who had been born to the Earth and chosen to bring glory to God. Despite long years of shame and having broken the covenant, despite long years of captivity and having wasted God's gifts for empty things and

silly insults, Samson had a sparkle of faith in his heart even after he had lost his power and glory. The Holy Bible tells about what was happening in his contrite and humble heart during those long lonely months of humiliating confinement in prison. And, from the bottom of this humility, we can hear the following: **«And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes»** (Judges 16:28).

Samson asked a good measure of the Old Testament retribution, i.e. eye for eye, which is justice of the ancient. However, his prayer has a deeper meaning for us because as he, persecuted and humiliated, was remembering God and praying to Him, we, too, get hope in our hopelessness and helplessness. Prisoners do understand the value of light of hope when it lights up in their lives through heavy fog of spiritual blindness and burning shame of their past sins. **«O Lord God, remember me...»** — prayed Samson. We, too, remember Him Who has never forgotten us, sinners.

Many years had passed since Samson's days, and another prisoner which was battered and exhausted, cried out to God — to God that was being crucified and dying on lonely and dark hill by Jerusalem **«... remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom»** (Luke 23:42). In contrast to Samson who grabbed the two columns in the Philistines' building, the crucified robber had his hands nailed to the wood of the cross. This reminds us, the prisoners who are «nailed» to desperate situations by years of sinful habits and ungodly lifestyles, about hope in God, even when we are in deep disbelief in ourselves. It is a true notice made by the fathers of church: the robber has stolen the kingdom of God in front of the death. That is why the robber has been called wise because he recognized Christ of Israel and the Savior of the world in the blooded and dishonored Jesus.

«... and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God...» sighed Samson who used to be the most powerful and independent. He showed in his prayer that he is weak and unable to climb out of the pit that he had dug for himself. Life teaches that weakness is the lot of every man because one day every dictator, the strongest man, and the leader will face their old age, weaknesses, illnesses, and death.

Prison reminds us about our isolation and loss. They are the most valuable things in human's

life such as health and life, belongings and relationships. Obviously, especially in prison where the principle of surviving the most adapted reigns, weakness is an occasion for exploitation. Being strong is a lifestyle and defense mechanism in the rotten and inverted community. However, it is just an illusion. What does one have near sunset of one's life? Weakness. What do we get when young and strong body is swallowed by microscopic enemy illness? Weakness.

In light of our weakness, God's help shows up as was expressed in Psalms: **«For thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away: thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever»** (Psalms 72:26). Samson ended up with the same conclusion, as we can observe from his prayer. We learn about our natural weakness from some life situations, or our disabilities, or cunning temptations of the enemy. We stumbled over and over again, we break promises and resolutions, but the prayer of repenting Samson is our heritage since it leads to the source of grace and strength.

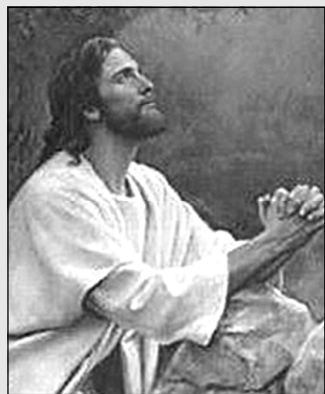
Like Samson, every person is created special and unique and brought in to the world with a purpose to fulfill a mission that has eternal consequences for the person and people around him or her. However, we do sometimes loose our way and are not able to fulfill the mission that God has chosen for us. But if we trace the life of Samson, we can discover that regardless of his serious mistakes, downfalls and incomplete missions, his name appears on the list of the Heroes of Faith (Hebrews 11:32-34) because his testimony is a testimony of faith and hope in hopeless situation.

If this world is the only reality, then all people, free and imprisoned, are doomed in hopelessness, filled with disappointments. But for us who are in prison and are deprived of our liberty, the door of faith and repentance is open to accept the forgiveness, as the crucified robber next to Jesus on the cross, who arose from death, the Savior, the Son of God, Jesus Christ who remembers us in His Kingdom and strengthens us in the valley of Death. And this is the only One who we have today...

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USA (Sakramento).



Mikhail Marhasev during conference with prison priests



LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

This Issue of the new-spacer «Prisoner» offers a new article «Let's Pray Together». The fact is that many people who just came to God consider that in Christian families, there is only peace and God's grace, and that sin is practically absent.

However this is a mistaken opinion, because the devil's attack on Christian families is rather more stronger and reoccurring, and as a rule many young people with fragile faith leave God's path. Unfortunately, there are fairly many Christian families, where not only do the children disobey their parents but also, as the worldly people, end up in jail or begin using drugs.

Undoubtedly, for Christian parents and relatives it is a big blow, when children and grandchildren leave the true path. This is why «Prisoner» invites all Christians to join in prayer for our Brothers and Sisters that are in need of prayer support.

†

Sister Angelina from the U.S. asks for prayers for her grandson's wife, **Svetlana**.

Svetlana, once a member of a church, had a good family, and was very fond of her children. But somehow the tempter of souls persuaded her to use drugs. She has been using drugs for over four years and not living with her family. Finally she was deprived of parental right, and disappeared. Her three children, four-seven years old, are being raised by their uncle.

From time to time Svetlana ends up in jail for theft. Only then do her relatives know her whereabouts. While in jail relatives visited her. She cried, wanting to start her life over again, to quit using drugs, and to see her children once again. Upon her release Svetlana was twice enrolled at a rehabilitation center, but she ran away the next day.

A request was made by her relatives to pray for Svetlana. So that the Lord would free her from using drugs and return her to God and her family.

Let's pray together about this need.

(Thanks to all those concerned, Editors of Prisoner).

TESTIMONIES OF

AT THE BORDER OF LIFE AND DEATH

My name is Aleksey, I was born in Arkhangelsk, Russia. I was brought up in a good family where there were no quarrels or alcohol. During my childhood I was engaged in sports, interested in technology, and learned to play guitar.

During my school years I learned well, played in a school band and in a school theatre. I

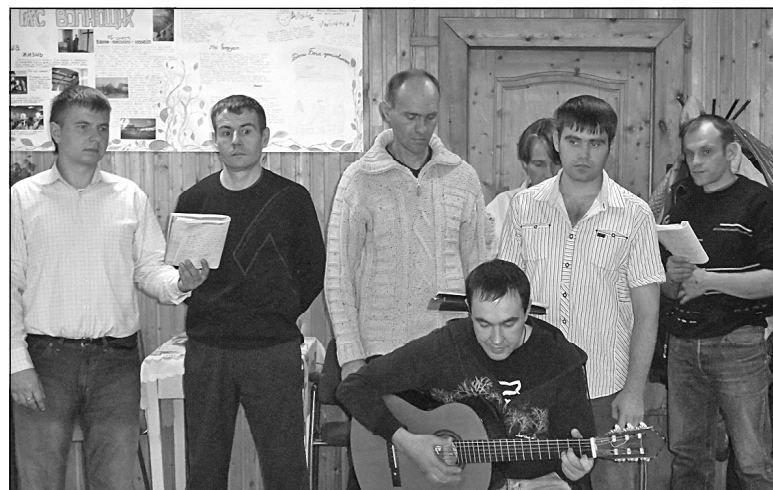


Photo: Rehabilitation Center Good Samaritan Aleksey with a guitar

performed for the honor of my school in different sports competitions. I graduated with a Physical Mathematical bias and a third category chief diploma.

After finishing school I entered the Navy and graduated. Simultaneously, I was studying at the Admiral Makarov Sailor's Academy, from which I didn't graduate.

On my last course of Sailor's Academy I began using opium. At that time I was nineteen years old. From then on my life began to change. By the time I was twenty-three I was heavily

addicted to heroin, and had a large list of complaint records with the police.

