HOW JESUS CHANGES LIVES

Christian Rehabilitation in the Russian Baptist Ministry

Igor Mikeshin

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Abstract

This thesis is the study of a rehabilitation ministry for the addicted people called Good Samaritan, run by the Russian Baptist Church. The study scrutinizes a two-dimensional process of Christian Rehabilitation. This process consists of two aspects: bodily detoxication through prolonged isolation, and radical moral transformation through conversion to Christianity.

This twofold process corresponds to the twofold nature of substance use dependence: biochemical and psychological. The narrative of conversion is constructed upon the literalist reading of the particular translation of Scripture—Russian Synodal Bible—impacted by the 16th (Martin Luther) and 17th century (Jacobus Arminius and the Remonstrants) Protestant dogmatics and Russian historical and sociocultural context. The narrative of rehabilitation is also impacted by the street, *junkie*, and prison experience of the rehabilitants and their elders, who hold the authority to interpret Scripture.

My research contributes to the study of Russian Evangelical Christianity and substance use dependence, both of which are unique and substantially influenced by contemporary Russian historical, sociocultural, political, economic, and linguistic context. At the same time, both Russian Evangelicalism and substance abuse share global features of Evangelical Christianity and drug epidemics.

My analysis is based on the ethnographic fieldwork conducted from January 2014 to January 2015 in St. Petersburg and Leningradskaya oblast, Russia. The participant observation included prolonged stays in three rehab facilities, guest and missionary visits, church services, seminars, festivities, and extensive study of Protestant Christianity and substance abuse.
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Abbreviations
AIDS — Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
DT — Delirium tremens (alcoholic delirium)
DVR — Children of believing parents (дети верующих родителей)
ECB — Evangelical Christians-Baptists
HIV — Human immunodeficiency virus
IDU — Injection drug user
ROC — Russian Orthodox Church
PAS — Psychoactive Substance(s)
P/C — Pentecostal and Charismatic (Robbins 2004b)

Note on names
All first names with or without patronymics are pseudonyms. People mentioned by their first and family names are real public figures.

Capitalized Rehabilitation and Adaptation stand for the stages of the rehab program.

Note on biblical citations
For the biblical citations in English, the New Revised Standard Version is used.
For the biblical citations in Russian, the Russian Synodal Translation is used.
1

1. Introduction

In his Confessions, Augustine reports as an example of his sin that he stole some pears from a neighbor's garden with the wanton thoughtlessness of a teenage boy. A modern reader familiar with the addiction narrative feels that Augustine was not exactly hitting bottom.

(Luhrmann 2012: 7)

Prologue

This study is an ethnographic account of conversion and rehabilitation in the Russian Baptist ministry for the addicted people called Good Samaritan (Dobryi Samaryanin). My initial interest in this ministry was related to the conversion to Christianity, its reasons and causes, and I saw the ministry as the brightest example of conversion. At the same time, I was interested in the ways bodily transformation works in the ministry, for I already knew that there had been successful rehabilitants keeping their remission for a substantial period of time. It was obvious that there is a connection between the two—rehabilitation and conversion—and this study is an attempt to unfold, describe, deconstruct, and analyze this connection.

Substance use addiction is a global epidemic. Very few countries can somehow reduce the harm or prevent the numerical growth of abusers. The most successful and realistic plans deal with maintaining and controlling the market of narcotic substances, reducing harm, and socializing addicts (e.g., GCDP 2014). The situation in Russia is even worse. The number of substance abusers stated by the Federal Drug Control Service is around 8 million, and opiate users made up about 1.5 million in 2014 (out of roughly 140 million of the total population) (Ivanov 2014, online source), and even this number is significantly lowered, as claimed by critics of the Federal Service.
Rehabilitation is a problematic topic in contemporary Russia. Firstly, lack of education and strong stereotypes about substance dependence lead to a widespread idea that addicts need medical cures or punishments, since addiction is claimed as a medical and moral problem.

