



# PRISONER

INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER

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

(John 8:32)

No. 2(2)  
October—November—  
December  
2013  
Distributed for Free

A great variety of letters has been sent to the office of the newspaper «Prisoner». And the same question has been asked many times already by some of our readers: **«What church does «Prisoner» belong to, and what confessions do you give preference to?»**

Dear readers! Thank you very much for your letters and questions addressed to us. When there is a good question, it is necessary to give a full and thoughtful answer.

One reader remarked that a Christian newspaper cannot be independent if it is distributed for free; the newspaper must be dependent on one church or another which sponsors its printing and provides funds for its distribution. There would be a grain of truth to this if the newspaper were to represent exclusively the interests of a single church, which was in disagreement with other Christians and did not share their beliefs.

«Prisoner» is a project intended from the beginning to unite Christians in God's love; it was intended to appeal to a large audience, including people from different confessions and non-Christians who are seeking God. No debates about churches have ever been or will be published on the pages of «Prisoner». This newspaper is founded on the two most

## What Church Does «PRISONER» Belong To?

important commandments: **love God and your neighbor** (Matt. 22:37-39). That is why the material in our newspaper will always be peaceable and of such a nature that through reading these sincere and trustworthy publications, even people who categorically reject God today might come to Him.

Long-standing practice has shown that in prison ministry there should be no divisions among brothers and sisters who have come to Christ in repentance. The foundation of this ministry must be only love and mutual brotherly love among all Christians. **«For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life»** (John 3:16). If God Himself has shown us His love – to love everyone! – is it right for us, sinful people who have not fully learned to love and be like Christ in all things, to engage in sectarian disputes and to express our dislike for other brothers and sisters? We have all turned away from the sinful ways of this world, but at the same time we continue to sin when we allow ourselves to judge and envy others, not to mention worse actions.

That is why my answer to the question, **What church does «Prisoner» belong to, is «Christian»** (Acts 11:26). Throughout history Christians for various reasons began to assign names to their churches, and Christianity (the one true church of Christ) began to splinter into more and more new churches. However, upon a close study of the Bible, we will not find a trace of the names by which the churches of the world identify themselves today. If Christ is the Head of the Church, then the church can have one and only one name – **Christian**. What else can be higher and more honorable than the right to be named Christians!

This is the reason why **«Prisoner» is an international independent newspaper**. The independence of the newspaper appears above all in its conciliatory attitude to all brothers and sisters who have the great honor to call themselves Christians. Could anything be better than the love with which God loved us? That love which is the foundation of the Christian religion: love God and your neighbor. This is the foundation that we have tried to build «Prisoner» upon, so that in its pages we all might gladly read articles, sermons and testimonies of Christians without regard to the name of their church. For love cannot have anything in it that is blameworthy or offensive to God or neighbor.

«Prisoner» does not yet have permanent sponsors who can provide funds for printing and distribution. Thanks be to the Lord that significant help for «Prisoner» has been given by people who share our goals and want to promote ministry to prisoners. Thanks to the sacrifice of these brothers and sisters, we are able to continue and increase the printing and distribution of this newspaper. It is not easy, but with God's help, we will be able to complete the task.

Thanks very much to all of you who are able to contribute for God's glory. We thank you, the readers of «Prisoner», for your letters and material for publication. If you wish to support the newspaper in your prayers and financially, we thank you, too. You all are valuable to us because, thanks to your prayers and your sacrifice, many people can obtain salvation. Let this verse from James be an edification for some of you: **«Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins»** (James 5:20).

I. GORIK.

## YOUR LETTERS

### With prayers about lost souls and with faith in their salvation

I greet you with love of Jesus Christ! Peace to you, joy, and rich blessings from God!

My name is Catherine and I am 30 years old. I am serving a life sentence in prison. I will not tell you about my life of sin. I will only say that I broke all of God's commandments many times. The Lord knocked at my heart many times, but I stubbornly went in the opposite direction...

My mother died in 2005, my father in 2007. I blamed everyone and everything, and I was even angry with the Lord. I swore and made a lot of promises, but every new day I sinned again with renewed strength. In 2009, I stumbled for the last time and ended up in prison. I praise God that He did not let me drown in the swamp of sin and filth, but He gave me another chance.

God is almighty and full of mercy. He does not show partiality and He restores lost souls. I was brought into His family by my physical pain and spiritual unrest. My pain was not real; I tormented myself and I prayed that the Lord would give me another chance. And He did. When I arrived here, I went to church. Women prayed, sang and gave praise to Jesus – all these things cut to my heart. I realized that it was exactly what I needed and I had to act now...

I repented before the Lord. Regrettably, we all start calling upon Him only at the very last moment. However, His ready hand makes up for our slowness with quick and effective action. When we are not able to do anything, Jesus can do everything. My experience was exactly as it was described in Matt. 14:30 **«...and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me»**. And He did save! Despite my sinful life, He began changing me little by little and renewing my heart. And I know for sure that I will not go astray and I will follow Him step by step...

Let's commit ourselves into His mighty hand, and everything can be solved. He who is in us is stronger than he who is in the world.

With prayers about lost souls and with faith in their salvation,



Екатерина КОСТИНА,  
ССУБ КИК-54, пер. Вишневый, 16,  
г. Харьков, Украина, 61124.



### Thanks to my grandmother, the Lord has touched my heart

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, to Whom be all honor, glory and praise forever! Amen.

My name is Roman and I am 26 years old. I was born in the city of Ukrainka, which is in Kiev oblast, in the region of Obukhov. I am currently serving a prison sentence. This is the place where Jesus has found me. I was raised in a family of non-believers, but my grandmother Valentina is a Christian. She attends a Pentecostal church, and thanks to her prayers, the Lord has touched my heart (my grandmother has begged for me to the Lord). Praise God!

I was thirteen when I started abusing the drugs, and I became dependent on them when I turned 14. My grandmother took me to church, but I did not make a decision about what I heard, and I continued my wandering life. My parents gave up on me, and no one could help me. I ended up in the hospital twice due to drug overdoses, but that did not stop me from continuing to use drugs, as well as stealing, cheating, etc. This lifestyle led me into prison.

I have been repeatedly convicted. However, despite my terrible lifestyle, Jesus came into my life and accepted me as I am. He has given me freedom from drugs, smoking, profanity and other vices. Praise God for His great mercy! The Lord has baptized me with His Holy Spirit here in prison. I made a covenant with my Lord and I have been serving Him for two years already. The Lord has completely changed my life and restored my family relationships, and my family is enjoying a normal life and experiencing joy. My grandmother Valentine is very happy for me. Brothers who are engaged in ministry to prisoners come to our prison. I would like to join this ministry with them when I am freed and rehabilitated. This is my short testimony.

My loved ones! I would like to ask you: please send me «Prisoner». My mother is not a Christian yet. I would like to ask you: please send the newspaper «Prisoner» to her, too. I would really appreciate your support. I would be also happy to communicate with someone via mail. May the Lord bless you!

With my respect to you,

Роман ХАРЧЕНКО,  
БИК № 85 (82 бригада), ул. Мирная, 3,  
г. Буча, Ирпенский р-н,  
Киевская обл., Украина, 08289.

Continued on page 2

## From the publishers:

Dear Readers of «Prisoner»!

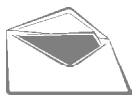
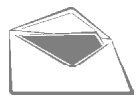
Many letters are sent to our office. And the same question has been asked many times: **«What role does work have in the life of a Christian?»**

The question is worth our attention, and we invite readers to express their opinions about it. The most interesting and concise

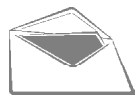
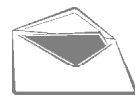
answers will be published in the next issue of «Prisoner».

We would also like to ask you, readers: please send your material no longer than one-and-a-half typed pages. We get so many letters whose authors ask us to publish them. We ask you to keep in mind that the newspaper has a standard format for publishing. Also please remember that the editor has the right to edit and abridge the content.





# YOUR LETTERS

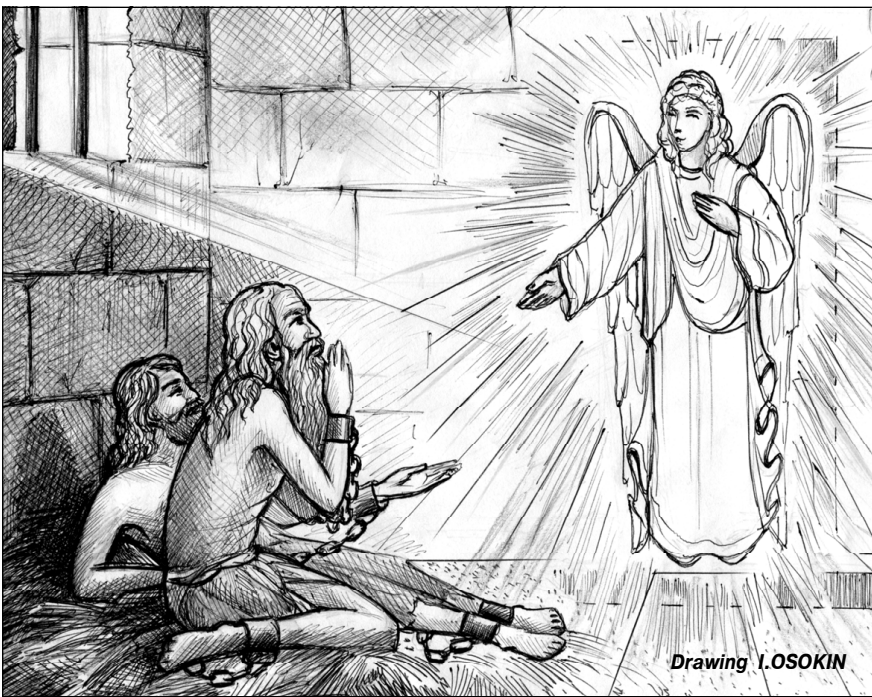


Conclusion. Continued from Page 1.

## WRITING TO YOU WITH HOPE AND FAITH

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you! First of all, I would like to thank the editors of «Prisoner» for their colossal and difficult job, as well as all the people who aid in the process of printing and distributing «Prisoner».

I write to you with the hope that my letter will not be left unnoticed. **«For everyone that asks receives; and he that seeks finds...»** (Mathew 7:9). My name is Stanislav, and for already 6 years I am at the very bottom of life-in prison. Like many others, I never thought that I would end up in prison; moreover, I never thought I would be sentenced for the rest of my life. Before, I had everything a person can dream about: a prestigious job, a good family and success. As I only now understand, the most important thing that I lacked was a faith in the living God, Jesus Christ!



Drawing I.OSOKIN

I do not now why and how it happened; I committed a great sin when I visited Kiev on my vacation – I killed a person. I was suffering and feeling sorry for myself for a long time when I realized that seeing freedom again was just an illusion. On the other side, I understood that I had done a horrible thing and was put to jail deservedly. This unending contradiction of feeling sorry for what I had done and feeling sorry for myself was horrible.

During these six years, both of my parents died. The other relatives act as if I don't exist because I am a murderer and a prisoner. At that time I did not know what to live for and what is the purpose of the rest of my life. That is when I took Bible into my hands for the first time. I prayed to God asking him that if He existed to show me the purpose of my life. Flipping the pages, I found the following verses: **«And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing amiss... and Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise»** (Luke 23:41-43).

At that time I clearly understood that not only in this life will I bear what I deserve, but also will be responsible for my deeds before God in the afterlife. I realized that I am a sinner in God's eyes and I got scared. I started searching the scriptures and I accepted Jesus as my Savior. I began to see the purpose of my life. I started sharing the Good News with everyone I possibly could. **«He which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins»** (James 5:20).

The realization that I am saved is priceless. Talking to the living God is the greatest joy in the world. I pray that the people to whom I brought suffering will forgive me as well, even though I understand that it is almost impossible.

I would like to ask the readers of this newspaper to help me and my brothers to get baptized here in the prison. I would also like to tell everyone who is sentenced to serve in prison: if you want to be free, you have to let go of the prison lifestyle and turn to God. Believe me that people who get out from jail with tattoos can still have a worthwhile life.

Let God bless you and fill your hearts with love, hope and joy!

Brother

Станислав НИКУЛИН,

РИК № 56, ул. Чапаева, 19, с. Перекрестовка,  
Роменский р-н, Сумская обл., Украина, 42073.



Hello to all of you partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven! May the peace of our Lord and His blessing be with you in all of your doings that are pleasing to Him. Through God's mercy good deeds are done and because of his mercy we have received «Prisoner» from you. I hope that in the future we will continue to keep in touch through this newspaper. Please accept my humble testimony and if possible, please print it in the newspaper with my address. I want to not only keep in touch with my brothers and sisters but also to spread the good news.

I have been in prison since I was 15 years of age. Criminal inclinations and habits were stronger than me then. They were also stronger than the suffering and tears of my relatives. They were stronger than common sense and love. Only in prison did I find time to start thinking about what my life meant. I started thinking about who I am, where I came from, why do I exist and if anyone needs me.

These questions oppress me constantly. Trying to exonerate yourself is useless. Perhaps that is when God starts talking to you through his Word, the Holy Bible. It happens automatically. You just take the Bible and start reading it in hopes of finding the answers. You begin to feel some type of peace inside. Once you accept Jesus Christ to be your

## YOU ARE A CONNECTING THREAD

Savior, you begin to live in a new, lighted world. You begin to have a future and a purpose for your life.

I am 25 years old now. It has been two years since I began following Christ. During this time, I realized that even the most serious problems are chances to stop and think about your life and the purpose of it. Each trial is an opportunity to overcome yourself and become better.

Since I came to faith in God, I have been searching for that one spring of life, for if this life is unknown, how will I know the afterlife? Only one question remains: will I be able to find that one spring during the time that I still have on this earth? No one knows the path of his life on earth except Christ. At times, I grieve not because my brothers do not know me but because I do not know my brothers.