I was convicted three times for home burglary, and once for drug possession. In 2001 I was sentenced to four years and six months. After being released I continued using drugs. The next three years (up to 2012) I was using Morphine (nicknamed Crocodile).

By this time I was diagnosed with many diseases. One of

them was, Thrombosis of the lower limbs. I was to have my leg amputated, but God miraculously saved me from this disaster.

This did not stop me from using drugs, and as a result I was diagnosed with Necrosis of both sides of the upper jaw. I had a surgery done, but I still continued using Morphine.

On the verge of life and death a thought was spinning through my head: when will this senseless life, full of pain and disappointment, that I myself created, end.

Miraculously I remembered a friend, who went to a rehabilitation center and returned well in a week. Even in this short period of time, she received medical help in a hospital in Saint Petersburg.

I felt was the peace that the Lord gave me, the freedom from drugs, and the desire to live. The Lord provided me treatment in one of the best clinics in Saint Petersburg.

I completed the program, but in my heart I understood that these eight months were just the beginning of my walk with the Lord.

I stayed to help others who were like I once was. I pray for my service, and I want to make a covenant with God.

God's word says, «...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house» (Acts 16:31).

The Lord softened my mother's heart, which had been hardened towards me. She attends a church in Arkhangelsk.

I am awaiting a plastic surgery. One of the best



I found the phone number of the coordinator in Arkhangelsk, who sent me to a rehabilitation center called Good Samaritan in Priozersk.

There I read and studied God's Word, and soon after that I repented. The first thing

surgeons will be performing the surgery.

Praise the Lord for this new life which He gave to me through His mercy.

Aleksey GIRIN.
Russia.

CHRISTIANS GAVE ME JOY

I am fifty-two years old. I was born and live in Estonia. I was raised by my two grandmothers. Growing up I moved from one grandmother to the other.

I did not do well in school. In sixth grade I was transferred to an Orphan school. When I finished eighth grade then later I enrolled into College.

Like most men I entered the army, and after coming home from service I got married.

It seemed that married life was not my thing, because all I was interested was being with my friends. With friends, of course, there was beer and drunkenness, which lead to jail. From then on life went in a cycle — drunkenness, theft, jail. I went so low that after being released from jail in 1994 I realized home were the streets.

From 1998 to 2000 I was helped for some time and found a place to live in a public residence building. But after it closed down I returned to my old life style.

Life went down the old path for almost six years. During that time I was diagnosed with tuberculosis, because I lived in an abandoned barn. That is when the Lord found me.

Many Christians visited me and told me about Jesus Christ. They also helped me go to a rehabilitation center. From 2007 to 2008 I was in rehab and learned to live a new life, this time not alone, but with God.

After completing rehab I returned to the city, where I was received by a church: Word Of God. The Minister was Oleg Pronin. The brothers from church



helped me reestablish my documents, which I had lost, apply for a job, and find a place to live.

Later I became a minister. I began praying and asking God to send me a companion for life. After a while God answered my prayers with a wonderful wife. We had a church wedding. The whole church was present. Now we are expecting a baby.

Despite the fact that we rent an apartment I believe that eventually God will help us decide where to live.

Praise the Lord and thanks to His mercy that comes through faith. How can I not praise the Lord for everything that He has done for me?

This is not a fairytale, real life comes through faith. Praise the Lord for everything.

Valeriy SEREBRYAKOV.
Estonia.

Once when I was sentenced to death penalty I had a wonderful dream: an irresistible force picked me up, took me from the earth and carried me somewhere upward. I went higher than the glistening stars and colorful planets.

I was ascending higher and higher where time seemed no more. I was taken to the presence of amazing majesty and power, which I in my fantasies never imagined.

Stricken with this greatness, I was terrified and trembled with fear. I understood that I appeared before the face Eternity. The word Presence was written on his forehead. It shone and sparkled till it hurt one's eyes. He began to speak; His speech was similar to the sound of thunder and thousands of seas tossed by a terrible storm. At the same time there was the sound of angels softly singing.

GOD SUPPORTS ME

Suddenly I heard a voice saying: «foolish and ambitious man, you neglected me and despised my revelation for thirty years. You forgot that you need to live for eternity but lived only for yourself. You treated the world's needs light-mindedly and carelessly.

He that controls the universe appoints a time so that you can get rid of the eternal shame. In this precious and short time you must work for the soul. Speaking to you is Eternity. If you make a mistake in correcting your way of life, my wrath shall come upon you».

I am sure that was nothing else but a revelation. It was God alone who talked to me.

Earlier, I lived an absolutely useless and ambitious life. I brutally abused the gift of life. Through God's mercy He showed me a mystery and gave me a chance to live the rest of my life differently.

By God's mercy the death penalty was changed to life imprisonment.

Sin imposes on us a stain that cannot be washed away even this a thousand springs of water, but only with the tears of repentance. The Lord waits for man to despise his own sin and with a crushed heart repent of his sins.

Praise the Lord, I gave my heart to Him and now serve Him.

Victor TOLSTIK, Salt-Ilets, Russia.



BORN AGAIN CHRISTIANS

Yuri
Yunyushkin



started breathing! Glory to God! I felt better and recovered in a while. But as time passed, everything continued as it was before.

My life had one remarkable event. Once, I was detained with drugs and the police brought me to the station. At the moment, I already had a sentence for two years which was delayed. Of course, I was denying the blame and said that the police placed the drugs into my belongings. I knew for sure that I would be locked up. I remember that all of a sudden I started praying with words, «God, if You exist, then let them release me with a signed testimony».

In the evening I was sent into the

I, of course, said no. I lied to this hard of hearing and somewhat blind man and he wrote a certificate saying that I am not a drug addict. I took it as a miracle from God! In addition to that, when my case was passed to the court, I was informed that my judge was Shishulin. I was assured that this was God's miracle!

Because of that I even went to an orthodox chapel and got baptized. Now, I started praying with a different prayer, saying, «God, if I'm going to be imprisoned and you're going to make a miracle again, then I will stop using drugs». The day of the court session came, but the trial was postponed for some reason. The judge invited me into

die very soon. You have some kind of infection, maybe even HIV because you always tremble and you have a constant fever». She understood that she needs God as well and that is why she continued visiting the church and praying for me. She prayed, «God, I give my son to You; I cannot do anything with him anymore. You see, he's dying. I'm not going to worry about it anymore. You save him!»

After some time, my mom saw me in spirit, free and saved. She said that at the moment I was dying, she saw me free, joyful, and with a Bible. In about a month, after she told me her vision, I came to a rehab center. I was not intending to live with God at the

I'm a drug addict, and I was supposed to die

Greetings! Peace be with you!

My name is Yuri; I was born in Krasnoyarsk in a common, soviet family. My parents were working in a factory. My father was a drunk and he constantly brawled at home. When I went to first grade, I finished the first quarter with Bs, but I said that studying was too hard, and during the subsequent years I just stayed home during the fall. That was going on in the 1st-3rd classes.

As I would come home from school, I would drop my backpack and run away from home every day. Every evening my parents would search for me and force me into the house with a help of a belt, and the next day everything would repeat.

When I was in 3rd grade, my father died of a blood-stroke. Mother could not cope with me anymore. I started drinking, smoking, stealing, gambling, and smoking «anasha».

During 6st grade, I would get so drunk that as soon as I would come home, I'd fall down in my room without being able to stand up. Mother tended around me, screamed at me, but she could not do anything anymore.

When I was sixteen, all of our gang was already addicted to alcohol. Without realizing it we were drinking twenty days in a month, thinking, that this was the meaning of life and that we're making memories for the future. Our guidepost was simple: if we remembered something in the morning, then we were sober the night before. In reality, we were deceived by devil, which was deforming our lives.

