



IMPACT Preparing Leaders for the Church in Russia russia

RUSSIAN LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES • FALL 2011



After overcoming a devastating heroin addiction, Zhanna studies in the rehabilitation ministry department at MTS to help address the widespread addiction crisis in Russia.

They were addicts like me... saved and set free by Jesus

Addiction, Hope and Paying it Forward

For some people, an HIV diagnosis might be a wakeup call, but for Zhanna, it was another reason to dive deeper into her heroin addiction. "My physical condition was getting worse and I began to wait for the end," she explains. "Many of my friends were already dead and continued to die of diseases and overdoses." This picture of a hopeless woman is a far cry from the strong, compassionate student Zhanna is today as she studies in the Christian rehabilitation program at Moscow Theological Seminary (MTS).

Although she was a quiet, obedient child from a loving family, she began to rebel in

that "he went... from a beautiful, healthy young man and turned into some kind of monster, causing only trouble and pain." However, his example didn't stop her from going down the same path. She began using heroin at 17, and by age 20, she had contracted HIV and Hepatitis C and had been through a rehabilitation program at a local hospital. Her parents were devastated but Zhanna showed no signs of kicking her addiction. "I began to shoot up again thinking that nothing good would happen in my life anymore."

After witnessing her boyfriend die from an overdose and attempting suicide several times, her family convinced her to enter another rehabilitation program. "I knew in advance that it wouldn't work out for me but I just wanted to let my family rest," she remembers. Upon entering a Christian rehabilitation program in a Moscow suburb,

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"I saw something kind, bright and genuine in their eyes."

high school, drinking heavily and using drugs. Unfortunately, her older brother had paved the way for her. Zhanna remembers

You Prayed, God Listened

Thank you for your prayers! After years of pursuing the legalization of the Moscow Theological Seminary (MTS) building, it has been approved. Although MTS owned the building, the final ownership documents had not been approved. This put MTS in a precarious position because

it allowed the government to impose (often arbitrary) restrictions about how MTS could

use the building. Applying for legal ownership required following a difficult and ever-changing bureaucratic process that often seemed impossible. However, after much prayer and perseverance, legalization was granted, giving MTS a new level of security and freedom.

"This is a big victory," says Peter Mitskevich, MTS president. "The Lord blessed us and provided for us to finish the first stage of legalizing the MTS property. Churches inside and outside of Russia can rejoice together."

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They were addicts like me...

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she sensed something different. "They began taking care of me right away. I saw something kind, bright and genuine in their eyes. I heard their stories and knew that in the past, they were drug addicts like me. They said that they were saved and set free by Jesus," she recalls.

Soon, Zhanna asked Jesus for forgiveness. She realized that He had been waiting for this for a long time and that He forgave her. "From that moment, my life began to change. I wanted to live again!"

Zhanna, now 31, works in a Christian rehabilitation center, telling her own story

You Prayed, God Listened

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Although evangelicals still face persecution in Russia, MTS's proper licensure means fewer restrictions and more opportunities to hold conferences, classes and other events. The next step in becoming fully protected is to acquire proper legalization of the land. This will no doubt be another lengthy, complicated process but Peter and MTS leadership hope and trust in the Lord's timing. Legalization of both the building and the land are necessary

of redemption, teaching Bible classes and counseling people in difficult situations. She studies at MTS to strengthen her ministry skills and Bible knowledge. "Thank God that He provides us with the opportunity to study, to fill these huge gaps in education. Glory to Christ!" she exclaims.

We at Russian Leadership Ministries rejoice with Zhanna and share her hope for the future of Russia. Would you partner with us in equipping leaders like Zhanna to impact Russia's future and address widespread addiction crisis?

for expansion of the current building which is an important part of MTS's future as it is becoming an increasingly popular destination for national and international conferences, meetings and seminars.

Thank you for your faithful prayer support. We praise the Lord for your partnership and ask that you continue to keep our brothers and sisters in Russia in your prayers.

Praise God for:

- MTS faculty member Dr. Alexander Popov and his recent completion of his PhD in theology from University of Wales through the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague.
- The Rostov on Don Learning Center will soon purchase a building and has added another cohort. Almost 40 students are enrolled, double from one year ago.

Pray for:

- NCBI's new programs in Christian counseling and digital media for evangelism. Pray that gifted and committed people will enter these programs.
- The staff and faculty at each learning center, that they will start the academic year energized after a restful summer. With MTS' growth, the faculty's schedule gets tighter each year with more students and programs.
- The Chelyabinsk learning center as it launches new programs in pastoral ministry and Christian education, making it one of our largest learning centers.
- MTS's pursuit of the title to their land.

News and Notes

- Peter Mitskevich, MTS president, was the keynote speaker at Stonebriar Community Church's annual missions banquet on September 16 in Frisco, Texas.
- Faculty from MTS's Church and State Relations department has been invited to lead a pastor's conference in eastern Siberia. They will educate pastors on legal literacy and recruit students from the region to study in the program in Moscow.
- MTS professor Anotoly Pchelintsev was invited to speak at Mongolian International University in Ulaanbaatar. He hopes to further cooperation with MIU as well as communicate with pastors on the implementation of religious freedom in Mongolia.



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