With the love of God, yours sincerely



Сергей СИМОН,  
ул. Чапаева, 19, РИК-56,  
корп. 2, с. Перекрестовка,  
Сумская обл., Украина, 42073.

## GROWING SPIRITUALLY THROUGH YOUR NEWSPAPER

I wish you peace, mercy, love and grace, dear editors!

Glory to God! He is our Savior who gives his peace to our hearts! I thank all of you who aid in distributing this newspaper. Thank you for the great edition with which I spend the days of my prison life. Thanks to the newspaper, I grow spiritually.

I ask you a favor. I would like to find people with whom I could communicate about spiritual topics. By publishing my letter, I believe you will help me find people who are willing to keep in touch with me. From now on, I want to share some of my life experience.

### L I F E

It has always surprised me that from generation to generation, people think they will become happier than their parents. Because of this, children treat their parents not with pity, but instead with neglect. However, like water flows between the fingers, their lives come to the time when they have wrinkles on their faces, and they wonder how did it happen that life passed so fast.

Unfortunately, it often happens that the best years of our lives go unnoticed and are spent in vain. Why do people search for happiness and not find it? People are spiritual beings. When children come into this world, they are able to respond to good and love. However, instead of teaching them to multiply this spirituality, we teach them that time is money. That everything is money ultimately.

Happiness lives in each one of us. Often, however we are unable to detect it. We don't listen to ourselves and to others. This happiness is in faith that is within us. Faith frees us from sin and fear.

The most important thing to understand is that God forgives our sins through faith. Everyday of our lives is another mercy of God. It means that God still gives us time to change something, to become better. Our lives are not races from our births to our deaths. We need to stop and realize that. I will stop here.

I wish you all the best of God's blessings.

Your brother

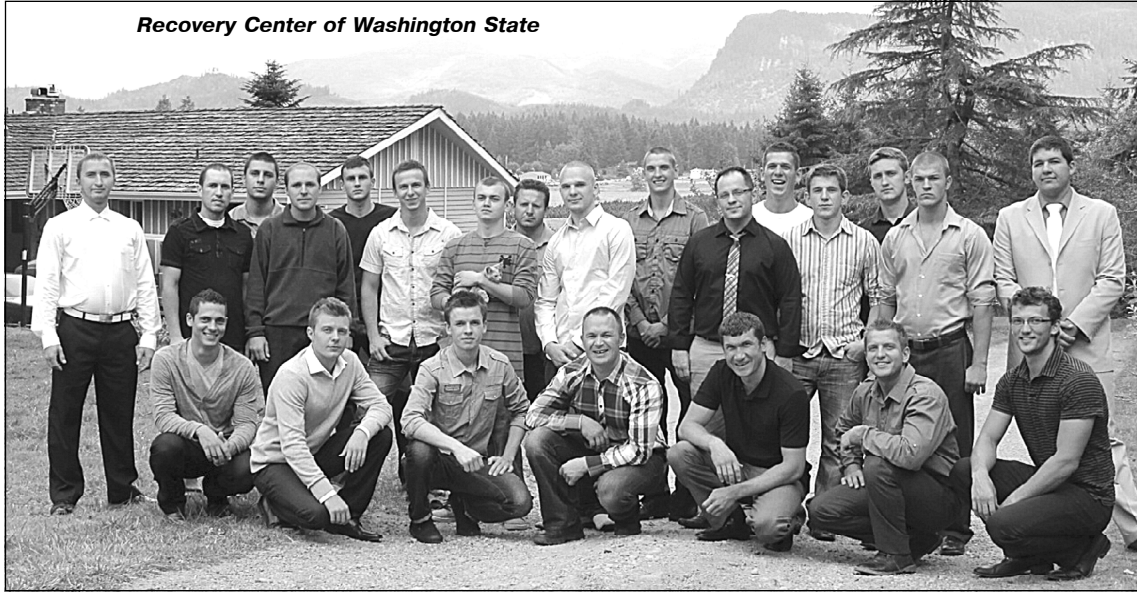


Роман ТАЛЬМАН,  
ФКУ ИК-18, пост № 5, п. Харп,  
ЯНАО, Россия, 629420.



# «GATES OF FREEDOM»

Recovery Center of Washington State



In recent times, the use of drugs and alcohol has spread in modern society, capturing a large portion of the population. In many cases, drugs can be bought at schools. Young people who have been curious about drugs at least once may subsequently become addicted. Addiction can happen in any family, and even children are prone to this disease. Needless to say, chemical dependency has a very negative impact on one's health, psychology and behavior. Destructive habits acquired over several years of addiction become the determining factor in further lifestyle choices. Since most of the activities of addicts are unlawful and require a significant amount of money, addicts often take the path of delinquency and crime to satisfy their habits.

Consequently this lifestyle leads to conflicts with the law, health problems, destroyed relationships, and so on, until the person's life is completely destroyed. Every year hundreds of thousands of people die because of this problem and sadly, the majority of them are young people. Doctors around the world are constantly looking for new ways to treat drug addiction. Experience shows that the single most effective method of treatment is the rehabilitation of drug addicts in Christian recovery centers. This is because addiction in itself is a spiritual disease, and it is impossible to heal the body without healing the soul.

Gates of Freedom Recovery Center was established in October, 2009, by Slavic-speaking immigrants. The main goals of this organization are to help people who struggle with addiction, to preach the gospel

in prisons and other places, and to take action to prevent youth from getting involved in drugs and crime.

The program aims to restore a person's relationship with God and help a person build the right attitude towards life. After being accepted into the recovery center, people learn to appreciate others, care for themselves, take responsibility for their own actions, and be self-disciplined. The center holds regular worship services, Bible studies, prayer, and counseling aimed towards learning and applying the basics of the Christian faith. In addition to a permanent staff, volunteers from local churches join in the effort to provide spiritual guidance and help the students understand the essence of their problems. They also show them

how beautiful life can be without drugs, and help them find the true meaning of life.

The Center has a set of rules and a schedule created to help with the recovery process. Each student is assigned a task or duty that they must carry out daily. Following the schedule and the assigned tasks promotes stability and responsibility in the student's life. Since physical work has beneficial effects for the recovery process, the students are happy to work in the Center's vegetable garden and small farm. The students cook, wash and clean the premises and the surrounding area. In their spare time, students have an opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument or play sports. The Center is a functioning household where

everyone does their part, where people are happy and care for each other. The Center partakes in different activities such as hiking, playing team sports, and physical training. Also, the students are encouraged to participate in a two-week men's boot camp designed to restore men and prepare them for missionary trips.

In the center we show little interest which substance or how much one used. A person's previous lifestyle and their social or financial position don't matter. The main thing is how sincerely a person desires to change. Therefore the Christian program directs a person toward freedom from sin and inner healing.

The Recovery process requires the individual to:

- recognize one's sin and addiction, and despise it;
- confess and repent of wrongdoings;
- admit one's powerlessness and turn to God for help;
- if possible, compensate people for moral and material damages;
- entrust one's life to God;
- seek the will of God, witness to others, and be involved in ministry.

It requires time to restore what has been lost, which is why the recovery program is set for one year. After this time a student can apply for the transition phase, where the student begins to establish a new life outside the center while still living at the center. The student can also choose to stay at the center and volunteer as a helper or counselor. The Center exists due to the financial support of churches, help from relatives and people who care, as well as through its own efforts. Gates of Freedom is always open to people who want to support the center, both spiritually and financially. There is also a need to establish a recovery program for women.

We believe that God is able to deliver a person from any addiction, as He already has freed many who have turned to him for help. Ever since the Center has been established, a majority of graduates have received complete freedom and now serve in local churches. Young families are created, children are being born, dreams are coming true and people receive an abundant life!

**Igor DOVGALETS,**  
Director of Gates of  
Freedom Recovery Center,  
Washington State.

## AN APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS

May peace be with you, my beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord! My husband and I are involved in prison ministry and we receive a lot of letters from prisoners. Lately people have not been writing out of idle interest, but because they are truly seeking God. They are looking for answers to questions: Why did my life turn out the way it did, and not differently? Very likely many mistakes could have been avoided, as well as many terrible sins which now cause so much heartache. Yes, it might have been different. But here I often think about my own life. If I had lived a socially acceptable life (in the eyes of the world), it is unlikely that I would ever have reached out to Christ.

When I was at the edge of the abyss, and everything good and light in my heart had been consumed by hellish flames, even then I wasn't really paying attention to what a Christian woman (through whom I later came to Christ) was telling me. So how could I have possibly turned to God if everything had been all right in my life? Probably God allows us to live like that for a time, until we feel complete despair and come to a dead end.

In the letters we receive, many of you say that only now have you begun to think about life and its true meaning. Of course, it is not easy to accept that many years have been practically wasted. But you know, perhaps my husband and I would not be in prison ministry if we had not lived through the state where a heart becomes very evil and feeds on hate, but still longs for love.

Most of the people who disguise themselves with self-confidence and importance in the eyes of others turn out to be lonely and weak. Left all alone a person begins to realize that the more he has in the material world, the emptier his soul is. No one can fill that void but God. Now that we know this, we really want to share this truth with those who realize that they are broken, but are afraid to admit it and go from darkness into light.

Certainly, many of you already experience the joy of living life with God, and therefore serving your time in prison without breaking the rules has become something wonderful to you. You understand that it's really not that hard to not sin if you completely entrust yourself to God. After all, He wisely guides our thoughts and actions. Certainly, we also understand that every Christian has to go through a lot of trials and tribulations, but all of these are for your own good.

The Lord will knead the clay and clean it from all

the impurities before He molds it into a precious vessel. In order to grow and mature spiritually, you not only need to read the Word, but it is important that the Word speaks to you. Then the Lord will open His depths to you, and the Word will fill you in such a way that you won't be able to contain it but will want to share it with other people. That's why it's so important to communicate with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Many write to us that they communicate with brothers in Christ, usually fellow inmates or cellmates. In general, this is very good; however, prison ministers visit many prisons. God definitely wants to use every



one of you in His ministry. It is one thing when you are still in prison and your heart burns with this desire, but if you aren't concerned right now that God would prepare a ministry for you upon your release, it is very unlikely that you will be able to stand firm spiritually.

You need to put in effort now, so that upon release your life will be closely linked with Jesus and His followers. Just relying on God to do everything for you is not sufficient. You need to figure out what you are striving for. To do this, you need to ask God to reveal His plan for your life. You will surely receive an answer from Him.

Beloved, the reason why we write these letters is not to teach you, but to soften your hearts. God has called us to this ministry to help you decide and choose the right direction in life. We do not know what's inside your heart, only God knows. However we do see a burning desire in the hearts of many. Stay faithful, for the Lord has paid a great price for us all. It is painful to watch our brothers and sisters fall

spiritually when they are released. While imprisoned, they repented and had good intentions to serve the Lord, but fleshly thoughts and desires were stronger. As a result, a person often returns to the slavery of sin.

My heart aches for such brothers and sisters. It has happened with them just as the Bible says - out of ten lepers who were cleansed, only one returned to thank the Lord. Similar situations also happen outside of prison. Today, the Church is very weak, and we do not have enough of those who would deny their fleshly desires, take up their cross and follow Jesus. **«Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize» (1 Corinthians 9:24).** This verse should become a guiding light for every one of us on our path.

It is very important to communicate with pastors and ministers. They support you while you are in prison. Upon your release, God through them prepares a ministry for you. We ask the Lord to lay all this on your hearts and work in them by faith. We are speaking the truth to you. Perhaps it is better to be easily scared than self-confident, for the Scripture says to save others with fear. The devil often comes as an angel of light and can give us such thoughts as: **«You don't have time to go to church service right now, you can just quietly read your Bible on your own. Once you are released, then you can start going to church, and have fellowship with brothers in Christ».**

But he will be waiting for you upon your release, and knowing all your weaknesses, he will attack you. Therefore ask God to prepare time for you to attend church services and stay in contact with brothers in Christ. Joint prayer is very powerful, but a person by himself is very vulnerable. The Word of God says, **«Do not forsake the assembly of the brothers»**, and also **«It is good for brothers to dwell together in unity»**. It also says **«It is not good for a man to be alone. For if he falls, who shall help him rise?»**

Imprisonment crushes many people, and it is not easy to change your lifestyle in that kind of environment. Therefore rely on the Lord in everything, and He will do things for you that you cannot do in your own strength. He will never leave you nor forsake you. God has promised that to us. His Word is truth. Be blessed, our beloved. May God keep you safe! Amen.

**With love to all - Brother Oleg and sister Marina HAMBEKOVY, Krasnoyarsk.**



## KENT HOVIND'S SEMINAR

Life is difficult, and almost every one of us lives imprisoned in our own mirages, illusive hopes and dreams. As a matter of fact, as soon as we were born, we became imprisoned in the prison of expectation for «tomorrow».

Every day becomes a day of anticipation: tomorrow I'll grow up, tomorrow I'll go to school, tomorrow I'll become a great musician, tomorrow I'll care for my parents, tomorrow I'll become happy, tomorrow I'll find joy in life. And there are many, many such «tomorrows».

The truth is, tomorrow simply doesn't exist! There is one reality – today. Yesterday no longer exists. Tomorrow doesn't exist yet – and who can be sure that it will arrive? You can hope, dream, and plan, but how

## Don't count on tomorrow...

can you live in tomorrow? It belongs to God, and whether you live tomorrow or not depends on Him alone.

Every time you wake up, by God's mercy, you decide whether you will live in today or in tomorrow. But for many, today is only a waiting room. They are born, they grow up, but they never begin to live their life to its fullest because they put off important things for tomorrow.