At seventeen I became a drug addict. Everything looked so dazzling: restaurants, drugs, and a lot of money... it seemed to me like it was a new loop of my life. But very soon this delusion ended and I felt like a dog on a leash, running in a circle. I decided to stop using drugs, and while I was suffering through the breakthrough, I thought that I was then free. That happened two times. But soon I understood that this was a lie; I was still like a dog on a leash, and whenever I tried running forward, the leash tightened and threw me back.

I remember waking up in the morning without any wish to get up. I was laying and thinking: «this closed circle got to me: waking up — stealing — getting drugged; and again: stealing — getting drugged — going to sleep; in the morning everything just repeats itself». Inside me there was always a feeling that there is supposed to be a way out. It cannot be that this is the end! But my life was rushing down the slope; it was becoming worse and worse.

Once, after the regular dose, I became very ill; everything blurred in front of me and I started choking. There was no one at home. I was laying on kitchen floor thinking: «I'm dying... how absurd is this death... my life is ending so foolishly...» Suddenly, I

ward (for the time being). The crossing guard came up to me and said, «Listen, all of the wards are overfilled. There is a ward with a teenager. Let me put you in that ward». Of course, I accepted. After about five minutes of sitting in the ward, the guard opened the window and gave me tea and cigarettes. My neighbor asked me with a perplexity, «You know him?» I said no.

The next day I was sent to an attorney. The investigator was astonished when an attorney said that they should let me go with a signed testimony or bail that I will not leave the town. Even though investigator wanted to put me to jail, they let me go.

When I walked out, I met my acquaintance who already had five previous convictions. He told me that a couple of months ago he was sued for the drug possession in the central court (at the moment my case was there as well) and his judge was Shishulin. When he was taken for the trial, his wife came with their child as well. This judge rewrote the verdict: instead of imprisonment (it was his 6st conviction); he issued a pronouncement to discharge him with a fine. He explained that his decision was made for the sake of the child.

I didn't understand a lot, but for some reason I prayed again, «God, if You exist, please, make sure that my judge is going to be Shishulin». When I was sent to narcotic dispensary for an examination to see if I'm an addict or not (at the time I already had a record), I prayed with the same prayer, «God, if You exist, please, make sure that I won't be declared an addict, make a miracle!»

When I walked into the office, I saw an elder doctor in a white robe. The narcotics expert and neuropathologist left to watch some kind of show. This elderly man asked me if I use the drugs.

his office and asked, «How much time do you still have left with your last conviction?» I lied again and said that I have less than six months. He said, «Good. I will add 1.5 years which means that you will have 2 years of conditionally-mandatory work. Agreed?» I asked, «What is conditionally-mandatory work?» The judge explained, «You're going to work for two years and 20% of your pay is going to be deducted by the government». Of course, I gladly accepted.

The judge sent me home, saying that they will prepare all the documents themselves, and will send them to the inspectorate. My heart was glorifying God. I even started witnessing that God exists! But the saddest in all of it was that I didn't learn who God is. I didn't come to know Him individually and I didn't feel Him in my heart. Because of that, I could not fulfill my promise before Him. Very soon I forgot about God altogether. I was falling into the abyss of hell even faster. I continued abusing drugs, but with more force and appetite.

In 1.5 years after my conviction, my mother found out that there was a church, where drug addicts become drug free. She started visiting their congregations and praying for my salvation. Mother told me that the Bible says, «With faith the whole house will be saved and you will be saved soon as well». But a dark night came into my life; I was abusing drugs five times a day and was selling all of my things. My liver started falling apart, my skin became dark and my body temperature was high continually. I started trembling after each dose. Before each dose I felt fear that I'm going to tremble again, but I could not skip a dose anymore, either!

Three months passed and my mother lost hope. Looking at me, she said, «You're not going to get saved and will

time. I thought that right after I will become drug free, everything is going to be cool in my life! But God touched my heart during the first weeks and I understood that my life was deformed because I did not have the right faith. I believed that stealing is normal because everybody was stealing. Even the cooks in the kinder garden were stealing produce and the workers at the factory were stealing nails and screws...

But God gave me the understanding that if I'm not going to change my faith and my principles, there will be no victory in my life. God said to my heart, «I want to take everything evil from your life: everything that kills you. I want to give you everything new and fine, so you would live». The desire to serve God emerged in my hearth!

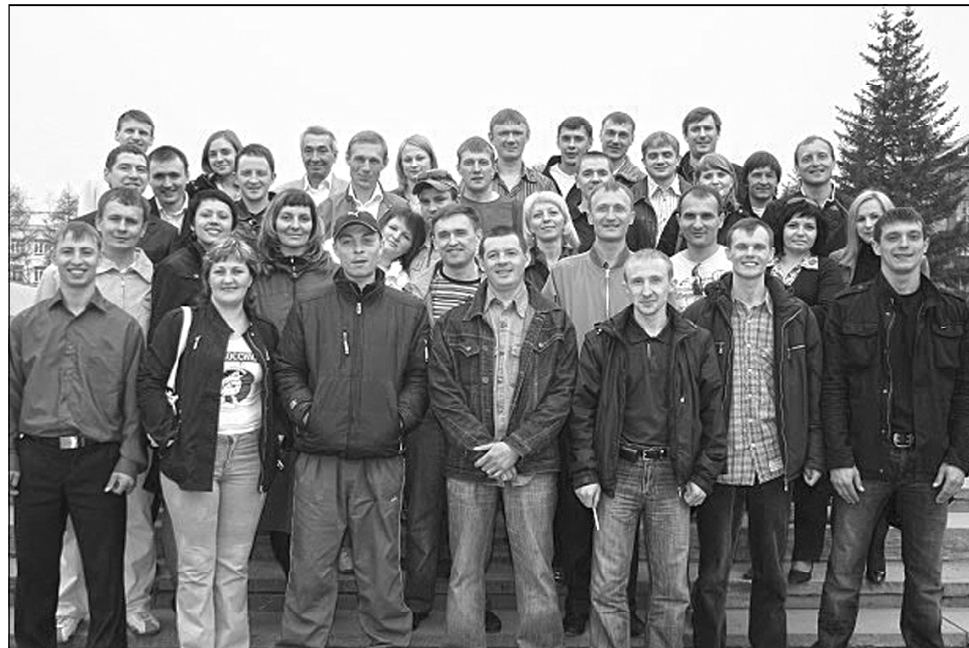
There was one significant moment in my life at the beginning of my rehabilitation. I forgot about it, but God reminded me in five-six years. It was the first month of my rehabilitation. We, rehab patients, were taken to a Sunday church. At the time, I didn't understand anything that was preached. There were around 700 people in church. One man came out to preach about donations. He was the senior at the apartment where I was living during a rehab. This man was a Christian for a little over a year already. Somebody told me that this brother once said that he is going to be standing on this stage and preaching. And there he was, preaching at the pulpit.

Something arose inside me and I said to myself, «I'm going to stand there and preach as well». I didn't even understand at the moment, why I needed it. Six years passed. I was getting ready to preach in church about faith. The Holy Ghost said to me, «Remember that once you believed Me and I made it true? You didn't know anything at the moment; you didn't even understand the Bible. You just believed Me!» When I just started preaching there were people who were asking me, «Where did you come from?»

The God's Word says, «Everything is possible to a believer!» When we believe God, He opens up new possibilities and gives us a fresh start and a new life! Almost thirteen years passed when I injected my last dose and I never regretted that I dedicated my life to Jesus Christ! Because of God's mercy, today I am a pastor in a church in Krasnoyarsk.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He can and wants to fulfill the miracle for every person. For God there is nothing impossible. Just believe in Him. Believe that He will accomplish a miracle for you personally and you will see His glory in your life!

With love of Christ, pastor
Yuri YUNYUSHKIN.
Krasnoyarsk, Russia.



