



The Bridge Report

REHAB CENTER SALVATION



R.K. (left) with Zhennya (Center) and his administrative assistant

Imagine telling those who are fighting the war on drugs in this country: There is indeed a place where heroin and cocaine addicts can get help that completely sets them free from drugs, where, within a year, they are restored back into the mainstream of life as productive, dynamic, citizens - all that for the cost of **\$1 a day!** The unanimous response would be: Impossible — you are exaggerating!! The truth is, there are several places in the world like that. One of those places is **Rehabilitation Center "Salvation"**, located in Asbest, Russia. The other is Sasha's Center in a rural village on the outskirts of the same city where all 240 adults were alcoholics when Sasha started his Center (see Bridge Report dated February 2001 under Archive on our web page).

The first time I visited *Rehab Center "Salvation"* and met its Director, **Zhenya Melnikov**, was in the Fall of 2000. I was leading a team from our leadership training school in St. Petersburg on a visit to Asbest to explore the opportunity of establishing a training Center in partnership with Love in Christ, the local church. During our stay, Pastor Vasily invited us to visit the two rehab Centers in the city.

The small, winding road took us into the beautiful Russian forest where the deep green of the pine trees accentuated the white trunks of the tall, stately birch trees. The Center was nestled on a hillside in a forest clearing. A cluster of a few buildings housed 30 men and women in rehabilitation and 15 full time staff members, including spouses and children. Everything was clean and orderly, and there was a real sense of a functioning Christian community in operation where the love and care for one another was apparent! I was invited to share my testimony in front of the whole group. The participants were so attentive and hungry for God! It was hard to imagine that, less than a year earlier, these young men and women had been burn-outs, flying high on drugs and alcohol in the streets of downtown Yekaterinburg, (also spelled Ekaterinburg - the metropolis two hours away) and other cities. They had been jailbirds, prostitutes, gang and Mafia members - people without a future and a hope.

RUSSIA — REHAB AND ANIMALS



The forest has great resources

Today, many of those who visit the Center marvel at the transformation from despair to hope among the participants of the program, and ask, "What therapy do you use that produces such profound, lasting effects in the lives of the substance abusers?" The answer is simple, "Faith in the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ, who makes everything new and gives us the power to live a righteous life."

The particular day I visited the Center, Zhenya had called together the Directors of six other rehab centers in the larger region for fellowship, prayer, sharing of burdens and the networking of resources. This was the very first meeting of its kind. I was invited to participate with them. Their spokesman, Dima, spoke very good English. He said, "We sense this is a 'divine appointment' that you have come all the way from America just on this one day when we are together for the first time." I asked, "What can I do for you?" Dima replied, "All our Centers are in serious need of finances to cover our operational budgets. We are just now discussing how to solve our growing need and have come up with the idea of an animal packet. If we could find someone who would invest a one-time gift of \$2,500 toward the purchase of domestic animals for each Center, we would become financially self-sufficient. As the animals grow and multiply, we will have food for ourselves, we can barter for things we need, sell the meat for cash, and there might even be enough funds left-over to start new Centers." Then they gave me a list of the kinds of animals and how many of each, with a detailed price list of the cost per animal: cows, pigs, goats, chickens, rabbits, etc. The Holy Spirit had prepared them for my visit! I caught the vision, and told them that I promised nothing, but that I would talk to my husband and then

approach some of our friends who are Christian business people in the States and present their project for funding.

When I returned home, we wrote a letter to a group of friends, explaining the idea of the animal packet. To our delight, within a few months, we had investor for all the Centers. I sent the funds overseas and the implementation of the animal packets began at a different pace in each location.

2002

In May I visited Asbest, again, this time with Dru Andersen, a friend who has a ministry mainly among the Hispanics in Cuba and South America



Many three-fold chords have been intertwined

RUSSIA — REHAB AND ANIMALS

The Bridge sponsored Mission Training Center (MTC) which we had moved from St. Petersburg to Asbest was initiated in October 2001. We visited the school just a few weeks before the graduation of the first group of students. The first day I stood in front of them, I recognized faces I had seen at the rehab Center more than a year before. Then I learned that 15 of the 30 students in the class had come from Zhenya's rehab Center! We had a joyous reunion. I was deeply moved and stirred by the growth in maturity and faith I saw in them, and their resolve to go out as missionaries into forbidding places with the light of Christ! Their enthusiasm and joy was contagious! I visited Zhenya and Sasha's Centers. They were busy building barns for the animals they were in the process of buying.