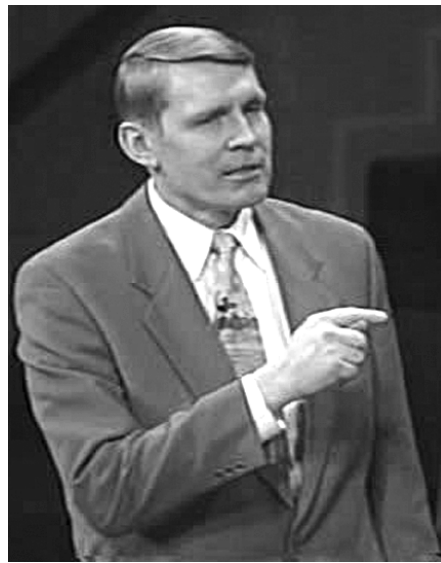
They live as it were half-heartedly, thinking that tomorrow they will have a chance to do everything, «Tomorrow I will make an important decision. Tomorrow I will profess my love. Tomorrow I will repent of my sins. Tomorrow I will quit bad habits. Tomorrow...» Here is where the deception hides, because often we simply don't live to see that «tomorrow»! And we remain without loving fully, with no explanations, with no creations in that empty waiting room, watching as life flies past us like a fast train.

«Tomorrow» is a horrible deception that grips all people, both smart and foolish, talented and those lacking talent, good and evil. Lulled by vague dreams about tomorrow, we don't realize the great value and extent of what we are losing! In the pursuit of happiness, we lose sleep and appetite, our strength fails, and at the end of the day we are left with nothing.

Is it worth waiting for tomorrow? Can you be sure that having put off something important for later, you will have a chance to do it? The Bible has an interesting phrase «the days are cunning». Can you be sure that tomorrow you will be able to finish everything you planned? Is it not worth it to finally start living today, so that tomorrow, if it comes, there will be no regrets?

Prayer: «Dear Lord Jesus! I thank You that You died on a cross for me. I know that You arose from the dead for my justification. Now, I give myself to You without hesitation once and for all. Manifest Your will in my life from now and forever. By Your mercy I will walk wherever You will lead me, will speak what You tell me to speak, will be the one that You desire me to be, will carry out Your will as You reveal it to me, for Your glory. Amen!»

Юрий РОГОВ,  
ФКУ ИК-1, пос. Сосновка,  
Зубово-Полянский р-н,  
Мордовия, Россия, 431120.



Adventure Land» in Pensacola, Florida. Hovind is well-known for his debates with evolutionary biologists. Many popular, modern evolutionary biologists, such as Richard Dawkins and Stephen Jay Gould, refused to participate in debates with Hovind.

Kent Hovind claims that they refused because the evidence of Creation is against them. In his debates, Hovind usually focuses on discrediting the theory of evolution. Also, he presents the evidence for a World Flood, and for a water layer that surrounded the Earth before the Flood.

In 1990, Hovind offered \$10,000 to anyone who could provide scientific proof for the theory of evolution. In 1999, the offer grew to \$250,000. «I offer \$250,000 to any person who will provide any scientific proof of evolution. My offer demonstrates that the evolutionary hypothesis is no more than a religious belief». (By the word «evolution», Hovind means macro-evolution.) He continued: «I am not trying to remove evolution from the textbooks, nor am I trying to push creationism into the textbooks. All I'm trying to do is to remove the lies from the textbooks».

On November 2, 2006, Kent Hovind and his wife, Jo, were convicted of a number of tax violations by a jury in the Federal Court in Florida. He was fined \$430,000 and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Today there are many debates and disagreements about the true reason for Kent's imprisonment.

Kent Hovind

## «THE AGE OF THE EARTH»

### ARE WE A PROBLEM OF THE ENVIRONMENT?

If evolution is true, then you are just a piece of protoplasm that washed up on the beach. You are a problem because you are one of the polluters of the environment. If evolution is true, then you appeared as a result of a cosmic bang some 20 million years ago; there is no purpose to life, so you might as well do whatever you want. One professor said: «There are no absolutes». I asked him: «Are you absolutely sure of that?»

### SPIDER LEGS IN A BANANA

I have two older brothers, Ross and Mark. They were always older than me, and they still are. When I was about six years old, we lived in Illinois. Once I was the first to come running in for breakfast, and I took the last banana out of the bowl. A few minutes later my two big brothers came in. They said, «Hey, Kent, is that the last banana?» That morning I knew they wanted my banana. But big brothers do not beg little brothers for anything. They either beat them up or trick them to get it.

So my brothers said, «Hey, Kent, do you know what bananas are made of?» I was only six years old, and it's been proven that the brain doesn't even start to grow until kids are 18 to 20. How many parents can verify that from raising kids? I said «No, what are bananas made of?» And they said, «Well, down in South America, they have these spiders with long legs, and when they die their entire legs fold up, and so a banana is really just spider legs».

I said, «You guys are lying to me because you want my banana». They said, «No, brother, cut that banana in half and you can still see the black spider legs». You know, I didn't eat bananas for nearly three years after that. I would never have believed that lie if it hadn't been for those black spots. See, if you want to get somebody to believe a lie, you have to mix it with some truth.

There is a lot of good science in

public school textbooks, mixed with bad science – poison which is destroying our children. For example, here is a first grade textbook: «Earth has changed much since its formation four and a half billion years ago». Now wait a second, is the earth really four and a half billion years old? No, but if you tell that to a first grader, he's going to believe you.

First graders believe everything you tell them. They believe bananas are made of spider legs. I did. There are only two options – believe that somebody made the world, or the world just made itself. There is no other option, although there are some lunatics who say: «We aren't really here, we only think we are». But let's forget about them, because we are here, and the devil doesn't want you to believe that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. That's why he came up with the Big Bang theory.

### THE BIG BANG THEORY

I was on an airplane years ago, flying from Dallas to San Francisco. And I happened to sit right next to a professor from Berkeley. I don't know if you have ever heard of this university, but Berkeley is not a Bible college.

I was sitting next to this professor, and after a while we started talking about creation and evolution. He said he believed in evolution. I told him I had already figured that out since he teaches at Berkeley. I asked him:

«Tell me, sir, if you believe in evolution, how the world got here?»

«It was the result of the big bang», he answered.

I said: «Hmmm... I'd like to hear about this!»

He asked: «You're a science teacher and you've never heard of the big bang?»

«Oh, yes sir, I've heard a lot about the big bang, and I believe in the big bang. But my big bang is a lot different than yours. You tell me about your big bang, and then I'll tell you about my big bang».

And so, the professor gave me the standard textbook answer:

«About 20 billion years ago all the matter in the universe was drawn into this little, bitty, tiny dot. And it was spinning faster, and faster, and all of a sudden, it exploded with a big bang. And the pieces that flew off became galaxies, sun, moon, stars, and here we are».

I said: «Sir, may I ask you a few questions? Tell me, please, where did all the matter come from? Who made matter?»

He said: «We don't really know».

So I asked another question: «Where did the laws come from? This universe is run by laws of gravity, centrifugal force, inertia. Where did these laws come from?»

The professor said: «We don't know that either».

Then I said: «Can I ask you another question?»

He said: «Sure. What else would you like to know?»

I thought, «Else? What do you mean what else? You haven't told me anything yet». I asked:

«Sir, does Berkeley have a merry-go-round?»

He said: «No, we don't have a merry-go-round at Berkeley».

«That's too bad», I said. «You could learn some good science on a merry-go-round. If you put some fourth graders on a merry-go-round and spin it clockwise as fast as it will go, the kids are going to go through four phases. They start off in phase one screaming, Faster! Faster!»

«At 30 miles an hour, the kids enter phase two, where they stop screaming and quietly concentrate on trying to hang on for dear life. When you get up around 60 miles an hour, the kids enter phase three, where they start screaming again, but now they are screaming, «Stop! Stop! Please slow down!» Don't stop though; keep going faster and faster».

Continued on page 5



## KENT HOVIND'S SEMINAR

## «THE AGE OF THE EARTH»

«When you get to 100 miles an hour, you enter phase four where the kids begin to fly off the merry-go-round. Now when this happens, you will notice a very interesting phenomenon of physics. If the merry-go-round is going clockwise when the kid flies off, the kid will be spinning clockwise because of a law in physics known as the conservation of angular momentum.»

The professor said:

«Yes, I know about this law.»

«Good», I said, «then please answer me this question. If the universe began as the result of an explosion of a spinning dot, shouldn't everything be spinning in the same direction?»

He said:

«Yes.»

«But that's not the case», I answered. «There are two planets that spin backwards. Why is that?»

He said:

«I don't know. Why do you think?»

I was hoping he was going to ask that. I said:

«Sir, it's really simple. I believe that «In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth», and God did it that way on purpose, just to make the big bang theory look stupid.»

«That's not science. Now, I do believe in the big bang, because the Bible teaches the big bang in the Bible: «The heavens shall pass away with a great noise» [2 Peter 3:10]. In the original Greek, that's a big bang! But this big bang hasn't happened yet, though it certainly will as the Bible says.

### KISS A FROG

The second law of thermodynamics tells us, «Everything tends toward disorder.»

If you leave something alone for a while, it's going to rust, or die. Nothing gets better by itself. That's what the Bible teaches. «The heavens are the works of their hands: they shall perish; ...they wax old as doth a garment» [Hebrews 1:10,11].

Nothing gets better by itself, without using energy. Take a look at your hairdo when you wake up in the morning. You'll see exactly what I am talking about. Everything tends towards chaos. But the textbooks say we are getting better. Now, if I told you that if you kissed a frog, it would turn to a prince, you would say, «No, frogs don't turn into princes or princesses». I doubt any ladies or men happened to get their husband or wife by kissing a frog.

But in the textbooks it does happen. They're still teaching the fairy tale that a frog turns into a prince, but instead of a kiss they have a new super magic ingredient called billions and billions of years. You see, if a frog turns into a prince quickly, that's a fairy tale, but if it happens slowly, that's science.

### WHAT DO SCIENTISTS BELIEVE?

We often hear that all scientists believe in evolution, but this is simply not true. Many scientists believe in creation, thousands of scientists, but the problem is that the evolutionists have declared that if you don't believe in evolution, you're not a scientist. That's why they say that all scientists believe in evolution. They have come up with their own definition of the word «scientist», and therein lies the problem. Just because a majority

believes in something doesn't make it true.

There was a time when most scientists believed that the earth was the center of the universe, and all the planets go around the earth. The majority of scientists used to believe that a big rock falls faster than a little rock. They taught that for 2,000 years, yet it's not true. They used to teach that if you were sick, you had bad blood.

Take out your blood, and you will get better. That's how George Washington died. The educated doctors who killed Washington weren't stupid, they were just wrong. And if your teacher can believe that the earth is millions of years old, that doesn't mean that they're stupid, they're just wrong. Ignorance can be corrected. Stupidity is forever, but not ignorance. Perhaps they just don't know, but it easy to prove that the earth is not millions of years old.

### LEAP SECOND

The earth is spinning. We are spinning in a circle, did you know that? The earth is spinning about 1,000 miles per hour at the equator. But the earth is slowing down about a thousandth of a second every day. The day is getting longer by a thousandth of a second, since the rotation of earth is slowing down. In 1992, «Astronomy Magazine» wrote that, «Earth's rotation is slowing down. We will have a leap second.»

Now, most people have heard about leap year, but very few have heard about a leap second. Did you know that we have a leap second about every year and a half because the earth is slowing down. The earth is spinning, but it is slowing down. So that means that it used to spin faster. If the earth is only 6,000 years old, this is not a problem. It was going a little faster in Adam's time, but he wouldn't have noticed, he didn't have a watch.

But if someone wants us to believe that the earth is billions of years old, then there's a problem. Several million (not to say billion) years ago the earth would have been spinning pretty quickly. The days would have been awfully short: night-day, night-day, night-day, night-day.

Centrifugal force would have been enormous. The winds would have been 5,000 miles an hour due to the Carioles Effect. And you think the dinosaurs lived 200 million years ago? I know what happened to them. They got blown off! But seriously, they did not actually live 200 million years ago, sorry, that is simply not true.

### GREAT BARRIER REEF

The largest coral reef in the world is found in Australia. You may know that part of the reef was



destroyed during World War II by ships, anchors and bombs. So the environmentalists went out there to see how fast it grows back.

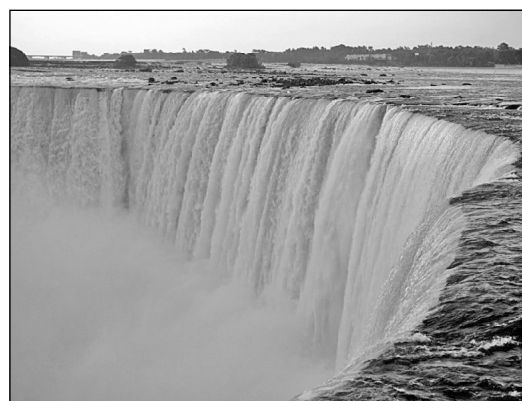
They watched the reef grow for 20 years. (It was a government project.) At the end of this time, they calculated that the reef is less than 4,200 years old. Yes, it is a very old reef.

But a question arises: If the earth is millions of years old, why don't we have an older reef someplace? Why on earth would the biggest reef be only 4,200 years old? I have a theory about that. I believe that 6,000 years ago God created everything, as the Bible says, and that 4,400 years ago there was a flood, after which the water receded, the continents stabilized, and the reef began to grow again. The oldest reef should be about 4,000 years old. So it is, and I think the Bible is right.

### NIAGARA FALLS

The textbook says: «The rocky ledge above Niagara Falls has been eroding for nearly 9,900 years». Now how do the authors know that? Well, because the rocks are breaking off the edge. All waterfalls do that, and that's why the waterfall is eroding. This is why sometimes the soil slides, and Niagara Falls is receding 4.7 feet a year. But did you know that below the waterfall is a gorge or large canyon? This gorge is 7.5 miles long. If you divide that by 4.7 feet, it comes out to 9,900 years.

But this raises another question: Niagara Falls was further north, the river flows north, and the waterfall is moving south. If it is millions of years old, why hasn't it eroded back to Lake Erie by now? I have a theory about that. I believe that 6,000 years ago God created everything, as the Bible says, and that 4,400 years ago there was a flood. As the floodwater was running off, about half of that bay washed out in 10 minutes. So it looks like it took 10,000 years, but those who say this forgot the Flood. It only took 4,400 years.