Members of the Rehabilitation center in Krasnoyarsk, Russia

Bible's View on Narcotic Drugs

«Plague» of the 21st century

Drug addiction today is not a problem of one distinctive country or nation, but rather a global tragedy for all humankind. World Health Organization's report that was released in September of last year proved, once again, the danger of drug abuse in the entire world. Recent data shows that over 210 million people out of the total world's population of nearly seven (7) billion have drug addictions. These people constitute 3% of the total population (this number is certainly bigger in reality). Most of these people, namely 47 million, reside in Latin America. Mexico alone is said to have over 1.2 million people who suffer from drug addictions.

Perhaps there is not a single country in the world today that can for sure say that it does not have a problem with drug addiction. This deadly contagion grew its roots everywhere. What makes the issue even sadder is that the majority of drug abusers are people of younger generations. Drugs are available practically in any city of today's world. Drug addiction is a web that ensnared the humankind.

Even teenagers as young as 12-14 years of age get so deep into the use of drugs that they have to be treated at dispensaries. This is somewhat due to the fact that drugs are not sold only in the night clubs but also in colleges and even schools. The world is precipitously rushing to devil's abyss. Illnesses, broken families, death — nothing stops people from this global catastrophe. There is only one reason to this — it is the lack of spirituality of people.



Most people on our planet live without faith and do not have Savior Jesus Christ in their hearts, and this is the main reason why people do not have peace and comfort within themselves. Inner vacuum, low self esteem and uncertainty in tomorrow make people search for ways to calm themselves down and to distract from reality that is filled with trials, fears and hardships. Here is where some turn to cigarettes, alcohol and even drugs for comfort by dozing off.

When it comes to teenagers, they mostly do drugs to imitate the elders and thus come close to this forbidden fruit, which in their minds will give them a status of being adults. The scripture says: **«For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ»** (Phil. 2:21).

90% of all crimes committed today are done under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Murders, car accidents, suicides along with robbery, theft and rape happen because alcohol or drugs were involved. Some realize what they have done only in jails. There is a big price for recklessness. Many ruined fates result from these wicked pleasures.

People lose their human guise when under the influence and turn into pitiful slaves of the sin. Very few people have got out of the drug addiction with their own strength. Even



when people try hard and use different types of sophisticated medicine, only few remain free from the addictions.

This is the outcome of every forbidden fruit. The

following writing will allow the reader to get acquainted with the Bible's view on this subject and provide some true stories of people who went through the experience of suffering from drug addiction. Hopefully, people who are looking into this subject will find answers and let God heal everyone who seeks to be free from this terrible addiction.

«Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye» (1 Cor. 1:36-37).

I. GORIK.

The information and context for the paper «Prisoner» was brought to by «Bible Discussion Club» Montreal, Canada

There are five narcotics mentioned in the Bible, and three of them are stronger than LSD: wormwood, gall, bile, myrrh and mandrake.

Five Drugs that are Mentioned in the Bible



Wormwood

WORMWOOD (bitterness, bitter grass): in Jewish «la'anah».

«He has filled me with bitterness, he has sated me with wormwood» (Lamentations 3:15).

«Remember mine afflictions and my misery, the wormwood and the gall» (Lamentations 3:19).

«But in the end she is bitter as wormwood...» (Proverbs 5:4).

«And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter» (Revelation 8:10-12).

GALL, HEMLOCK (in the Bible represents poisonous substance or poison itself): in Jewish «rosh».

«For their vine is of the vine of Sodom... their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter» (Deuteronomy 32:32).

«They speak vain words, swearing falsely in making covenants; therefore judgment springs up as hemlock in the furrows of the field» (Hosea 10:4).

Also mentioned in Job 20:16, Deuteronomy 29:18, Jeremiah 9:15.

MANDRAKE (translates as «plant of love»): in Jewish «dudaim».

Mentioned only two times in Bible — in Genesis 30:14-16 and in Song of Solomon 7:13.

MYRRH (means to «fill with bitterness»): in Jewish «smurnizo».

«And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not» (Mark 15:23).

The Romans gave this drug to most of the persons on trial.

BILE (bitterness): in Jewish «mererah».

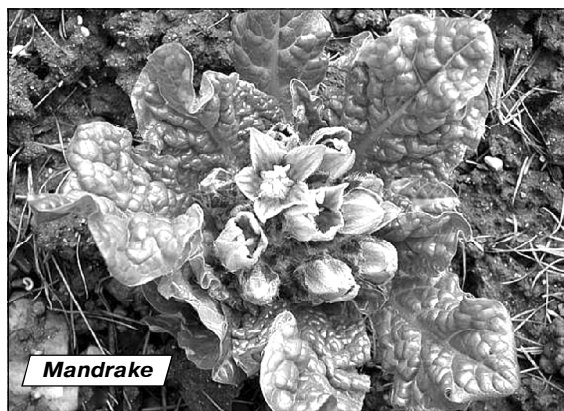
Mathew 27:3-34, Psalm 68:22.

<http://cogmtl.net/Articles/080a.htm>



Gall, Hemlock

Reasons why Christians Should not use drugs



Mandrake

I. A Christian is a new creature — «wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature...» (2 Cor. 5:17).

II. Drug addiction is closely related to occultism — «Now the works of the flesh are manifested, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, ...drunkenness... and such like» (Gal 5:19-20).

III. Drug addiction is associated with dark deeds — sexual debauchery, murders, suicides and other crimes are usually done under the influence. The devil uses drugs as his tools to manipulate people's behaviors. «Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons...» (1 Cor 10:21).

IV. The use of drugs can serve as temptations to others — «It is good not to eat flesh, not to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbles» (Rom. 14:21).

V. A Christian does not belong to himself — «or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? And ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body» (1 Cor 6:19-20).

VI. Unclear mind leads to riots — «And be not drunken with wine wherein is riot...» (Ephes. 5:18).

God Can Help You Get Free From Your Addictions.

If you got addicted to any type of alcohol or drugs, only God can set you free from it. Do not pity yourself or seek for justifications for yourself. Turn to Him for help.

«If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness» (1 John 1:9).

«And the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up...» (James 5:15).



Myrrh

PRISONS AROUND THE WORLD



Zlatoust Prison (Russia)

Zlatoust, a moderate city of the Ural Mountains in Russia, is located in the city of the Chelyabinsk region. The city is famous for the birth place of the known story teller, Pavel Bazhov. It is also known for the famous Russian prison which held high risk offenders charged with felonies.

It began in the eighteen century, when many iron-ore and weapon factories began to rapidly appear in the Ural Mountains. The prison began to fill up with workers who violated strict orders.

The factories that belonged to private owners treated workers more cruelly than those who belonged to the State. In private owned factories like merchant Demidov's, the workers that violated the rules were mercilessly drowned in the nearest pond.

The Zlatoust armory originally belonged to the state. Therefore, the orders in the factories were very strict. Everything was done by law. For any act of disobedience; absence from work, drunkenness, or fights, the violators were put into a factory jail. After serving their time in jail



they were returned to their job. If the disobedience reoccurred, the punishment was doubled. That is why some of the boisterous troublemakers spent more time in jail cells than working in the factory. For some of them the hard prison bunks became their deathbed.

In 1773 there was a revolt lead by Yemelyan Pugachev. His supporters were from various groups including; peasants, the Cossacks, and Old Believers priesthood. At one point they claimed control over most of the territory between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains. The revolt crushed towards the end of 1774. In the beginning of 1775 Pugachev was captured and executed. The Zlatoust prison filled up with hundreds of participants in the revolt. Some of them were executed there.

The prison had a provincial status, and also transferred prisoners to Orenburg and Ural Mountains. The prison was a typical provincial prison which housed low risk offenders who were not sentenced to labor camps in Siberia.

