

# WINSTON COUNTY JOURNAL



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Winston County Journal

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### Russian gives story of his redemption and path to God

By Joseph McCain

The Winston County Journal

Oleg Volkov read the entire Bible from cover to cover in a month except for the fact the Bible he read had no cover.



Volkov brought his personal message of how he found God to local Winston residents at area churches and the Louisville Rotary Club Nov. 1.

Volkov, who serves as a Presbyterian minister in St. Petersburg, Russia, found the answers he had searched for all of his life in that torn Bible that he received as a prisoner in a Russian prison. Raised in communist Russia where almost no one talked about God, Volkov found himself lost at a very young age and seeking the answers to life. Volkov had turned to a life of crime and drugs for those answers and soon found himself serving time in an overcrowded Russian prison.

While in prison, Volkov overheard a crime boss talk of Jesus and finally discovered the answers he had always sought in the pages of a torn and coverless Bible. After 5 years in prison, Volkov received a pardon from Boris Yeltsin and was released from prison and immediately pursued a path to serve God more diligently by attending the Bible College. In 2001, Volkov attend the seminary under Blake Purcell and moved on to bring the word of God to all he could.

Volkov set up what is now the model for all prison ministries in Russia.

Volkov now helps bring the word of God into the very prison where he was lost and discovered "Why he lived".

"Ten years after I got out, I am back in the same prison but this time ministering to those who are serving time," said Volkov.

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- YES!
- Maybe
- I would do ANYTHING to avoid those crazy people.

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Volkov noted that he also aimed to help the prisoners transition back into a positive life once out of prison. "In one way, it is easy to be a believer in prison since everyone sees

[Russian gives story of his redemption and path to God](#)

how you live and the other prisoners do not tolerate hypocrites, but when you get out there are many more temptations and prisoners must learn to handle their new freedoms," said Volkov.

[World War II vet proud of service](#)

In an effort to aid that transition from prison to outside life, Volkov is trying to establish a retreat in Russia for those prisoners to keep them busy and help get them on their feet so that they will not return to crime. Volkov said he was blessed to have been able to transition from prison to the Bible College and keep busy with his studies. Volkov admitted it was hard but he had been rewarded for his efforts.

[For those who practice liberty, deserve freedom](#)

Volkov noted he had enjoyed his visit to the US and had really enjoyed the South since it was so open with so much land.

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Volkov came to the US and Louisville with Blake Purcell. Purcell heads the Biblical Theological Seminary in St. Petersburg where he lives with his wife, Cathy (a Winston native), and their children except Graham Purcell who is attending the university. Purcell hopes to bring Afghan family to Christ and America

[Family Center Safety night a success](#)

Purcell, his family and his Russian Church welcomed an Afghan family into their fold recently.

[Benefits of learning can be witnessed in many aspects of life](#)

The Abdul family had escaped from Afghanistan during the Taliban's rule shortly after Abdul's father was killed for owning a Christian Bible. Abdul then fled from Afghanistan to Russia and finally settled in St. Petersburg with his wife and six children.

[Let's be Neighbors](#)

Abdul and children presently live in a place provided by the Russian church and five of the children attend the International Christian School. Purcell hopes to bring the Abdul family to the US to help them attain a safe life.

[Let's be Neighbors](#)

To make any donations to the Purcell's efforts or Volkov efforts please send donations to Slavic Reformation Society, P.O. Box 794, Louisville, MS 39339.

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