### SALT WATER

When it rains, 30% of the water runs into the ocean, bringing with it mineral salts. Evaporation removes fresh water and leaves salt water in the ocean, which is why the oceans are getting saltier every day. Today the oceans are 3.6% salt. They could have done that in less than 5,000 years. If the earth is billions of years old, then why aren't the oceans saltier? An atheist once asked me, «Mr. Hovind, do you believe there was a flood 4,400 years ago?»

I answered: «Yes.»

He asked: «Can you please tell me how the fresh-water fish survived the Flood?»

I said: «Sir, aren't you assuming the flood was salt water?»

He said: «The ocean is salt water today, after all». I said, «It

is – today. And the water is getting saltier every day. I think that after the flood the water was freshwater.»

He asked: «How did ocean fish survive?» I said: «Probably there were such fish at that time». He continued: «But the ocean is full of fish.»

I replied: «Yes, today it is full. What happened is that some creatures and fish adapted to the salt water. Adaptation has nothing in common with evolution, absolutely nothing. Today there are fresh-water crocodiles, and salt-water crocodiles, and they probably had a common ancestor. A crocodile.»

Then he said: «That's evolution». I said, «No, it's not. Going from a fresh-water to a salt-water crocodile is a very insignificant change compared to what you believe.»

### STALACTITES AND LIES IN THE TEXTBOOKS

Have you ever been in a cave, and the guide said, «Don't touch the stalactites; they take millions



of years to form». Have you heard something like that? The say, «The cave in New Mexico was formed over 250 million years. It takes 500 years to grow 1 centimeter». No, this is not true.

There are some 50-inch stalactites growing on the Lincoln Memorial, which was built in 1922. There are 2-inch stalactites growing off a refrigeration shed in Pensacola, Florida. There's a mine that was shut down for 55 years, but when they opened it back up they discovered many stalactites and stalagmites that had formed in 55 years.

A guy in Wyoming had a spring coming out of the ground on his property, so he stuck a pipe in it so that the water came

out of the top of the pipe and flowed down its sides. That was in 1903. When the water flowed down, some of the water evaporated and left mineral deposits. Maybe you've seen rust on a sink from where water drips? The guy died, and they forgot about the pipe. Today after more than 100 years it looks like a large rock formation.

### EROSION OF MOUNTAINS

When it rains, soil from the mountains is washed into the oceans. Two things occur: the mountains erode, and the oceans fill up with deposits. At the current rate of erosion, the continents will erode flat in 14 million years. There are landslides and collapses. Does land ever slide up, or only down? Only down, right? Then why do we find fossils that are supposedly 300 times older than that still above sea level?

This is possible if it the earth is young.

### PLANETS LOSE THEIR WARMTH

Galaxies are stars that spin together in big groups. The stars in the middle spin faster than the



stars on the outside. If galaxies were billions of years old, they would not have spiral arms. The existence of spiral galaxies proves they are not billions of years old.

Textbooks say that red stars are slowly turning into white dwarfs. They say that it takes hundreds of thousands, if not billions of years. I don't believe this. All the ancient

astronomers said Sirius was a red star.

Sirius is a bright star. Today it is a white dwarf. 2,000 years have passed. But textbooks say it takes 100,000 years. Several planets are cooling rapidly, losing their heat, but it's not possible to lose heat forever.

If you see a cup of coffee on the table,

and I say to you: «Don't touch, it's hot». You ask: «Whose coffee is it?» I say: «I don't know, it's been here for 400 years». That would be hard to believe, wouldn't it?

But they want me to believe that the planets are millions of years old, even though they are still cooling off... There are rings around Saturn, but they are not stable and they are drifting away from the planet. Saturn is losing its rings, they are only a few thousand years old, not millions. I have a question: if the universe is billions of years old, why are there still rings around Saturn? Why is Jupiter's moon, Ganymede, still hot? This proves that it is not billions of years old.

### THE MOON IS MOVING AWAY FROM THE EARTH

The moon goes around the earth. But did you know that the moon is gradually getting farther away from the earth? We are slowly losing the moon. It's leaving us a couple inches a year. Nothing to worry about; besides, there's nothing you can do about. But the moon is getting farther from the earth every year, which means that it used to be closer.

But if you bring the moon in closer to the earth, there would be a disaster, since the moon is the cause of the tides. If the moon was closer, the tides would be much stronger due to the inverse square law. Several billion years ago the moon would have been so close to the earth, that the tides would cover the whole earth twice a day, and all mankind would drown in a day.

### ASTRONAUTS ON THE MOON

Space is full of dust, and traveling at high speed will scratch a porthole. Scientists worried about the dust in space.

Conclusion on page 6

# KENT HOVIND'S SEMINAR

Conclusion.  
Continued from Page 5.

In the 1950s they tried to calculate how much dust is on the moon. Dust settles on things, forming layers; the moon is moving through space which is full of dust. The scientists thought that an inch of dust would accumulate every 10,000 years, and that it would be impossible to land on the moon.

In 1955, Littleton said: «The dust on the moon could be several kilometers deep». In 1959, before man had traveled to the moon, Isaac Asimov said: «I imagine that the first spaceship will slowly sink



tail first into the dust and be swallowed up». He thought that the spaceship would be buried in the dust.

In a children's book it says: there is nothing on the moon but dust. Maybe that's why they put huge landing pads with wide legs on the spacecraft to spread the weight out evenly. The people who made the backpacks were told to make them dust-proof in case they sank in dust. Even the ladder on the spacecraft was shortened by 16 inches.

They all expected that the moon would be covered with a lot of dust and the astronauts would drown in it. But when they landed on the moon, they saw there was only about a half-inch of dust. So the Christians asked the evolutionists: Where's all the dust? The atheists didn't say so, but I think they most definitely thought that the Christians had cleaned it up to make fools of them. But they didn't need any help, they are already foolish.

There is less than a half-inch of dust on the moon, so if they earth is millions of years old, where's all the dust? They left plastic containers on the moon to collect dust. By measuring the dust that was collected, they determined that in a million years only about two and a half inches of dust would collect. This would come out to 345 meters in 4.5 billion years. But there is not enough dust on the moon for it to be billions of years old. I think this is a very important argument.

## COMETS

Comets are traveling through space. Comets are constantly losing matter. Solar winds and the sun are constantly burning comets, and they leave a tail trailing them. But it's impossible to lose matter forever, a comet will soon disappear. If you only lose money, then soon you won't have any. Since comets are constantly losing matter, their lifespan is less than 10,000 years. This poses the question: if the universe is billions of years old, then why are comets still flying through space.

One man dedicated his whole website against me. He says that I can't use comets as an argument. In 1950, the Dutch astronomer Jan Ort said maybe there is a huge spherical cloud of comets at the far reaches of our solar system. He said that Ort's cloud is 50 light years away. The problem is, no one has ever seen

# «THE AGE OF THE EARTH»

Ort's cloud. Ort didn't see Ort's cloud. It's conjecture.

A whole article was published on this topic with the title, «Ort's cloud does not exist». But Watson said on the Internet: «Excuse me, but if you want to use the comet argument, then you have to prove that Ort's cloud doesn't exist». Excuse me, but how can you prove a negative? Where to begin? He needs to prove something, not me. We have comets – that's a fact. They don't live long. The Bible says the earth is 6,000 years old and that's a fact. And everything fits together – that's also a fact. Everything else is conjecture.

## MAGNETIC FIELD DECLINE

The earth has a magnetic field around it, but this magnetic field is getting weaker. The earth is losing its magnetism. This of course means that the earth is not billions of

years old. The earth is not more than 25,000 years old by the laws of magnetism, which means that carbon dating doesn't work for anything older than a few thousand years. So people say that magnetic reversal exists. Excuse me, but there is NO magnetic reversal in the earth's core. What happened is that 20 years ago they discovered that on the ocean floor there are places of weak and strong magnetism.

On the chart it looks like a sinusoidal wave. Someone drew a line right through the middle and said that everything under the line is magnetic reversal. But this a huge mistake since there is NO magnetic reversal. There is no place on earth where a compass points south instead of north. There are places of weak and strong magnetism, but not magnetic reversal.

## THE SAHARA DESERT

The Sahara Desert has what is called a prevailing wind pattern. The wind almost always blows the same direction. But that creates a problem. The hot wind dries out the trees on the edge of the desert, they die, and the desert keeps growing.

The Sahara is growing. The Sahara is only 1300 miles north to south. It is growing 3.5 miles a year. Not long ago it was announced that the Sahara is about 4,000 years old based on extensive study of its growth. But if the earth is billions of years old, why don't we have a bigger desert somewhere? Why is the largest desert in the world less than 4,000 years old? I have a theory about that: I believe that about 6,000 years ago God created the heaven and earth, and 4,400 years ago there was a Flood.



It's hard to have a desert underwater, so the desert didn't start spreading while the earth was covered with water.

## EARTH AND OIL

Did you know that there is oil under the ground? The oil is under incredible pressure of up to 20,000 pounds per square inch. Just think about it – 20,000 psi! Scientists who study the rock on top of the oil say the rock would crack within 10,000 years. Okay, well than I have two obvious questions. Why is there still oil under the earth and where did it come from? Why is it still under pressure? If the pressure can only last 10,000 years, why is there still pressure down there?

Well, nearly all scientists agree that oil comes from organisms that are changed by great pressure. Did you know that scientists can turn a ton of garbage into oil in a few minutes? They say that dinosaurs turned into oil over millions of years. No, I think that 6,000 years ago God created heaven and earth, and 4,400 years ago there was a Flood where everybody and every living creature drowned and was turned into oil under the great pressure of rocks, sand, gravel and mud.

So the oil down there is from the people and animals that drowned in the Flood. That means, if you stop and think about that the next time you drive, it means you are driving on some of your ancestors! Next time you are at the gas station pumping them in there, say, Bye Grandpa! You should have listened to Noah! He told you it was going to rain!

## ICE CORE LAYERS – DO THEY EXIST?



When I was in Denver, some guys came up to me and said they worked in the Denver National Ice Core Laboratory. They invited me on an outing. They took me into a giant freezer where it was 36 degrees below zero. I got to meet the guys that drill the holes in Greenland and the South Pole to determine the age of the ice. They have ice samples in the laboratory in Denver.

In this article it says that the deepest hole they have ever drilled is 10,000 feet, and the ice sample has annual rings, 135,000 of them. And these guys showed

me the ice cores.

They said they drill holes in the ice and draw samples, like they do in the south part of Greenland. Here you can see the rings: dark-light, dark-light.

They said what happens in the summer, it gets warm and so the ice melts a little bit and freezes into clear ice. In the winter it does not melt

so it turns into white ice.

So these dark-light layers mean 135,000 summers and winters. And then they asked me, how can you say the earth is only 6,000 years old?

We can prove the earth is 135,000 years old. I said, so you are assuming these are annual rings? These guys might not know about the lost squadron.

You know, there were some airplanes that crash landed in Greenland during World War II, they ran out of gas. And they were forgotten.

But in 1990 one guy decided to get them out of there. But it wasn't that easy. These planes were under ice, 263 feet of ice in 48 years.

Well, let's see, 263 divided by 48 is about 5 1/2 feet a year. And the deepest hole they have ever drilled is 10,000 feet, which comes to 2,100 years, not 135,000 years. The deeper you go, the thinner the layers.

And praise God, I understand this, because 4,400 years is a perfectly reasonable timeframe for the accumulation of the ice. But I decided to talk with the man who dug out the airplanes. They drilled a hole and pulled the plane out in pieces. This man is named Bob Cardin.

I asked him: «Bob, when you dug that airplane out, did you notice dark and light layers of ice above the airplane?» He said, «Of course, I noticed».

I asked: «How many layers of ice were there?» He said: «Many hundreds».

I said: «Bob, how could there be many hundreds of annual rings in 48 years?» He said: «Those aren't annual rings. It's not summer-winter, it's warm-cold, warm-cold, and there can be 10 rings like this in one day».

Since 1990 when the plane was found, enough time has passed, but unfortunately «Scientific American» still calls these rings «annual rings».

## THE OLDEST TREE

The oldest tree in the world is in Southern California. It is 4,300 years old, the oldest living thing on earth. That is an old tree, but I have a question. If the earth is millions of years old, why do we not have an older tree someplace? Why is the oldest tree 4,300 years old?



Well, I have a theory about that. I believe about 6,000 years ago, God created the heaven and the earth; 4,400 years ago there was a Flood and I'm confident the oldest tree should be less than 4,400 years old.

And now everyone should consider, maybe the Bible is right after all?!

(Transcribed from videotape by Artem CHERNOMOR, and edited for «Prisoner».)