During the civil war the prison was used by both sides; the White and the Red army. In 1918, Yaroslav Gashek, a Red army commissioner, spent a few weeks in the prison. Gashek was one of few Czechoslovak prisoners who sided with the Soviet, and voluntarily entered the Red army.

During the Czechoslovakian riot he was arrested by the Whites, but was able to escape prison bars by taking someone else's identity. Gashek later became a known Czech writer.



Paris Prison la Sante (France)

France, for a long time, was considered a country with an advanced penitentiary system. French prisons were always considered as model prisons not only around Europe but also around the world.

Recently the penitentiary system began to have problems. History of the famous Parisian prison La Santé, gives a clear confirmation.

La Santé is located on the south of the French capital, Montparnasse — on the street with the identical name.

In 1869, during the second empire, the famous architect, Joseph Auguste Emile Vaudremer built the La Santé prison. The emperor of that time was Napoleon III. He came to power during the coup d'état, forcibly gaining power. He fiercely dealt with his enemies — the Republicans, by putting them into prison. Napoleon seemed to have many political enemies that 45 prisons with twenty-five thousand prisoners were overcrowding and ordered fifteen new prisons to be built.

During WWII and the German occupation, La Santé besides criminals had political prisoners and members of the Resistance. The memorial boards on the outer walls of the prison remind us of nine of the Resistance members that were killed by the Nazis.

In the 1950's Alian Delon spent three years in La Santé for illegal possession of weapons. He later became a famous actor.



Castle Saint Angelo (Castle of the Holy Angel) (Rome)

Today's Castel San 'Angelo is a monument located in the center of Rome. Throughout more than a thousand years it was mausoleum (large tomb), a fortress and castle for the popes (simultaneously a prison), and now a museum and a tourist attraction. In the sixth century the tower got its present name.

This magnificent building was built in 135 AD, by Roman Emperor Hadrian. He built it as a mausoleum for himself and his family. During his reign, thick walls were built surrounding Rome. The walls were later used for military purposes.

The mausoleum's architecture was similar to an Etruscan tomb. On a square concrete base, a decorated stone cylinder was installed. It had a garden and a statue of Emperor Heliogabalus riding a chariot.

The mausoleum held the remains of the Roman Emperors starting from Hadrian to Septimius Severus.



A Scientist and Astronomer, Giordano Bruno spent six years in the Castel San 'Angelo prison for confirming Nicklaus Copernicus' idea that the earth traveled around the sun.

In 1633 a famous Scientist, Galileo Galilei was arrested and put into the Castel San 'Angelo prison for holding the idea that the sun is the center of the world.

The Butyrka prison is located in Moscow, Russia. The prison is known for its brutal administration. Currently the Butyrka prison remains the largest Moscow remand prison. Overcrowding is still an issue.

To get into the Butyrka Prison the prisoner must enter through massive oak gates. Behind these 240 year old gates a very different world begins.

The prison has large bright hallways, soft colored walls, and spacious waiting rooms. As soon as the prisoner enters, they are put into an isolated room and a psychologist begins to work with the individual. Many individuals put behind bars for the first time experience stress because they were caught.

For first timers the prison becomes a problem because they do not know how to behave. For this reason there is a bulletin with the psychologist rules on discipline. For example;

look carefully at the actions of others, do not play gambling games, do not talk too much, use your vocabulary carefully, and exclude filthy language.

The inspection of arrivals is similar to that of the inspection at the airport. The arrivals put their belongings through a metal detector and pass through the scanner. If the prisoners are over 35 years old it is necessary for them to go through an electrocardiogram. Starting from that age our heart requires special care and attention.

Today Butyrka has 1,850 prisoners.



Chistopol Prison (Tatarstan)

The Chistopol Prison is located on the Tatarstan territory, not far from the capital, Kazan. One of the oldest penitentiary institutions is located in Kazan.

The Chistopol prison was built in the nineteenth century and has experienced a lot in its time.

The development of the Chistopol prison began in 1855. It was built to relieve the overcrowded prisons in Kazan and Samara. The construction began in a rapid pace, and on October 5, 1857 first prisoners were moved in.

At first the Prison contained cells for 350 prisoners, a church, a maintenance building, and a warden's office.

TESTIMONIES OF BORN AGAIN CHRISTIANS



Igor Grushin with his wife, and daughter

My name is Igor. I was born in Cherepny, Russia in 1967. I lived with parents. I started smoking before I attended school at five

«Good News» kept us from failing

years of age. At 16, I was already drinking. At first I drank beer, then vodka and later any liquid that burned. I met a girl whom I liked when I went to college, and when I was 17, we got married. However, I got so much addicted to alcohol that I made a holiday of every single day.

Obviously, problems started to arise which I tried to resolve with vodka. I figured that if I get intoxicated and doze away, the problems will dissolve by themselves. But things got only worse. My wife also liked to drink. And oftentimes under the influence, we often argued and fought. Eventually I got seven knife-stabs and tried to spend as much time outside of home as possible. I tried to poison myself a few times, but all was unsuccessful.

My smoking addiction was also so intense that I passed out a few times while trying to quit. In 2000 I got imprisoned for fighting with my wife and was released a year later. I left home. While I had money, I had friends.

Life became unbearable: I slept where I could, ate

what I could find. If I went into a store, I saw that people turned away from me with disgust. I didn't want to live. I swallowed pills when I could get my hands on them. I looked at others and cried. Once, I was looking for a rope, but couldn't find it.

I was once woken up by a «Good News» church and was asked to come in. I was very ashamed of my appearance. Despite my unappealing looks, I was offered rehabilitation at the church. I was very happy. My beloved pastor Victor Motsyu gave me the best room in the building. Thus began my Christian life.

In the winter, when it was cold, the pastor took me to his house. His wife looked after me; fed me, washed and ironed my clothes.

As of today, I am a member of church for ten years. I have a family of my own. God blessed me with wonderful wife and daughter. I also have a successful career and a place to live.

Glory to our Heavenly Father! Believe I Him! He is real!

Igor GRUSHIN, Russia.

Alex
KUCHMAR:

A TESTIMONY OF AN EX-PRISONER

Lord Jesus Christ! I want to devote this testimony to you and want to show who I was before and whom you made me now.

My childhood was joyless — in hunger and poverty. My dad left us, and my mother began drinking. I was grown practically on the street. I rarely attended school. At 14 I started smoking and drinking. At 15 I was arrested for the first time and sentenced to three years. I never experienced such hell as in the juvenile.

We were often beaten by the sadist-activists. Obviously, I got out being an evil wolf. My mother continued

drinking. My older brother was also released from prison. Life didn't look promising. I was stealing continually and was sentenced again for four years.

When I made my time, I got a job. I married without any sense of love. Even the birth of my daughter Olga didn't inspire me. In 1986 I tried drugs for the first time and got hooked up. I became sexually involved with many women and got gonorrhea. My wife got sick because of me. I felt very guilty in front of her. She later told me that she forgave me.

I could not live with family after

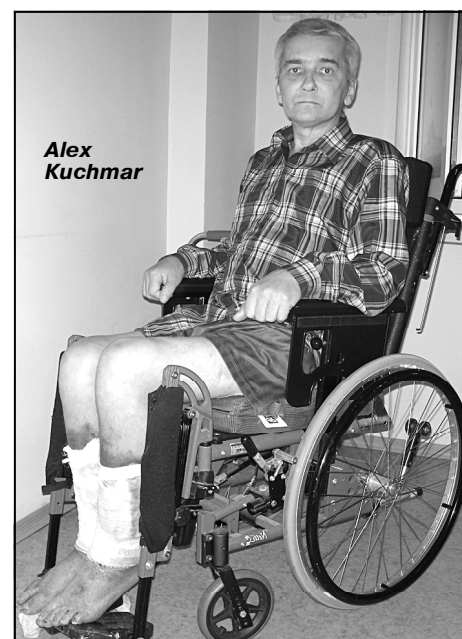
the incident. I spend two years outside of home. In 1988 we were caught with drugs. When I went through demolition in the cell, I experienced hell. Three days later I began hitting my head against the wall hoping to pass out. Then I went to rehab, then to my brother in Kiev, but always returned to drugs.