Evangelical communities, at the same time, are often regarded as a *Western* invasion in Russian spirituality, a consequence of *heretical* proselytism, or simply fraudulent *totalitarian sects*. Christian social support ministries, hence, are claimed to use brainwashing techniques to recruit new members from the most vulnerable groups: addicts, prisoners, the homeless, orphans, and so on. Many former rehabilitants, having attempted to convert their family members, later refer to them as saying: "I wish you still shot [heroin], rather than being *like you are now.*" (Sergey, a minister, citing one of his former protégés)

I closely followed the Baptist community in St. Petersburg, its history, present life, and dogmatics. From my first encounter when I worked together with two congregants back in 2002, I learned that Russian Evangelicals are honest, genuine, and sincere Christian believers, taking their faith seriously, pragmatically, and consistently, unlike the majority of self-identifying Orthodox Christians in Russia.

Besides presenting an in-depth analysis of the ministry and rehabilitation process, my work also indirectly takes a stand against stereotypical accusations of Evangelicals, whose faith I do not share, yet whose sincerity and dedication I have had the chance of witnessing. The prejudices against drug addicts, stating impossibility of their rehabilitation and reintegration to the society, their implied immorality, and the need for severe punishment, I also reject with my work.
Problem and questions

My project is an ethnographic study of the Russian Baptist rehabilitation ministry for the addicted people. Among many possible topics and questions the phenomenon of Evangelical ministry can raise, I concentrate on the interdependence of the processes of rehabilitation and conversion, construction of the narrative of both, specificities of Russian Baptist that contribute to both processes and perceptions of the experienced transformation by people on the program. My research questions with clarifying and unfolding sub-questions are as follows:

• What is global and what is specific in Russian Evangelicalism and Baptism in particular? How do these specific features impact the rehabilitation and conversion and make them unique? What is the place and role of Russian Evangelicalism and Russian Baptism on the global scale? What is the role of Evangelicalism in Russia?

• How are the narratives of conversion and rehabilitation constructed? What is the basis for this construction? What are the linguistic specificities of it? What is the historical, social and cultural, dogmatic, or political context of these narratives?

• What is the relation between the processes of rehabilitation from substance use dependence and conversion to Christianity? Can it be regarded as one two-dimensional process? How does successful conversion contribute to the success of rehabilitation and vice versa?

Previous research on Christianity

The structure and logic of my thesis calls for the review of relevant literature and previous research in every respective chapter, thus I address current debates and bibliographic context in the anthropology of substance abuse in chapter 5, historiography of Russian Evangelical Christianity in
chapter 6, ethnographic approach to Christian rehabilitation and rehab ideologies in chapter 7, and conversion to Christianity in the post-Soviet space and biblical literalism in Evangelicalism in chapter 8.

This work is a contribution to the ethnographic study of Christianity and hence as a starting point I outline current anthropological research on Christianity. The diversity, complexity, and incompatibility of various forms of Christianity call for focusing on multiple christianities (Robbins 2003), having very few features in common, rather than a holistic phenomenon of Christianity (see, for instance, discussion in Anidjar 2015). There is an old history and tradition of studying people identified and self-identified as Christians and communities labeled Christian, and anthropology in particular has been touching upon the subject since the beginning of the discipline itself.

However, according to Joel Robbins' reflections (2014) on the past, present, and future of the ethnographic study of Christianity, anthropology of Christianity as a self-reflective discipline is roughly fifteen years old. Robbins links the formation of the discipline with the reaction on the vast spread of Pentecostal and Charismatic (P/C) Christianity worldwide, especially in the Global South (Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific). This spread was so big that, nowadays, the Global South accommodates the majority of the world's Christians (Coleman and Hackett 2015).

Anthropology of Christianity, Robbins argues, is itself rooted in the Western Christian culture, and the expansion of P/C Christianity has attracted ethnographic attention as a unique and spectacular phenomenon of Global Christianity. This eventually led to formation of the discipline.

Jon Bialecki, however, suggests (2012) that the object of anthropology of Christianity (or, I would say, anthropologies of christianities) could not
always be reduced to the particular empirical cases of multiple christianities. The object of this sub-discipline is Christianity, Bialecki claims, but in its virtual form, "as a multiplicity which is predicated on and produces difference, even as that difference is still comprehensible." (Ibid.: 298)

Another starting point for the ethnographic study of Christianity became a discussion on what could and should be considered as Christianity. Fenella Cannell in her essay (2005) discusses this problem using the example of Mormons. Mormons are not only seen as being non-Christians by other denominations, but even by researchers, who tend to construct typologies. Anthropologists of Christianity, however, tend to rely on the self-identification of the people they study, thus the phenomenon Cannell calls "the Christianity of anthropology" should be regarded as anything but Christianity as such.