## Seeking spiritual Fellowship with Christians

**Виноградов Анатолий**, ФКУ ИК-6, г. Соль-Илецк, Оренбургская обл., Россия, 461505.

**Пичуев Владимир**, адрес тот же.

**Кулев Валерий Юрьевич**, адрес тот же.

**Шатунов Влад. Геннадьевич**, адрес тот же.

**Попов Яков**, ФКУ ОИК 2/2, г. Соликамск, Пермский край, Россия, 618545.

**Красинский Александр**, ОБ 94/2, пос. Южный, г. Улан-Удэ, республика Бурятия, Россия, 670016.

**Сацюк Сергей Григорьевич**, ул. Гагарина-2, ЗИК № 58, ПЛС, г. Изяслав, Хмельницкая обл., Украина, 30300.

**Гогин В.И.**, адрес тот же.

**Жданов Михаил Николаевич**, 4 отд. ХИК-61, ул. Дружбы, 4, г. Херсон, Украина, 73024 (25 лет, болен туберкулезом).

**Волокsevич Ян Иосифович**, ул. Чапаева, 19, РИК-56, с. Перекрестовка, Роменский р-н, Сумская обл., Украина, 42073.

**Давыдов Виктор Федорович**, ФКУ ИК-6, 10 отряд, 19 пост, г. Соль-Илецк, Оренбургская обл., Россия, 461505.

**Котов Сергей**, ФКУ ИК-18, ул. Гагарина, 1а, п. Харп, ЯНАО, Россия, 629420.

**Пшеничников Николай Григорьевич**, о. Огненный, д. 16, ИК-5, Белозерский р-н, Вологодская обл., Россия, 161222.

**Чуняев Василий Александрович**, ФКУ ИК-6, 1 отряд, г. Соль-Илецк, Оренбургская обл., Россия, 461505.

**Уколов Сергей Сергеевич**, ФКУ ИК-18, пост № 8, п. Харп, Приуральский р-н, ЯНАО, Россия, 629420.

**Батрак Сергей Николаевич**, ул. Довженко, 8-а, УВП № 9, г. Ужгород, Закарпатская обл., Украина, 88000.

**Михайлов Андрей Викторович**, адрес тот же.

**Ключников Сергей Борисович**, ур-е № 12, ул. Советская, 65, г. Бендеры, МД-3200, Молдова.

**Чвыж Константин**, ДИК-89, ПЛС, ул. Буденного, 1, г. Днепрпетровск, Украина, 49600.

**Харченко Роман**, БИК № 85 (82 бригада), ул. Мирная, г. Буча, Ирпенский р-н, Киевская обл., Украина, 08289.

**Тальман Роман Андреевич**, ФКУ ИК-18, пост № 5, п. Харп, ЯНАО, Россия, 629420.

**Симон Сергей Георгиевич**, РИК-56, к-2, с. Перекрестовка, Роменский р-н, Сумская обл., Украина, 42073.

**Жданов Михаил Николаевич**, ХИК-61, 4 отд., ул. Дружбы, 4, г. Херсон, Украина, 73024.

**Никулин Станислав**, РИК-56, ул. Чапаева, 19, с. Перекрестовка, Роменский р-н, Сумская обл., Украина, 42073.

**Супрунок Сергей Олегович**, ФКУ ИК-18, ПЛС, п. Харп, ЯНАО, Россия, 629420.

**Грачев Дмитрий**, Н-Северская УИН-31, ул. Коротченко, 31, г. Новгород-Северский, Черниговская обл., Украина, 16000.

**Тамамшев Влад Викторович**, ФКУ ИК-18, п. Харп, ЯНАО, Россия, 629420.

**Васин Станислав Андреевич**, ЗВК-58, ДПК, 6 отр. К-26, ул. Гагарина, 2, г. Изяслав, Хмельницкая обл., Украина, 30300.

**Черемных Евгений Петрович**, ФКУ ИК-6, отр. 3, к-67, г. Соль-Илецк, Оренбургская обл., Украина, 461505.



**FROM THE EDITOR:** We have received countless questions from readers who are taking Bible correspondence courses. These questions share a common theme – what does

## The Pastor's Word

it mean to be led by the Holy Spirit? In this issue we attempt to address this important question with material provided to us by Pastor Aleksandr BORISENKO.



# Being led by the Holy Spirit

The majority of Christians understand the importance of being led by the Holy Spirit in their lives. Some love God so much that they want His involvement in every part of their lives. They constantly ask Him questions, and joyously receive His answers, while ignoring the criticism of spiritually weak Christians who disparage this way of life. Others have come to realize the necessity of being led by the Spirit only after suffering the pain of disillusionment that resulted from their unwise decisions. Whatever the reason one decides to seek God's leading, he is on the right path. The Bible contains many blessed examples of people who were led by the Holy Spirit, and encourages us to experience this in our practical living.

**John 10:27** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

**John 10:4** *When he has driven out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they recognize his voice.*

The leading of the Holy Spirit is an expression of the Holy Spirit revealing God's will to man. However, it is one's right to choose whether or not to follow the leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

**1 John 2:27** *The anointing you received from God abides in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you this. Instead, because God's anointing teaches you about everything and is true and not a lie, abide in him, as he taught you to do.*

**Romans 8:14** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

**Galatians 5:18** *But if you are being led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*

**Proverbs 14:8** *The wisdom of the prudent helps him know how to live.*

### God's command for Christians to understand His Will

**Romans 12:2** *Do not be conformed to this world, but continually be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may be able to determine what God's will is—what is proper, pleasing, and perfect.*

**Ephesians 5:10** *Determine what pleases the Lord.*

**Ephesians 5:17** *Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.*

**1 Corinthians 7:17** *Only, as the Lord has distributed to each man, as God has called each, so let him walk.*

### What advantages do Christians led by the Spirit have?

#### 1. Spiritual Growth.

Those who are led by the Spirit daily grow spiritually as a result of seeing the fulfillment of what God has foretold them.

#### 2. Growth in Faith.

Their faith and trust in God grows.

#### 3. They are filled with God's wisdom.

Observing God working in people's lives leads to spiritual wisdom and experience.

#### 4. No disillusionments.

Those led by the Spirit are protected from disillusionments, because if God is in charge, everything has a meaning and reason. As a result of seeing God and His plan in everything that happens in their lives, these Christians have no reason to get upset with the people through whom trials come.

#### 5. Less mistakes in life.

Those led by the Spirit make less mistakes because they try to not make any decisions without first consulting with God's will.

#### 6. Being led by the Spirit is an indicator of the spiritual level of a Christian.

Losing the leading of the Holy Spirit is a signal that something is wrong and stimulates one to seek to correct the reasons for this loss.

**1 Samuel 14:36, 37** *Saul said, «Let's go down after the Philistines tonight and plunder them until dawn, and let's not leave a single one of them alive». They said, «Do whatever seems good to you!» But the priest said, «Let's draw near to God here». Saul inquired of God, «Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel?» But God did not answer him that day.*

After not receiving an answer from God, the people of Israel understood that sin was the reason God did not answer them. This prompted them to search for the reason for God's silence, and they found it.

#### 7. Being led by the Spirit prevents pridefulness.

Success gives people wings. It is the nature of man to feel pride in circumstances they played a decisive role in.

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, it is the Holy Spirit who leads and makes decisions. Knowing this protects a person from pride. A person led by the Holy Spirit realizes that any successes in life are due to the decisions of the Holy Spirit; he cannot take credit for them.

#### 8. The desire to know the will of God liberates from selfishness and self-love.

It is impossible to live a life of both fulfilling the desires of one's flesh and that of fulfilling God's will. Before one can decide to seek God's will, he has to first deny his own desires in favor of what God will teach him.



Drawing И. ОСОКИНА

#### Does a Christian sin by not seeking to know God's will for him?

**Hosea 4:6** *My people are destroyed because they lack knowledge of me. Because you rejected that knowledge, I will reject you as a priest for me. Since you forget the Law of your God, I will also forget your children.*

Yes. The Christian not only sins, but also risks losing the privilege of God's nearness. The children of those who understand and reject God's leading will have problems in life. God's protection and blessing may be taken away. Those who are careless about finding out God's will can suffer despair, depression, and lose out on spiritual growth.

**Psalms 106:10, 11** *Some sat in deepest darkness, shackled with cruel iron, because they had rebelled against the command of God, despising the advice of the Most High.*

**Psalms 27:5** *Because they do not understand the deeds of the LORD or the*

*work of his hands, He will tear them down and never build them up.*

**James 4:17** *Therefore, anyone who knows what is right but fails to do it is guilty of sin.*

The biggest obstacle on the path to finding out God's will is our unwillingness to sacrifice our comfort in order to put in the effort required to find out God's will. Because of this Christ said: **«The one who loves his life will destroy it, and the one who hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life»** (John 12:25).

Some Christians have the wrong understanding of the Holy Spirit's role. They think that the Holy Spirit is meant to help them in the attainment of their personal desires. In their opinion, the Holy Spirit should bring victory into their lives and fulfill all their desires without any action on their part. What could be more wrong? The Holy Spirit is God, and should be treated as such. The Holy Spirit is not simply a means of communication. If the Holy Spirit were simply a «telephone» or a «wire» connecting us to God, and not a Person revered in heaven, then there would not be any harsh punishment for those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit. And Christ would not have given the instruction to baptize believers in the name of the Holy Spirit; it would have been enough to baptize them in the name of the Father and Son.

**The leading of the Holy Spirit is intended for the salvation and perfection of man.** Therefore, whoever does not cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the matter of his own sanctification, will most likely

not be able to be used of God for the benefit of others around him. We need to remember that the primary task of the Holy Spirit is to save man and perfect him.

#### Why is it impossible to give specific instructions in regard to hearing God's voice?

Why can't we develop a universal, simplified process for being led by the Holy Spirit?

1. Because the Holy Spirit is not a mechanism that needs to be studied in order to be able to use it for our own benefit, but rather a Divine Person (one of the Trinity) Who acts as He likes.

2. Because the process of searching for the leading of the Holy Spirit is, in itself, a great blessing for man. God often uses this time to show man those aspects of his life that need correction. Sometimes a delay in receiving an answer can bring man more blessing than the answer itself.

3. God wants to have fellowship with each person individually. The experience of one Christian in being led by the Spirit may not completely fit the experience of another. God does not want His children to be more absorbed by the method of receiving His leading than by Himself.

#### Conditions under which the leading of the Holy Spirit becomes clearer

##### 1. Childlike faith.

**Heb. 11:6** *But without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to God must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him.*

**James 1:6-7** *But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord.*

**Mk. 9:23** *Jesus said unto him, «If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes».*

#### 2. A pure heart.

**Jn. 9:31** *We know that God does not hear sinners: but who honors God and does His will, him He hears.*

**Pr. 15:29** *The Lord is far from the wicked, but the prayer of the righteous He hears.*

**Ez. 14:3, 9, 10** *Son of man, These men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be consulted by them at all?*

**Mt. 5:8** *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

#### 3. Realizing the insufficiency of our own mind, desiring to be led by the Holy Spirit.

**Pr. 3:5** *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

**Jer. 17:5** *Thus says the Lord: «Cursed is the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord».*

**1 Cor. 2:12-16** *Now we have received, not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit of God to understand the gifts bestowed on us by God, So we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But the person without the Spirit does not accept the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.*

#### 4. When inner peace is preserved.

One who does not have inner peace in his heart cannot understand God's leading.

**James. 3:18** *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

**Phil. 4:6-7** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guide your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

#### 5. Consent to fulfill the will of God, whatever that may be.

God's will is revealed to those who are ready to fulfill it.

**Mt. 6:10** *Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven;*

**James. 3:17** *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*

#### 6. Having a prayer life.

God gave man free will, and cannot go against it without man's permission. Prayer gives God the right to correct a man's life for his own good. Therefore a man's prayers, or the prayers of other people for him, are essential for the Holy Spirit to lead him.

**Eph. 6:18** *With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*

**Rom. 8:26-27** *The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. He who searches the heart, knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

#### 1 Thes. 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

#### In summary:

— God has His own will for every person, but not everyone wants to know it. Many want to live their lives as they see fit.

— Seeking God's leading is clear evidence of our love for God.

— Understanding God's will is a blessing that is available to all believers, but only a few seek this.

Aleksandr BORISENKO.

# TESTIMONIES OF BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIANS

GREETINGS, dear child of God! I don't know you, what your name is, how old you are, whether you are male or female, what kind of person you are, or even why you are here, but one thing I know for certain – your Heavenly Father loves you so much! He knows everything about you!

He is the one Who planned your entire life. He formed you in your mother's womb: your skin and bones, nervous system, hair, fingernails, and your senses. He also created your heart and placed in it all His very best – goodness, kindness, compassion, care, sympathy, and love, without which everything else would not matter.

No matter how deeply these wonderful feelings are buried in you, the Father wants to bring them to your mind. He wants your mind to begin thinking! He knows the first thought and step which led you to your first sin.

You know, I am not the least bit better than you, and you are not worse than I. In all my life I have sinned plenty...

Forgive me for not introducing myself sooner. My name is Tanya. I am 58. I have a son and a daughter who are grown up. I have three grandsons and a granddaughter. And I used to be a wife. I came to God seven years ago. If it interests you, I can write later how exactly it happened. Sometime after it happened, I asked God why he didn't come into my life earlier so that I wouldn't have committed so many sins. His answer was that earlier I wouldn't have understood. It became clear to me that the Lord needed to lead me through difficult trials in order to purge me of every evil way (and I used to be proud of that evil).

Now when I recall my former life, the thought enters my mind that if all of that had not been in my life, then I certainly would not have realized what kind of person I was then. Once I asked God: «What did you see in me, that You paid attention to me? I did so much evil, everyone forsook me, but You still say that you love me very much. How can this be? Answer me».

And God answered: «I do not come to the righteous, but to sinners. I placed in your heart that which I have. You are made in my

## A Letter to You

image. And I know that that image is still there. But you believed those who told you that you were not beautiful, that no one wanted you, that you are a failure, and that you can't put two words together because you stutter. When you got married and had children, you did not raise them, you just lived with them. You didn't teach them anything, they just did what they saw you do. All your relatives yelled at you and said you weren't normal. They said you didn't treat your



children and husband right. But I tell you that you acted correctly. You proved to them in tears that you were right. They lowered your self-esteem, and walked all over «you».

When you saw that they didn't understand or accept you, you started making mistakes. But I saw everything, and I knew, and I waited for you to call on Me for help, but you tried to do everything yourself... and that's why you made so many mistakes. I know how you suffered, how much you cried, and how many people, including your relatives, turned their back on you... And I waited... And now you are mine! I didn't look at circumstances; I looked straight into your heart in which I placed so much that is beautiful.

My son Jesus took away all your sins, your sicknesses, the curses, and weaknesses, already 2,000 years ago, but you only came to understand this now. Regardless of

your mistakes, your wrong actions, your bad thoughts, I still love you very much, my daughter!»