Once, I returned to my hometown and met an acquaintance of mine. We began fighting and I stabbed him and damaged his liver. Thank God, he stayed alive. I got another sentence of six years. There were many new drugs to try in prison. There were also Christians there. I talked with some of them out of interest. I felt jealous while listening to them. I even tried reading Bible at times. But nothing stayed in my mind. Perhaps, the devil stole the Word. I got out and returned to previous life.

I once took a gun and wanted to rob someone for a dose. I almost shot an innocent person that time. A passing by street patrol searched me and found the weapon. Another sentence of two years. I stole money from my aunt when I was released. I carry the most guilt for that.

My mother died. Our house burned down. I became homeless. A friend of mine helped me with housing. He was arrested for dealing drugs and I continued his business. I met Irina then and for the first time I experienced a feeling that was like love. We lived together and used drugs together. We had a child, Tomochka. During my another arrest, Irina found herself a new man and Tomochka lived with people from the New Life Church.

I decided to quit for my child —



found a job. Then I found out that I was sick and pretty soon I was not able to walk. When I was at the hospital, I began thinking about future for the first time. It turned out that I had a bunch of other illnesses, even HIV. I did not have money. Suddenly, I thought to pray. No one except God could help me anymore. I asked someone from church to come visit me. Next day I met Svetlana. She taught me how to pray. I asked God for forgiveness and He have me that and also hope.

Now I stay at a clinic. I let Jesus into my heart as a Savior. I see his love for me in everything. My heart is filled with peace. Jesus Christ, I give glory to your name!

From the Editorial group.

Unfortunately when the paper was printed, Alex was already gone. But praise the Lord, for his soul has found him, and received forgiveness on earth.



Baptism in Church «New Life», Kiev, Ukraine

Church «New Life»

Sofia YANAKEE, service leader of a group struggling with HIV:

— In the past 5 years in 5th hospital in Kiev, which care for 2,200 patients with Aids or HIV, heard the Good News of Jesus and 1,000 repented, and 18 people got Baptized. We have testimonies of people who are currently ill with HIV, cancer, and other deadly diseases. Our Lord Jesus did heal people from numerous of diseases, including leprosy.

You can reach us:

02002 Milchakova, 5a, Kiev, Ukraine.
Phone #: (044) 516-8407.

Or find us on the website:

e-mail: vozroждение@newlife.kiev.ua
facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001383034214&v=wall#!/profile.php?id=100001383034214&v=info>
livejournal: <http://formirovanie.livejournal.com/>

Nadezhda MALICHEVA:

— We employ a youth program «Born Again» — it is an education group which informs the young of proper and non-reckless behavior.

License CE # 2640032 — granted by the Board of Education of Ukraine from 4/20/2001. And the # 300 was granted by the Commission dealing with children and their education. All supported by the Board of Education of Ukraine (Protocol # 13 10/20/2014).



A few weeks after the people of Israel came out of Egypt on their way to the Promised Land, having passed through the parted Red Sea, they came to a place called Rephidim. In this area, there was no water. Because of this, the people began to rebuke Moses, and tempted the Lord, saying, **«Is the Lord among us or not?»** (Exodus 17:7).

And all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the command of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim. And there was no water for the people to drink.

And the people wrangled with Moses and said, Give us

sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and send rain on the just and on the unjust» (Matthew 5:45).

This means that God can do good to all, regardless of their deeds or personal qualities. Walking through the desert to the Promised Land, all of the people of Israel received the angelic bread — manna, the faithful, even though these were few, and the unfaithful. The unfaithful people in Israel did not get swollen feet from the long journey just the same as the faithful, and shoes and clothes did not wear out. At the time they could have said,

16:2). **«There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end — the way of death»** (Prov. 16:25).

Natural spiritual blindness is common to all people, regardless of their breadth of knowledge of the Word of God, or the amount of blessed church services they're able to attend. Even being in close proximity to Christ, the apostle Judas was a traitor (John 12:3-7).

And yet, how are we to

A WORD OF A PASTOR



Carnal (Earthly) vs. Spiritual Joy

Carnal (earthly) joy is food for the flesh nature of man. A Christian that lives for carnal joy is robbing himself spiritually. Like having earthly thoughts and desires is being a **«Hater of God»** (James 4:4), so is carnal pleasure—the earthly happiness that distances a Christian from God. God's children are most vulnerable to failures and attacks from the devil at the peak of their glory, success and earthly joy.

Periods of elation and success raise self-esteem but with it, so does self-confidence, pride, and a sense of superiority. The world around them does not change, but under the narcotic influence of success their point of view changes. Soon the Christian begins reek of sin (Psalm 37:4-6), and there is the need for immediate treatment, otherwise it will get worse.

The treatment of sin usually follows this scenario. Our Holy God cannot have anything to do with sin and is forced to deprive the sinner of God's defense and protection. After a certain period of time a Christian will find themselves in the «dump», hating their own selves. They will then put all their efforts into retaining their self-dignity and achievement but to no avail. It is not until they reach a state of deep humility and acknowledge that God

does not like the prideful **«And those who walk in pride He is able to humble»** (Daniel 4:37). Is that not why it is written: **«Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling»** (Psalm 2:11).

We can recall the 70 disciples of Jesus Christ who returned with joy that the demons obeyed them in the name of Jesus Christ. **«And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us through Your name»** (Luke 10:17). Did you notice why the disciples were happy? Not liberation and salvation to people, but the fact that now the demons obeyed them. To what Jesus said, **«Yet do not rejoice in this, that the evil spirits are subject to you, rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven»** (Luke 10:20). What Christ said to them, can also be expressed as: do not rejoice in the carnal, sensual, selfish joy in itself, about yourself, your

importance that the demons are subject to you, but have spiritual joy of your own salvation.

Perhaps, with the exorcism of demons from the possessed people, the disciples saw the undisguised delight of people who witnessed these blessings and grateful faces of the relatives wanting to somehow thank their benefactors. Therefore, Jesus Christ warned, **«You have received freely, freely give»**. Would someone refuse to be in the middle of fame and fortune? But Jesus warned them, saying, do not sin, do not rejoice in this carnal pleasure. This joy is the result of the visible. But you be joyful with the things you cannot see, the things you only be joyful about with faith, and would not be the envy of unbelievers. That your names are written in heaven, and you are the candidates of the Heavenly Kingdom. Such as those outlined in the letter to the Hebrews in chapter 11, which says: **«But now they stretch forth to a better fatherland, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them»** (Hebrews 11:16). **«These all died by way of faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off. And they were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth»** (Hebrews 11:13).

Carnal joy depends on the visible external circumstances, whereas spiritual comes through faith. Sensual, carnal pleasure distances man from God, increases sinful nature, while spiritual — transforms man into the image and character of God. Even Job understood that carnal pleasure is not pleasing to God, saying, **«If I rejoiced because my wealth was great and because my hand had gotten much? ...this also would be an iniquity for the judges»** (Job 31: 25).

Here are several Biblical examples of spiritual joy, which is not dependent of external circumstances. **«As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing»** (2 Cor. 6:10).

«That in much testing of trouble, the overflowing of their joy, and the depth of their poverty, abounded to the riches of their generosity» (2 Cor. 8:2).

«Therefore I am pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am powerful» (2 Cor. 12:10).

«For you both sympathized with my bonds and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance» (Heb. 10:34).

In conclusion we present the well-known passage from the Bible: **«for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is well-pleasing to God, and approved by men»** (Romans 14:17,18).