R.K. with the Center's dog in front of the new animal barn

2003

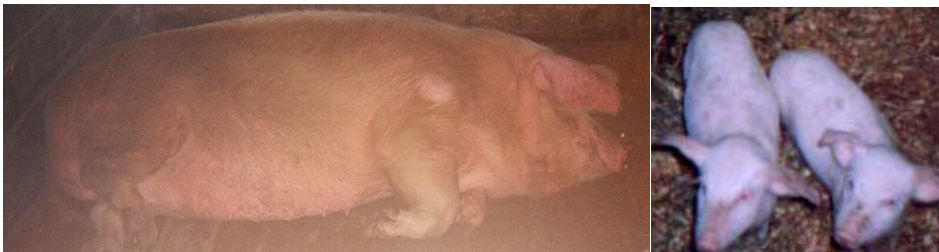
Zhenya wrote this letter to us in June:

"Dear Steve and R.K., and The Bridge Friends, I would like to thank you for your participation in the needs of the Rehabilitation Center "Salvation" in Asbest. As you are well aware, our center is free-of-charge for all those in need. The funds you sent to our Center were a huge blessing. From the very beginning of our Center's existence, food products were in short supply. At the beginning, bread, sugar and other products were lacking.

Upon receipt of your financial assistance we were able to finish construction of our barn, and buy farm animals. Presently we have 15 hogs, 11 piglets, three cows, two calves, and 25 laying hens. Every other month we produce 50 chicks (broilers). As a result, we have meat, milk and eggs. This year we planted a 1.3 acres field with vegetables. Our stock constantly increases in number; the barn is no longer sufficient to contain the entire stock. Therefore we have begun construction of a small barn capable of holding ten cattle..."

2004

During my last trip to Asbest in February, I again visited Zhenya's and Sasha's Centers, although the majority of the time was spent at the MTC, which I will report on in a later Bridge Report. As we drove toward the Center, I was impressed all over again at the beauty of the forest. Entering the driveway, I noticed that two new buildings had been



From the Editor

One aspect of the of the mission work of The Bridge has been to help resource the workers in the pioneer mission fields we have been called to serve. Over the twenty-some years of our mission, several million dollars have been sent overseas to fund the printing and distribution of Bibles, support of indigenous missionaries, sponsoring of leadership training schools and mission centers, pioneer outreaches and a variety of mercy ministries that have given tools to the believers to be a light in their communities for the Gospel.

A less public aspect of our mission, is our involvement in the funding of micro-businesses in the mission field which has helped the indigenous church become self supporting and financially autonomous. My husband, Steve, having been an entrepreneur all his life, has invested personal funds and that of a few close friends with like vision, into ventures that have born much fruit and helped the church in very poor nations prosper. In the future we will feature some of these projects.

This issue features one of these projects. The Lord led me into this the first time I visited the Ural in 2000. Due to limited space, I am presenting only one of the seven rehab Centers we financed with the animal packets described. The reason is that Zhenya's Center is located close to our Mission Training Center. A good partnership has taken place between the two organizations: Zhenya gives 10% of his harvest of food to the MTC, and provides students for the school; MTC gives a place for those who have completed the program at Zhenya's Center to further their Biblical knowledge and gain leadership training for mission work. By this, Ephesians 4:12 -"to prepare God's people for service (work of ministry)..." is being actively fulfilled!

RUSSIA — REHAB AND ANIMALS cont...

erected. The larger building is almost finished and will have small apartments for four of the staff members who have wives and children. The smaller is a gorgeous eye-catching log home in light wood with a bright blue upper wall (see picture on page 3). I was stunned to learn that it was the barn housing the newly purchased animals. The excellent workmanship was impressive and the style reminded me of a Tyrol chalet! Zhenya took me into the barn where I counted 35 hogs, many piglets, 3 cows, many chickens and various other animals.

When we sat down, Zhenya told me, "R.K. - if your friend had not given us the animals, we would not have survived as a Center. Your financial assistance has been our only source of income" Then he gave me some of the statistics.

In 1998 Zhennya started *Rehabilitation Center "Salvation"*. Since then 600 people have participated in the program at the Center and have stayed at various length of time. 50% of them are today proven drug free. 150 completed the intense, one year full time course, and among them, more than 80% are drug free. After completing their program at the Center, twenty of them enrolled in the church planting program at the MTC and graduated after a year's training. Some of them are involved in pioneer mission work, some in serving in leadership in a local church in the region. Among the people who have come through Zhenya's Center, many have returned back to school to complete their education, many have now good jobs and a number of them have married, and are active participants in the Body of Christ with their families. Like the expanding rings from one stone dropped into the water, each one who was touched by God's transforming power through the Center are living testimonies of the Risen Christ to the people of the Ural and Siberia!



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