Thank the Lord that I am now with Him, and that my hearts weeps and sympathizes with those who are in prison. I don't know yet what will happen with the ministry that God has opened for me, but I know this – I really want to tell you how much your Heavenly Father loves you! So much that you can't even imagine it!

Three days ago I read «Prisoner», cried all night, and the Lord gave me a gift! For many years I could not stop smoking. I quit many times but started up again. But when I realized that I was addicted, I got frightened: «This is just like drugs!» If I didn't have a cigarette in the house, I started shaking and began feverishly searching all my pockets and purses. This went on for a long time. Every time I promised myself that this would be the last cigarette, and then I started again.

Many times I prayed God to take away this addiction. I was very afraid that He would let me get some terrible disease, and only then would I stop. But how wonderful is God! He said to me: «You will stop yourself». And that very night, when I read «Prisoner» and cried, I finally stopped smoking.

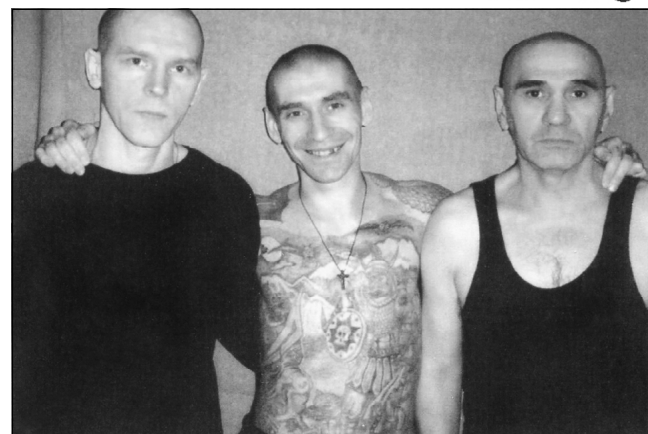
I am free from addiction to smoking! I just needed to make the decision, and God did all the work Himself! I really want you to make the decision to receive complete freedom in God! I really want to tell you the truth that God is stronger than all your fears, worries, doubts, and the opinions that people think about you! You are a wonderful creation of the Heavenly Father! You don't even realize how close God is to you! Just stretch out your hands, call on Him, believe, open your heart to him, let Him in, and allow Him to live there! He is waiting for you! He will forgive you! To have freedom in the Lord is an amazing and incomparable feeling! Know that I am praying for you!

With the love of Christ, your sister

**Tatyana RYBINA**  
Krasnoyarsk, Russia.

I greet you, dear brothers and sisters, with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ! Peace to you!

Hearty thanks for the newspaper you sent me – «Prisoner». It is a very good and useful Christian publication that I read with great satisfaction. Along with my letter I am enclosing my testimony and photo for publication (I am in the center). My earnest request is that you would publish my material, if at all possible. I greatly need fellowship with other Christians, and I will answer all letters, if someone writes to me.



## I have become what I should be – a son of God

My name is Vasily, and I am 38 years old. I was born and raised in Siberia, in the city of Krasnoyarsk. I am serving a sentence in a maximum security prison named «Chorniy Delfin» (Black Dolphin) in the city of Sol-Iletska, Orenburg region. My journey to the Lord was long, thorny, and slippery. I was pricked by the sharp thorns of temptation and fell many times, landing on the shiny «ice» of sin, and inflicting deep wounds on my own heart. But praise be to God, I have become what I should be – a son of God. When I was a little boy, I saw a crucifix and asked my grandma (she was Russian Orthodox): Who is that hanging there? She told me that that is our Lord Jesus Christ, and that wicked people had nailed him to the cross. That was the extent of my knowledge of God.

In elementary school, I began stealing change from pockets in the students' coat room, and then in the teachers'. At first something inside of me protested and would not give me rest, but later my conscience «feel asleep». I began to steal money from my parents and grandmother. I was caught many times but nothing happened. My family warned me that I would end up in prison and become a bandit. The thought of this future scared me, but after I rushed headlong into street life, I decided that being a bandit would be prestigious and cool. And I successfully became one, unfortunately, even though my family was a good family. I have a brother and a sister; I am the youngest in our family. Sadly, my mother passed away on January 3, 2013, on my birthday. Such was my birthday present for my foolish life.

When the police first arrested me for stealing at age 10, they were especially amazed that I had stolen from a 16-year old. They registered me for a year with the juvenile section of the police department, since I was too young to stand trial. This was a shock and embarrassment for my family. As for me, I was proud of my action, and I gained great respect from the guys on the street.

In Pokrovka, where I lived, they dealt drugs. As a rule it was gypsies who dealt them. To get a dose of «kaifa», people would come from faraway to our town. We called these people «flying geese». We would latch onto them and take away their valuables. Those who didn't cooperate we beat up. I myself didn't use drugs and the like, and I stayed away from those who did. These druggies were the reason I didn't want to get involved. I saw how miserable they were without their dose, and how quickly they deteriorated to living like animals.

Probably this is why I told myself, that's not for me! My weaknesses were alcohol and money. The devil completely controlled my

heart. My life rapidly fell into drunkenness, fighting, and other vices... But I was excited, I thought I had attained what I wanted. It was all a mirage and a lie.

I was arrested and put in prison when I was 14. Of course, I didn't want to sit behind bars, but I didn't have much of a choice. The court sentenced me to three and a half years confinement. In 1992 I was released, and with renewed energy I returned to the same filth. Sinful desires sparked with devilish power: drinking, fighting, women, and so on. The devil rejoiced and pushed me deeper into the same filthy swamp. He wrung from my soul every drop of life and filled it with stinking gall. And what was bound to happen sooner or later, happened. I was arrested and charged with murder. At that moment time completely stopped for me. The investigation took a whole year, then came the trial and the sentence – death!

Behind me clanged shut the bolts on the metal doors of that room designated for prisoners condemned to death. My former life died, my new life had not yet begun, and in fact I had no idea about this new life. My heart hardened and was filled with anger. Nevertheless, after a while I gradually got used to my fate.

Once I got my hands on a Bible, but I didn't understand the point of it. I decided it wasn't for me. The devil drowned my consciousness in murky, foul water. But the Lord in His love did not wish me to perish, and He sent to my aid a brother in Christ, Yuriy Sheshin, from Krasnoyarsk. I received a letter and photograph from him. I didn't feel any particular happiness, but I did decide to answer his letter. After all it's kind of embarrassing not to answer someone who made the effort to write you a letter and even sent a picture. We began to correspond, and this stirred an interest in reading and studying the Word of God. But my heart was not made clean, as Satan did not want to release me from his clutches. It took time before I could cast off the yoke of the devil and consecrate my life to the Lord.

That happened in 2000. I sincerely repented before God and received such peace in my heart as only Jesus Christ can give. Praise God! From that moment I became a truly free man. The Lord gave me a large family of brothers and sisters in Christ. I obtained the eternal life which our Heavenly Father has prepared for us all. Praise be to our Lord and Savior! Hallelujah!

**Василий ЧУНЯЕВ,**  
ФКУ ИК-6, ПЛС, г. Соль-Илецк,  
Оренбургская обл., Россия, 461505.

Peace and grace to you, dear editors of «Prisoner»! Yes, I will most gladly help to distribute this newspaper. And I believe the Lord will help me to do it. I have already received an answer from several fellows who gave thanks for the newspaper and asked, if possible, to send more. So thank you for your work, and praise God!

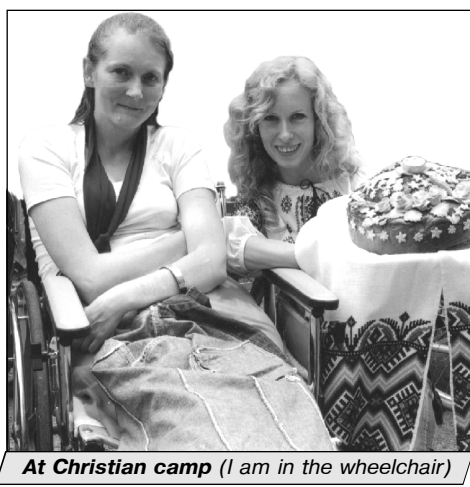
You asked me to share my testimony. I don't like to remember the past, since there is nothing there except a swamp of sin and lawlessness. But at your request, and that the Lord would be glorified, I will say a little.

I was 15 years old when my parents lost their parental rights, and we (I have a younger brother and sister) were placed in an orphanage. My mom died after several months (she was murdered for her house). In the orphanage I met Christians and heard about God for the first time.

## Dear friend, don't wait to come to Jesus

A classmate and I attended church and both soon repented. But when we finished school and went on to study further, we both began to drink and smoke. Naturally, I was embarrassed to go to church anymore. I gave up my studies and returned home. Since I was afraid to live with my father, I went to a neighboring city.

There my life went downhill fast. For 7 or 8 years I lived in dens, cellars, and with bums (for a year and a half). It's only by God's mercy that I'm still alive. Praise God!



At Christian camp (I am in the wheelchair)

He stopped me, although He had to put me in a wheelchair to do so. When I awoke in the intensive care unit after falling from the third floor, I realized that it was only by God's mercy that I was still alive (I could have fallen onto a spiked fence or asphalt). I

wished that Christians would come to visit me, and I wanted to read the Bible. The Lord answered me.

When they took me from the regional hospital to my hometown, an acquaintance of my mother came to visit me. She was a Christian. She let me read the Bible, and on January 23, 2006, before my birthday, I repented. After the hospital I was sent to an old people's home. But later it became apparent that it was actually a psychiatric orphanage. That was scary! I spent 5 years there. When I asked to be baptized, someone said that I could not go in the water. But here the Lord again helped me.

On November 1, 2008, I entered into a covenant with the Lord through holy water baptism. In 2011, the orphanage became restricted. In God's mercy and because of my handicap, I

was transferred to a home for the elderly and disabled. The Lord gave me the opportunity to praise Him in

poems which I write, and He gave me a ministry of correspondence with prisoners, for which I am so thankful to Him! I want to close my brief testimony with the words of Jesus Christ: «For the Son of Man came to see and to save that which was lost».

Dear friend, don't wait to come to Jesus. He forgives

everyone and gives new life! He loves you, no matter who you are!

**Valentina ONISHCHUK**  
Lutsk, Ukraine.



Home for the elderly, Ruda, 2007



Every day the editors of «Prisoner» receive many letters. Most of them are from men, seldom from women. Letters from young people are especially rare. However, one came in from a young woman who asked us to publish her letter (excluding her real name and location).

We could not ignore such a letter, so we are publishing a very slightly abridged and edited version:

## PAPA, PAPA...

Dear editors of «Prisoner»! A copy of your magazine ended up in my hands not long ago. My dear father, who is serving a life sentence, sent it to me by way of my mother. In his letter he writes how he came to faith in God and how after that his life completely changed. He advised me to read this magazine, thinking that since I lived in the free world, everything must be going wonderfully for me. In reality, he could not even imagine that his «beloved girl» was incarcerated just like him.

Dear editors, is it really true that God can totally change a person to the point that even serving a life sentence seems like a dream come true?

This year I turned 19, but I feel like I have already lived three or four lives. I only ever



saw my father in photos, and my mother lived her own life, meaning from my earliest childhood I saw one man after another come in and heard their nightly oohs and aahs in the next room over. Our house was the place for regular drinking sprees and the resultant nightly drunken brawls and stupors.

By age twelve I just wanted to have an adventure in life. I tried every corrupt and sinful act imaginable in this world, and now I live on the very edge, beyond which is nothing but the end – «a flight over the cuckoo's nest».

Now I see no way out, for not only am I addicted to drugs, I am also infected with HIV. I find it hard to believe my father's words that God truly can change a person. Sadly, this letter with the magazine was the very first that I received from him in eighteen years. I must admit that as I paged through «Prisoner», the articles seemed interesting and applicable. I even tried to pray, but I couldn't. For some reason I immediately melted into tears and my heart shrank into a sick lump. «Papa, papa, where were you as I grew up?! Surely my life would have turned out alright if you had been there. But now I have nothing but emptiness». Now nothing helps, not my own scrounging, nor my selfish ways, nor anything else.

I ask you, editors, to publish my letter without my full name. Let my father know how hard it was for me all these years and what emptiness I now have inside. I know for sure that if he had been near, all this misfortune of my short life would not have been...

You know, I liked the article by I. Gorika, «Apathy». That is exactly the way things are today. Sometimes I just want to scream out in horror about what tomorrow will bring...

OXSANA.

\* \* \*

It is painful to read such letters, especially from young people such as this very young girl. It is very hard to wrap one's head around the fact that prisons today hold not only adults, but even adolescent girls. Usually, when I look into these children's faces, I know full well that most of the blame lies with us adults. And what could we tell God in excuse, when the children themselves testify to our apathy!

I. GORIK.

*«My desire is that every prisoner would receive a New Testament, that every prisoner would know that there is a God Who loves him, and for his sake, the sinner, God sent Jesus Christ into this world. I am convinced that 99% of prisoners are lost in spiritual deadness».*

(Viktor Mural-Sikorskiy).

Once a newborn baby was found in a dumpster, cord uncut, wrapped in a rag. As a result, this child, with neither father nor mother, grew up in the children's homes and orphan-schools of the city of Gaisin.

The efforts of this young man turned him into an internationally-recognized judo master by the age of 20. He won an Olympic silver medal for the USSR. He graduated with a major in philosophy

### What does a man go through when sentenced to ten years imprisonment? How did a lost, embittered criminal become a loving, caring prison missionary?

Like all people, I always wanted to be happy. When I was still young, I concluded that everything in life is solved by money. The problem was where to get it. An opportunity presented itself. My wife worked at a printing house and I often visited her there. Seeing how different things were printed, I had an idea...

In short, a group of six of us got together and we began to make counterfeit 25-ruble bills.

This came to an end in the summer of 1985 when we were arrested. Investigators pulled from the banks more than one and a half million of our counterfeit rubles. At trial, the prosecuting attorney demanded we be shot, insisting, «People who have learned to do that will never rest». What saved us was the «Gorbachev thaw» that began that year. So instead we were given long sentences without the right to appeal for amnesty.