We select what is relevant to our discussion today. The kingdom of God is joy in the Holy Spirit. And who serves the Lord with spiritual joy, is proper to God. Is it not nice — to serve God with joy, the source of which is hidden in Himself? So let us rejoice in God's joy. Amen.

Aleksander BORISENKO.

«Is the Lord among us or not?»

..... (Exodus 17:7)

water that we may drink. And Moses said to them, Why do you wrangle with me? Why do you tempt Jehovah? And the people thirsted there for water. And the people murmured against Moses and said, **«Why is this, that You brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our sons and our cattle with thirst?»** (Exodus 17:1-3).

This story is noteworthy for the fact that the people of Israel came to this barren area under direct guidance of God through the pillar of fire and the cloud column. Of course all complaints and murmurings fell upon the one who showed them the way, and brought them there. That's what Moses had in mind when saying, **«Why do you test the Lord?»** (Exodus 17:2).

Still, the question arose: **«...Is the Lord among us or not?»**

If He were with us, we would not have this lack of water. And if we need, and there is no help, where is God? This question did not arise when all was good.

What about the wonders that God had done for Israel earlier? Egypt's plagues, walking across the dry floor of the parted sea, death of their enemies, making the bitter water of Meribah sweet, the daily falling of manna?

But no, the question at hand is much deeper. By what means did the people of Israel determine whether God was with them? Did they decide this based on the presence of prosperity and health, by the presence of food, water and clothing? If so, it is not surprising that when the water was gone, it immediately raised the question: **«...Is the Lord among us or not?»**

If no problems arose, it is possible that it would have never occurred to the people of Israel to ask **«...is the Lord among us or not?»**

«The answer could have been: «Yes, of course He is, because we are fine».

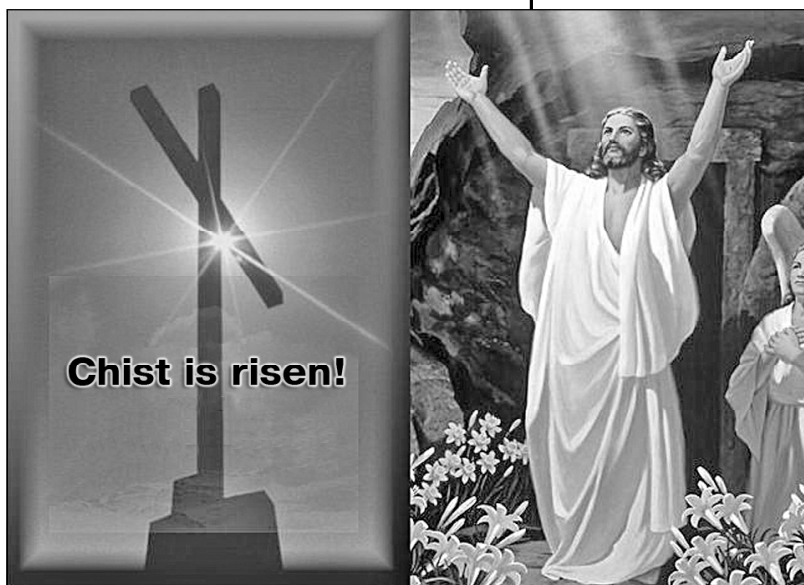
Do we not find such a stereotype among us Christians today? God's provision of prosperity is regarded as His approval of our lifestyle. If God blesses me, that means I'm right and my relationship with God is all good.

Where does such a view come from? What is it based on? After all, Jesus himself said, **«you may be sons of your Father which is in heaven, for He maketh His**

«Do you not see that God is with us? His pillar of fire serves us as light each night, and the pillar of cloud leads us every day — we have God's guidance». But did those circumstances give them the right to assume that they were in the right, and to consider God's blessings as His approval? Far from it. After all, they were selfish complainers and would have to die for their actions, if not today, then tomorrow.

Many Biblical characters were confused by the universal mercy of God and were shaken by it. Let's look at some arguments of God's people: **«All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, wicked live long in his wickedness»** (Ekl. 7:15). **«There is a vanity which is done on the earth; that there be just men, to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity»** (Ekl. 8:14). **«Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments. Why do the wicked prosper and the way all the treacherous thrive?»** (Jer. 12:1). **«And behold, the wicked prosper in this century, multiply wealth»** (Ps. 72:12).

Therefore, knowing this, we Christians should be very careful, especially in times of prosperity, that we do not consider financial security, health, and success, as God's approval of us or our way of life. After all, even obviously wicked and evil people receive these blessings, but is it not better to humble ourselves before God, and examine ourselves before it's too late? Given that it is our human nature to justify and deceive ourselves, let us ask the Lord for help in this. The Bible says, **«Who can discern his errors?»** (Ps. 18:13). **«All the ways of a man are clean in his eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart»** (Prov.



Christ is risen!

know; is the Lord among us or not? And more specifically: is the Lord with me? If it is dangerous to judge this by received blessings or gifts (even the gifts of the Holy Spirit), what are the criteria for evaluating yourself? In this matter, only the Holy Spirit can help us, of whom it is said: **«And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment»** (John 6:8).

However, even this is man's choice: whether or not to open himself to correction by the Holy Spirit. And yet, to answer this question, let's ask ourselves:

1. **«Do I consistently get filled with the Holy Spirit? Do I have the humility of heart and the ability to cry under the gentle influence of the Holy Spirit?»** (Ephesians 5:18).

2. **«Do I have a deep, inner peace in my heart and spiritual joy that is not dependent on external circumstances?»** (Romans 14:17).

3. **«Am I directed by the Spirit of God, and do I hear His voice daily?»** (Romans 8:14).

4. **«Do I overcome my flesh, denying it in its lusts?»** (1 Cor. 9:27).

If yes, then it means that I abide in the vine (John 15:5) and I will not have to wait long for the subsequent fruit of righteousness. And if not, I need to put everything aside, even all Christian activities, and pay any price to find and restore my relationship with God.

Alexander BORISENKO.

TESTIMONIES OF BORN AGAIN CHRISTIANS

The Lord is Truly Alive and Our Souls are Also Alive

«And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left» (Luke 23:33).

Once I was one of these robbers. By my crimes I was unworthy to live on the Earth. But there is grace and love of God, which are superior to our understanding. Love and Grace of God give us forgiveness for our sins, adoption and consecration, and also an eternal life in the Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ. I want to share the great forgiveness of God and tell you a few things regarding Love and Grace.

In my childhood I was unbalanced and restless kid: fought, stole horses, escaped from home, etc. I got to jail for 3 years at 17. There began my, so called, criminal romance. I was almost added a term. But I started to think in different way: «1 year of robbing, 3-4 serving term. That was my life». Sadly, I had been only 4 months at large, and returned to jail for 10 years.

After 2 years, I was convicted for 15 years of high security term and 5 years of escort banishment for disorganization and attempt to kill an administrative representative. During high security term, my life was governed with violence, cards, drugs... my heart was full of anger and hate towards prison camp administration. As a result — I received an additional one year of solitary confinement.

My heart was just overfilled with hate and I wanted to finish my life killing someone in administration. Surely, I would be shot for that. At that moment is when I began to think about what will happen after I get killed for killing an administrator. I thought little about my afterlife, I always knew that I'll get «there» when I get «there»!

My view of life became irrelevant, and just a waste of time. Why should we work, waste our health, strength, invest money, build, tear each other's throats for a place under the sun, clutch to this life, if «there» is nothing? At that time I didn't know about Jesus Christ and eternal life. Once in 1978, when I robbing a residential complex in Kiev, I found the Bible and the old Gospel. Of course, I didn't read them. It seems that the robbed brothers and sisters, forgave me, and they prayed for me... May the Lord bless them!

If someone would begin to talk to me about Jesus Christ



In the photograph: **Viktor Kudinov** (in the middle)

and God's love, I won't listen to that person. But the Lord knows our hearts and the right method of approaching them. I got a journal «Physical training and sport» with a story of U.P. Vlasov «Concurrence of difficult circumstances». His words «Strength is when your spirit is in flames», inspired me to struggle for myself. I decided that I won't sell my life so cheaply, and I began to do physical exercises.

That is when I first appealed to God in the hope of gaining His power. I trained to the point of exhaustion. Then I felt down on a floor and asked God to give me the strength to overcome all difficulties... And at that moment something happened to me. I was gained not only a physical strength, but also a faith in myself (unfortunately, not in God yet). I gained a belief I can overcome all those difficulties. I was full of happiness.

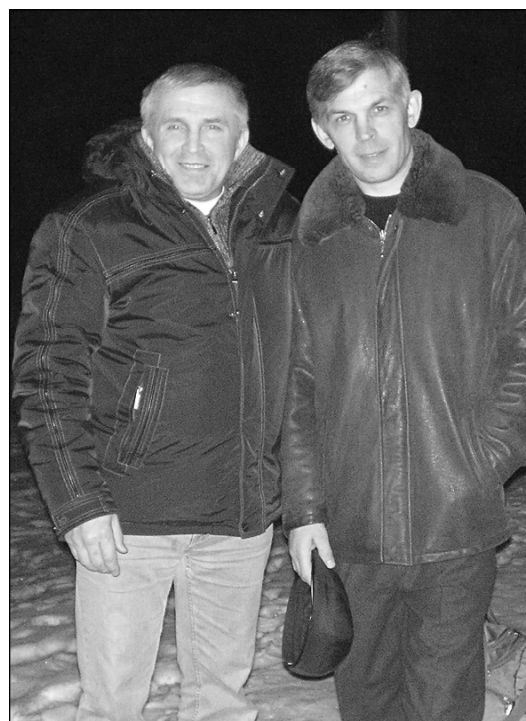
People were grinding their teeth in a solitary cell, but I was singing. Then I lost my patience and began to write poetry. I found a new sense of life. I decided to prove people that I can leave something good after myself. And so I walked the Lord's way, but I didn't understand a lot.

Then I was sitting in a «cruel jail» (a jail with cell routine of confinement) where I caught tuberculosis. And the Lord helped me there. I prayed to Him again and asked for help. As a result, in three months I was discharged from hospital as an absolutely healthy man. This recovery, as I thought, was all mine, thanks to my will, sense of purpose and faith in myself. I was sure of myself, but far from appeal to the Lord to repent, though I called for Him it is not our ways but always His.

Soon my pen-friend Lena arrived to me on a long date. As

a result we became a husband and a wife. I wrote poetry, studied at night school, worked. Then Perestroika began. She wanted to go to Moscow to demand my release. But because of a conflict with administration, I was put in solitary cell for eight months. Therefore I divorced my wife.

I was ever more difficult during that period. All my hopes and plans dashed. All had turned away from me and I was completely exhausted, broken-hearted. There was no exit from that blind alley. However, God do not leave us without help, He turns us to the way of Truth.



Viktor Kudinov with Vasiliy Romanko

I read books which we were given from the prison library. There were small options of books, so we had to read those which we were given to. Once I got the book «The Tom's hut». I thought it was light-headed and childish book. When I started to

read it, I was astonished. I've never read such amazing book! I've discovered that «God is love». He have been in human shape on the Earth. God suffered from our sins and decided to die in order to save lives of people like me. God gives us the power of love, which overcomes any evil of this world. He gives it to those who believe in Him and love Him.

I read about real Christians and I wanted to become like they were. Having read that book. I've come to the conclusion that I was as dishonorable and dirty. I was crying and repenting of my sins. I asked God to help me to become a real Christian.

Having read that book, I wrote in my diary: «I've never read such books! That was like it is raining on the hot-red ground, like fire comes into the barrel with powder!» From now I knew who is the OneWho I ask to help me. God turn me in His way. I had to overcome a lot of difficulties recently. We can overcome a lot with the help of God.

I was freed from Sokalska reformatory in 1995. God had cured my friend and brother in Christ, Vasiliy Romanko. He was stabbed with a knife into his temple. As a result, his left half of body was paralyzed. Awakening had happened there after that event. More than 100 recidivists are sons of God now and serve Him all over the world. God is truly alive and our souls are alive too.

God poured out His love repeatedly after my liberation. I cannot feel the sense of my life without God. No treasures of this world worth Jesus Christ's gifts.

He has forgiven me a lot of sins. I strive to execute His holy will to everywhere I can, by serving Him with prayers in local reformatories and churches. God gave me beautiful Christian wife and five children. Whom I love and live by my loving God, as I can't even imagine another life now.

Viktor KUDINOV,
Simferopol, Ukraine.

Dear readers of «Prisoner»!

The newspaper office requests to enclose your postal address with your material (evidences, sermons, articles, etc) for further distribution of the «Prisoner». If you enclose your photos with a material, we will be glad to publish them.

And for those of you just on the way to God, it's time to turn to our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ with a short prayer:

«Lord Jesus, I believe you are Lord's Son; you died for my sins and resurrected for my excuse. I accept you as a personal Lord and Saviour. Please, forgive me all my sins and grant me an eternal life. Amen!»



PRISONER

INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER

Certificate of State registration
of the print media series KV
№ 19016-7806P
from 8.06.2012

Dear readers!

Newspaper «Prisoner» distributes free of charge in America, Canada, Germany, Iceland, Czech Republic, Estonia, Moldova, Belorussia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine. The circulation of the paper depends on the donations. Sent your material and support financially this important publication of the newspaper for society. **God bless you all!**

Current Account for donations:

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Our contacts:
redakciya.uznik@mail.ru
tel.: +380645225707
+380661395801

The address of the newspaper:

«Prisoner», box 60/15, Severodonetsk, Lugansk region, Ukraine, 93406

Editor Igor Gorik

Responsible for the issue **Irina Shevchuk.**
Design and Desktop Publishing **Pavel Zhezurin.**

Translation services

Translation of the articles was provided by: **Alla Koroleva, Irina Voronina, Oksana Kravchuk, Natalie Skvortsova, Yelena Borisenko, John Ostapenko;** and edited by: **Eleonora Gorbenko.**

Newspaper printed at limited liability company «Press-express».

91034, Lugansk, Vatutina, 89a. Tel.: (0642) 500-869.
Circulation 300 cop. Order N 526

Correspondence with readers only in the newspaper. Authors' thoughts do not always coincide with the point of view of the editorial staff. Creative works published in source language. The accuracy of the material is provided by the author. The editors reserve the right to edit and shorten the texts. **Manuscripts and photographs will not be returned.**



In the photograph: **Vladimir Maslennikov** (in the middle) with **Alena's mother**

Search for freedom

Sister in Christ, **Alena Myakisheva** is looking for her father, **Maslennikov Vladimir Efremovich**, born on 5.08.1954, who lived at. Aid-Orli, Kurtinsk district, Alma-Ati region, Kazakhstan. He got into prison in 1978 for a murder. Maybe he lives in Kustanay now. His daughter Alena wants to find him, to ask of forgiveness and tell about Jesus Christ. She asks everyone who know her father to help.

Malishenko Helen Vladimirovna from Liepay, Latvia, is looking for **Alexander Belov**. Recently he lived in Kirov, Russia. He was served a sentence to FBU, EK-20 (earlier ETK-16), Lesnoy-Polevoy, Verhnekamsky district, Kirov region, Russia.

His distinguishing features: a tattoo on a neck with an inscription «The order is to survive» with cross in the middle. **Wanted can write to a newspaper office.** Address is on the output data of the paper.