In prison I could not understand why I had been incarcerated. «I should get a medal for helping the government print money», I thought. «At least they could have just said, «Sikorskiy, don't do that!» and I would have agreed to stop. But to be given such a long sentence!» Because of this I hated everyone. I threw my weight around, fought, and broke all the rules of order.

«Since I am serving for no reason, why should I obey them?» I figured. So I almost never got out of the punishment cells. «Well», I dreamed, «when I get out I will go back to printing money and just throw it on the street and let people pick it up!» I was so angry that I wanted to undermine the country's economy.

In those years many believers served time in prison with us. Some were imprisoned for printing Bibles, some for refusing to bear arms. We looked at them as people «not of this world». If you would have told me then that I would become one of them, I would have been offended. «So that people would scorn me? Never!» I figured that these people had been raised in a barn somewhere and so did not know anything about life.

We had one believer we called «Lemon» (his hair was light like a lemon). What got me was that when the deputy chief for political indoctrination suggested he go on the radio and publicly renounce Christ, and be released within the day, he stubbornly refused. I could never understand why. «Listen, Lemon», I said, «Renounce and go free, and then believe whatever you want. After all, you have a wife and four children».

I remember that he answered, «You know, I can't renounce. This is my life, my very breath!» I was amazed at that – on one hand they were pushed around like play-dough, and on the other they had such strength of character.

Several years passed and all the believers were released. Then, in the summer of 1989, we heard that some believers had arrived and, by the way, among them were girls. We all flocked around... It was hot, but we sat and watched, amazed, covered in tattoos of crosses and the Virgin Mary.

Anyway, they started their presentation: they sang, preached, and prayed. The more I heard, the more furious I became. «Well», I thought, «they came to dumb us down. They

are talking about love, but I can't understand what talk about love there can be when you don't even get a spot in the sunshine unless you show your teeth». Everything inside me rebelled.

What's more, they constantly repeated, «This is what it says in the Word of God...», the Word of God says...» and I was even more bothered. After all, I considered myself an educated person and thought that I was rather familiar with Christianity. As it turned out, I couldn't come up with a challenge to anything they said. So I decided to ask one of them for a Bible, study it, and then speak with them «on their level» and tear apart all their philosophy.

## A TRUE LIFE STORY

After the service, I went up to the preacher and said, «Listen, friend, give me your Word of God, with which you are drenching us». He hesitated, doubting whether to give it or not, since the prison administration forbade them to give anything to the prisoners. But at that moment the deputy chief of the prison walked up. Hearing that I had asked for a Bible, he said, «Who?



Sikorskiy?! He is a lost case if there ever were one! Even if you gave him ten Bibles, he would still end up either butchered or rotted away. Ones like him never go free». Then the preacher said, «Very well, I will give it to you. Only promise me that before you sit down to read you will pray, and that you will read it from the first letter to the last period». Of course I promised.

After that, I started a notebook to record my observations. But to avoid being a liar, before I opened the Bible I said, «Lord, I don't know if you exist or not, but since I sort of promised, I will pray. You should make me understand, show me something... anyway, do what you know...»

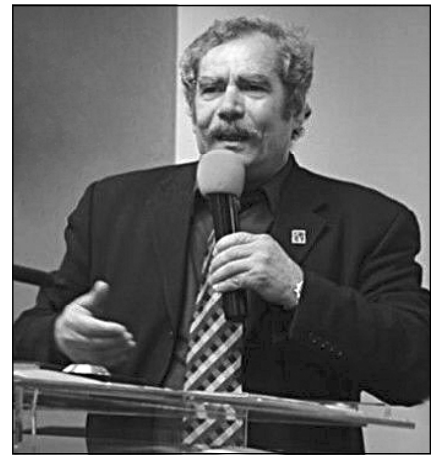
When I had finished reading the Bible all the way through, I realized that I understood very little. But one thing was clear – I was not living right! From that time on, no matter what I did or where I went all my thoughts were about Jesus. So what about me, but Him? For what was He executed? One day I saw myself as if through the eyes of God and was horrified. I was covered in the plague of sin. No matter what part of me, it was rotten. Suddenly I asked myself, «What do I do now?» If my life were to suddenly end, I would be in hell for certain.

In short, I understood that I needed to repent. But how? Those believers had been released long ago. Now I was

from the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kiev. Today, Viktor Ivanovich Mural-Sikorskiy is pastor of People of God Church. He also heads a seminary.

He is a bishop and coordinator of the prison ministry in Ukraine. His path to God was not the least bit easy, as can be seen from his short biography. This true story told by Viktor Ivanovich himself will grip the attention of readers of Prisoner. A number of articles and various Christian publications, including his sermons, have been published about this extraordinary man. He has held evangelistic services in 146 of the 200 penitentiaries in Ukraine, carrying the Good News to imprisoned people, to whom he once belonged himself. His story is best told by him himself.

From the Editors.



ready to listen even to that Lemon day and night. But then from the devil came the thoughts, «Sikorskiy! What are you thinking! You have years and years to sit in prison. Besides, this place has its own laws and ways – you would never survive!»

At last, on September 10, 1989, I decided to repent. In my understanding, this had to happen in private – only me and God. So, late that night, I went out of the barracks, knelt down, and began to repent. Suddenly, out of nowhere, the guard appeared, saw me, and exclaimed, «Sikorskiy? What are you doing here?!» My first thought was, «Now he will start swearing and scolding, and spoil the triumph of the moment...» Surprising myself, I prayed, «Lord, keep him from yelling at me this time!» As it ended up, we calmly conversed a few minutes and he never once scolded me! This had never happened before. I realized that the Lord had answered my prayer.

When they heard about my repentance, everyone thought I had lost my mind. «Think!» they told me. «They will tear you to pieces! Why do you act up?» Others said, «Nonsense! It will blow over like the common cold». I started to tell everyone about Christ. «Look!» I convinced them, «We are not living right! Turn to Jesus!» Many brushed it off, while others listened and repented. As a result, over the next two months a church of forty people sprung up among us. I ended up as its pastor, although I knew next to nothing...

After I was released, my biggest desire remained to bring convicts to Christ. So I started to travel, preaching wherever prison administration allowed it.

The first few years I traveled by myself. Then the Lord opened the hearts of brothers to begin to support me through New Birth Mission and Love of Christ Church in Kiev.

Today I continue to visit prisons and organize churches in them. Besides that, I travel constantly and watch over those that already exist.

Now I am working toward linking these prison churches with nearby local churches. This would solve many problems. First of all, it would reduce the necessity for a single minister to travel from prison to prison to various regions of the country. Secondly, those local churches would have a great opportunity to carry out evangelistic services in the prisons. Finally, local churches are in a much better position to support former prisoners after their release.

Viktor MURAL-SIKORSKIY.

If someone accidentally stepped on your foot or smashed your hand in a car door, be very thankful to God that you have limbs which can be damaged. And believe me, I'm not joking.

I have had the wonderful experience of meeting people with limited physical abilities, and I learned a lot from them. The most important lesson that I learned from my unique friends was to never grumble in any circumstances and to look at the positive side of every tough situation in life.

Both of my Christian friends were diagnosed with myopathy (progressive muscular dystrophy). Usually people in this situation can only move in wheelchairs or at best with walkers. Even though there was no hope of healing, my friends had such strong spirits that sometimes I was horribly ashamed when I grumbled in my mind about something in my life. What strong faith they had! Five years of happy fellowship with my sister in Christ, and seven years with my brother in Christ (they are in heaven with God now), taught me real courage. Everything that I had achieved –

a higher education in sports, military service, and so on – was simply nothing compared to what I learned from our friendship. I'm very happy that my dear friends taught me the most important lesson – trust God!

Today, the readers of «Prisoner» can read this worthwhile article which will challenge many people to dramatically reexamine their own lives. I think that after reading this article and viewing these photos, many brothers and sisters will be ashamed of their weak trust in God's ability to change any person. Perhaps many of you have already heard about this amazing person, Nick VUJICIC, but likely not many have had an opportunity to see him in different moments in his difficult life.

Please, look and pay close attention to Nick's life-loving face and then look at your face in the mirror... But most important, always remember if someone accidentally steps on your foot or smashes your hand, it's not a reason to be sad. It's only a reminder that you have limitless abilities to do many things in life.

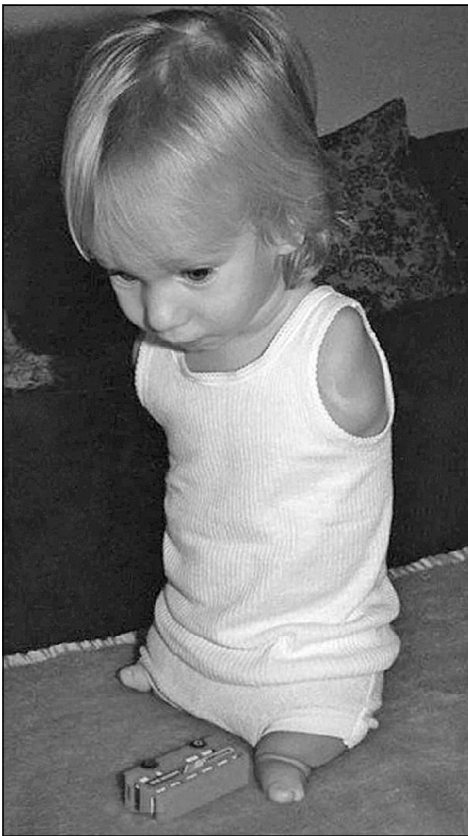
I.GORIK.

## THE LIMITLESS GOD OF LIMITLESS NICK

Dallas, Texas. The Dallas Telegraph reports that a reception was given in Dallas to thank Nick Vujicic and his ministry partners, including organizers, donors, and prayer partners. The reception was organized by three bankers from Merrill Lynch, two pastors of evangelical churches, and a lawyer. Leonid Regheta, pastor of River of Life church in Dallas, represented the ethnic churches of greater Dallas on the organizing committee.

Who is this man, Nick Vujicic? Nick is an educated man with two bachelor's degrees, a famous writer, a motivational speaker in high demand across the world, a successful businessman, singer, actor, and a Christian. He meets with presidents, parliamentarians and movie stars all around the world. Nick was born to a Serbian family in Australia. He has accomplished a lot in his 31 years of life. He starred in a short film «The Butterfly Circus», which he produced practically by himself. He has written two books: «Life Without Limbs: Inspiration For A Ridiculously Good Life» in 2010, and «Limitless» in 2013. Nick started his own non-profit organization «Life Without Limits», and later a motivational organization «Attitude is Altitude».

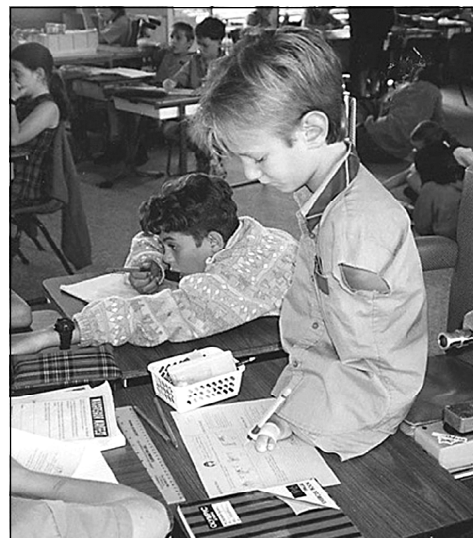
Nick Vujicic has visited more than 20 countries. He is on the road 10 months out of the year, making some 250 appearances and actively engaging audiences and the press. Nick enjoys swimming, surfing, golfing, skateboarding, even diving. It might be expected for a young, successful man to do all those things, but Nick has no legs or arms. Nick Vujicic was born with tetra-amelia syndrome, a rare disorder characterized by the absence of all four limbs. His Christian parents wept without comfort, not knowing how to endure such a trial. But what at first they saw as an insurmountable trial eventually turned into a blessing. Until age 15, Nick could not come to terms with his physical appearance. With the help of a partial foot with a few toes he learned to walk and even swim, but he still was really concerned about his physical deficiencies. Then he read this Bible story about a blind man. He was especially inspired by Jesus Christ's answer to his disciples' question: «Why was this man born blind?» Jesus replied: «That in the him might be revealed the works of God». Nick later wrote that at exactly that moment he stopped being angry at God. «I realized then that I am not just a man without arms and legs. I am God's creation. God knows what he is doing



and why. It doesn't matter what people think».

At age 19 Nick was studying financial planning at the university. Once he was asked to give a speech to the students for 7 minutes. Within 4 minutes of his talk, people were crying and one of the girl students asked for permission to come on stage and hug Nick. She said: «No one ever told me that they loved me, no one ever told me that I was beautiful just the way I am».

At his appearances Nick will often tell people, «Sometimes you might fall like this», and then he falls face down on a table. «In your life you can fall and there is no strength



to rise again. I do not have arms or legs, and even if I try a hundred times, I can't get up. But even after many failures, I don't lose hope, and I keep trying over and over to get up. If you want to finish strong, then you will have to find strength in yourself to get up». Then, pushing his forehead against the table and helping himself with his shoulders, Nick stands up...



More than a hundred guests gathered at the reception for Nick Vujicic in Dallas, ready to support and pray for his gospel ministry in 2013. From Nick's talk it became apparent that he has chosen to live his life according to the main idea



that he wrote about in his book, «Limitless». This is not an autobiography about the limitless abilities of the author; it is a story about the limitless love and power of God. In 2013 Nick planned to visit 26 countries around the world including Japan, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Macau, Hong Kong, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, and 13 different countries in South America.

Nick has chosen two goals for his trip – to mobilize the Christian world and to help people to realize one simple, but important, truth: all human plans and goals must come from God. «I'm not after big crowds, but at the same time I want all the world to know that Jesus is alive», said Nick.

Commenting on his unforgettable acquaintance and friendship with Nick, Leonid Regheta, pastor of River of Life church in Dallas, writes: «I can't think of another meeting that was as full of God's presence, joy and hope for the future». Nick Vujicic dreams of visiting Russia. On a recent interview on ORT, he introduced himself: «Hello, Russia! I'm Nick Vujicic. And I want you to know I'm happy. I hope that my life and my smile will inspire you to never give up».

«Nick, what will you say to the disabled persons in Russia who have no future, and, if we're honest, no hope that life will improve?», asked Leonid Regheta.

«When we talk about Russia», said Nick, «where people of limited abilities



Ник Вуйичи - Родился без всех четырех конечностей. Научился жить со своим недостатком, делая своим опытом с окружающим и став всемирно известным мотивационным спикером.

don't have the same opportunities, where society doesn't accept them, we need to start a movement to change this situation. Every Russian has to understand how valuable a life is. And government, businesses, and education campaigns can help with this. I understand, of course, this might take a long time. I remember the feeling of being trapped that I had as a child, and I remember being ready to give up – I tried to end my life when I was 10. But now I understand that if I had taken that fatal step then, I would have deprived myself of heavenly blessings – a wife, a

son, life in California, and travels around the world.

Today I'm speaking to millions about hope and happiness. I don't want to promise everyone a head-turning career because our worth is not determined by our job or even our talents. The most important thing is that every person is inherently valuable and can become valuable to society. I always tell people: If there is no miracle in your life – be the miracle for others. Find



someone, listen to them, support and help them, and you will perform a miracle!»

The pastor of River of Life church of Dallas asks: «And how can we as Christians be a miracle for this world? How can the church be a miracle for Russia, America, Ukraine?»

«It's very easy», smiled Nick. «We simply have to be more united as one church. Fewer divisions and more joint effort. For example, when I was invited to Slovenia, all 18 evangelical churches in that country, which had not fellowshiped or worked together until then, suddenly began to pray together every week, forgive each other, and fast together. And then the miracles began.

We will definitely be a miracle for others when we become one family of God in deed. When we are one, then our nations will begin to change. Be a miracle! Stop

waiting for something more. God will not give us more until we learn to use what we already have to the maximum. Let's start with the most important thing – love!»

The love, faith and hope of Nick Vujicic is limitless. Appearing before thousands in an auditorium recently, he said: «In my closet there is a pair of shoes... just in case».

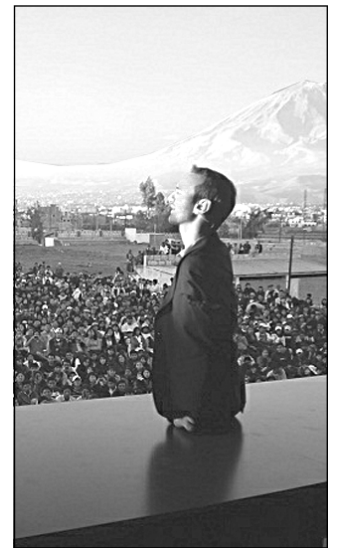
Lyudmila KACHKAR.  
<http://www.hve.ru>

More photographs on page 11





# THE LIMITLESS GOD OF LIMITLESS NICK



## Famous Athletes Talk About God and Their Faith

«For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?» (Matthew 16:26).

«It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God» (Luke 4:4).



**Yuriy POSTRIGAI,**  
Olympic Gold Medalist in Rowing:

«God is the whole purpose of my life. When I discovered the New Testament, I realized that I had lived a wrong lifestyle because I lived without God. The New Testament is a collection of life instructions for people of all ages. There are instructions how to get a Gold Medal, how to find the best wife, how to do business, how to deal with failure, how to communicate with parents, how to love, to forgive and to succeed. I waited for that moment when I could say in front of millions of people that God exists! I prayed: «God, if I win the medal, I will tell about You everywhere». This is what is happening right now. I won the Olympic Gold Medal so that I could say to everyone: God exists!»

**Yekaterina ANTONYUK,**  
multiple champion of Belarus, and medalist from Russia in cross country skiing:

«I started practicing sports when I was eleven. And

ever since, I have been focused on sports. I did not have a clear understanding about the Bible. I thought that I did not have to read the book. It was enough for me to simply have it in my house.

However, one day I took the Bible in my hands and I realized that it was not just a book, but it was God's word to us people. It was God's word where He describes and opens Himself, His will and the history of Earth from Creation to the end...»



**Juan Carlos VALERON,**  
soccer player, winner of the Spanish Super Cup:

«As an athlete, I would like to say that I owe everything that I have achieved to God. God is real for me. Jesus turns all problems into blessings. I especially like Psalm 23 because it reminds me that God is the Father who leads me, and I have everything when I am with Him».

**Paulu SERGIO,**  
world champion soccer player:

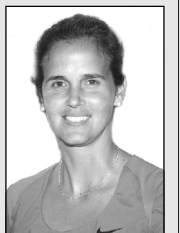
«Of course, it is good to be the winner. To achieve something in life is wonderful. But these are temporary things, and the joy they bring passes very quickly. One day, I learned that the Bible talks about a victory that will never end. It is the victory of Jesus Christ over sin. «If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us



our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness» (1 John 1:9). Jesus did this for us. This truth has changed my life».

**Mary Jo FERNANDEZ,**  
tennis player, Olympic Bronze Medalist:

«Jesus takes the main place in my life. Whatever I do, I always rely on God. He gives me strength and encourages me. In a certain way, trials promote one's spiritual growth. They are sent to us so we can reach our higher purpose».



**Michael CHANG,**  
winner of the Davis Cup in tennis:



«Faith in the Lord is very important for me. I believe that Jesus is real and that everything that has happened in my life was not an accident. God controls everything. You just need to acknowledge that you are a sinner, ask God for forgiveness, and accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. From that moment your life changes, because you don't just learn what is good and what is bad. You get a great goal in your life. From that very moment, everything turns into an exciting adventure.

After the games I always want to give thanks to Lord for the victory»

Sources: armageddon.ru



## PRISONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

### Tulun — ominous and mysterious



The exact date when the prison in Tulun (Irkutsk Region, Russia) was established is not known. In the prison's archives is a photo of the administration building for Prison No. 2 that was opened in 1920. Some people believe that the prison in Tulun has existed since tsarist times, but that cannot be confirmed.

Until 1962, the prison was heated by ovens. In the early 1960s, all wooden structures on the prison's territory required repairs. From 1962 to 1973, the prison's special buildings, warehouses, cellars, workshop, garage, boiler room, bathhouse, laundry room, yard, and tunnels from the cell buildings to the yard, were constructed from reinforced concrete. A new administration building, which now serves as the headquarters, was built in 1978.

Thanks to the work of the staff of SIZO (criminal investigation isolation ward), some interesting historical facts were discovered in the archives. For example, until the 1950s, convicts were brought to the prison primarily by animal-powered transport. The prison workers were hired based on their social status: usually they came from the poor peasant class, or in exceptional cases from the middle class (only if they had not undergone dekulakization), and from those who had not lived in Nazi-occupied territory. Until the 1960s, prison staff were required to pass a test demonstrating their knowledge of how to restrain a prisoner with a straitjacket.

### Alma-Ata Central



The criminal investigation isolation ward in Alma-Ata has existed for more than a hundred years. Here, thousands of arrested persons awaited their fate (and the court's decision). In different historical periods, Alma Ata Central looked strikingly different. At one time it was an ugly regional jail on the edge of the empire, later a model isolation unit for political prisoners, then a severe Oriental zindan — and all of this in the same building.

Before the October Revolution and Civil War, Alma-Ata was called Verniy (Loyal). The city was founded in 1856 as a mighty military fortress on the edge of the Russian Empire. At the same time, Verniy was a large administrative center and the capital of the Cossacks cohort. The main population was composed of soldiers, Cossacks, and officials — that is, law-abiding and disciplined people. There were not a lot of crimes in the city. So when in 1893 there arose a discussion about building a jail in Verniy, the city officials decided to save money and built a small jail with only 18 small cells. The maximum number of convicts the jail could hold was 84.

### Kishinev Prison



Kishinev Prison is a complex of low buildings which form a large interior yard. Externally it looks like an ancient castle built in the baroque style, which some local convicts say proves that the prison was built in the 18th century under Empress Catherine II. It was then, in the golden age of Russian nobility, that Moldova was united to Russia.

The primary prisoners in the new Kishinev Prison were small-time swindlers and local burglars. However, there were some outstanding individuals among them. There repeatedly served time the so-called «Bessarabian Robin Hood», who later became a commander of the Red Army — Grigory Kotovsky.

After the dissolution of the USSR, Kishinev Prison became the main prison of independent Moldova. In this capacity it endured many scandals and escape attempts.

### Syzran SIZO



Syzran SIZO stands out among the correctional facilities of the Russian Federation. It is the one of the oldest prisons not only in the Volga region, but in all of Russia.

It is interesting that there is more information about its past than about recent years. In part this can be explained by the fact that for many years death sentences were carried out here, and as a result there was a high level of secrecy. There were very few similar facilities across the immense USSR.

The history of Syzran SIZO is closely associated with the city of Syzran itself. In the second half of the 17th century, Stepan Razin, the famous Cossack leader, led a robber band which levied tribute from all vessels passing up and down the Volga. After the suppression of his uprising, his cohorts still roamed the region. The government was forced to take a series of military measures, including the construction of a fortress in the Volga region.

Syzran SIZO is one of the oldest buildings in the city. It is built of red bricks and was designed to hold 260 people. SIZO satisfied all the requirements of prison construction at that time. It had a section for women, and a 20-bed hospital. The prison church of St. Nicholas was located on its territory.

In Soviet times, Syzran SIZO, which for a long time was named «Domzak», survived on funds from the regional treasury and money the convicts earned. Since 1925, Domzak had workshops for carpenters and metalworkers, and various manufactures. The prisoners also worked on collective farms making hay and harvesting crops. All this work was supervised by prison staff.

Many legendary individuals have passed through this prison during its long history. They include responsible officials of various ranks who came under investigation, persons falsely slandered and crushed under the wheel of repression, and many



leaders of the criminal world. Reportedly, Aleksandr Matrosov, future hero of the Soviet Union, was there in transit.

### Samara «Kresti»



Towards the end of the 19th century, officials in many regions of the Russian empire had a serious problem: they needed more space for persons awaiting trial and for convicts who were already sentenced. The prisons they had were overcrowded; sometimes they held three or four times more prisoners than sanitary regulations allowed. In the early 1890s, the reconstituted Main prison administration of the Russian empire decided to build new prisons in a number of cities. In Samara, the prison was modeled after Peter's «Kresti», because this Volga city was already one of the largest railroad hubs in Russia, through which thousands of prisoners and exiles were sent to Siberia.

During the three Russian revolutions, there were a lot of famous revolutionaries in the Samara prison. For example, in 1913, Inessa Armand spent several days there because she was a member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolshevik). Later some other famous Bolsheviks spent time here: A.I. Rykov, N.M. Shvernik, L.B. Krasin, and V.V. Kuybyshev.

### Central Riga Prison



Central Riga Prison has a long and sorrowful history. Tens of thousands of people passed through its brutal concrete cells, and for many of them it was their last journey.

The main prison in Riga, located in the central district of the Latvian capital, was opened at the close of the 19th century. The complete prison complex, composed of fifteen buildings including a hospital, bakery, bathhouse, workshops, and several outbuildings, was commissioned in 1905. Each building had either shared cells or solitary cells. The prison was originally designed to accommodate one thousand people. It was built to replace the old and decrepit regional prison.

In 1911, Pavel Dybenko, future hero of the Revolution and Red Army commander, served his term here. It is hard to say how in the world the Ukrainian Dybenko ended up in the distant Baltics. In Riga, he worked as a porter. He joined the revolutionary circles of the Bolsheviks and SRs (Social Revolutionaries). But he was convicted not for his his revolutionary activities but for evading military service. When he learned that he could face three years in prison, Dybenko agreed to serve the king and the Fatherland. Dybenko began his military service as a sailor on the penal ship «Dvina», where he behaved very diligently. He was soon after sent to mine training school, and then put on the battleship «Emperor Paul I». The rest of his life is well-known.

### Dear readers of «Prisoner»!

The newspaper office requests that you enclose your mailing address with your material (testimonies, sermons, articles, etc.) for publication in «Prisoner». If you include photos with your 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 Savior Jesus Christ with a short prayer:

*«Lord Jesus, I believe you are God's Son; you died for my sins and rose again for my salvation. I accept you as my Lord and Savior. Please forgive all my sins and grant me eternal life. Amen!»*



## PRISONER

### INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER

Certificate of State registration of the print media series KV № 20170-9970PR from 15.08.2013

#### Dear readers!

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

Current Account for donations: «PRIVATBANK»

s/a 4405885822937253. For postal orders: **Dolgushina Irina Nikolaevna**, box 60/15, Severodonetsk, Lugansk region, Ukraine, 93406. For transfers via Western Union and Money Gram

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

**Mailing address from U.S. prisoners for the newspaper «Prisoner»:**  
Christian Prison Ministry Bryte Church 1000 Sacramento Ave. West Sacramento, CA 95605.

**The address of the newspaper:**  
«Prisoner», box 60/15, Severodonetsk, Lugansk region, Ukraine, 93406

Editor **Igor Gorik**

Responsible for the issue **Irina Dolgushina**.  
Design and Desktop Publishing **Pavel Vladimirov**.

**Translation services**  
Translation of the articles was provided by: **Irina Voronina, Eleonora Gorbenko, Marina Krivosheenko, Alla Koroleva, Elena Borisenko, Kristina Baljic, Irina Sentsova, Michael T.** and edited by **Michael T.**

**Newspaper printed at limited liability company «Press-express».**  
91034, Lugansk, Vatutina, 89a.  
Tel.: 38(0642) 500-869.  
Circulation 350 cop. Order N 1719

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.**