The study of the Russian Baptists also calls for reflection on the continuous tendency of referring to the Baptists as a sect. Initially a neutral naming of a religious movement parted from a bigger church or denomination, sect, especially in Russia, is almost a pejorative term, associated with fraud, foreign influence, proselytism, and dangerous heresy. (On definition and pejorative use of the term "sect" see Wilson 1970: 22-35)

The most oppressed groups of Evangelicals in the 60-80s—Pentecostals and unregistered Baptists—were called sectarians (sektanty), and the term became associated with brainwashing of ignorant, weak people, or old women, by the "agents of Western influence."

Having in mind the history of almost 150-years of Evangelicals in Russia, their theology and dogmatics, preaching and evangelizing narratives and techniques, and, not in the least, my personal communication with them, I reject regarding the Russian Baptists as a sect. The Baptist movement in
general, and its Russian version in particular, were never part of any bigger denomination or Church, though even amongst the Baptist theologians there is an ongoing debate on whether they are a part of Protestantism or not (See, for instance, Branson 1994). In my work, I refer to the Baptists as a Church, a Christian and Evangelical one (See also Mitrokhin 1974: 6). Evangelicalism, thus, is a branch of Protestantism, mainly characterized by radical biblical literalism and born-again experience.

The anthropology of Christianity initially starts off from the reflection on the response to Catholicism, secularism, and globalization. Since the Reformation, through the history of Pietism, Methodism, Remonstration, Great Awakenings, and Fundamentalism, Protestant Christianity, precisely its Evangelical version, was regarded as an opposition and response to Roman Catholicism, and is still often studied as such (Cannell 2006).

In comparison to the heavy, old, and hierarchical Catholic body, with a big body of mainly formal adherents, Evangelicalism is seen as a growing, dynamic, adaptive movement, based on individual conversion. Relations between Catholicism and Evangelicalism do not necessarily represent a binary opposition, but sometimes they interact and merge into a specific and very much unique phenomenon, for instance, Charismatic Catholics (Csordas 1997b). Eastern Orthodoxy, often neglected in such contrapositions, commonly represents a comparable antagonist in the study of Evangelicals in Russia.

Continuing the historical line, after the Enlightenment, Christianity faced yet another challenge—secularism. Variating from its mild version of privatization of religion to secular humanism and radical atheism, secularism provokes a reaction, fluctuating from total rejection and condemnation to dialog and compromise. Anthropological study of the impact that privatization of religion (Engelke 2013) and secular humanism
(Engelke 2014) have on Christianity is one of the mainstream fields in the study of Christianity (See also Davie 1994).

The globalization of Evangelical Christianity works in two ways. There is a wide spread of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements almost worldwide. At the same time, they both adapt to the local cultural and linguistic contexts and adjust them to the global and universal Christian dogmatics (Robbins 2004b). The local hardships, political and cultural discourses, cults and beliefs, values and narratives are all explained and interpreted through the prism of the Evangelical worldview, and neatly juxtaposed as godly, worldly, or satanic (Meyer 1999). Russian Evangelicalism, and the Baptists in particular, fit into this pattern, combining the universal principles of Baptism with local peculiarities, very much linguistically and culturally Russian.

More detailed study of *christianities* focus on conversion, identity construction, and role of the Bible. Conversion to Christianity is regarded as a process of moral transformation to a believer, going far beyond mere change of religious affiliation. Three aspects are commonly stressed, namely narrative of moral (Harding 2000; Barker 1993; Robbins 2004a; Wanner 2007) and bodily transformation (Coleman 2006; Luhrmann 2004); liminality, transitional period of changing state, both temporary and permanent (Gow 2006; Meyer 1999; Priest 2003); and cultural contexts (Hefner 1993; Wanner 2007; Zigon 2011; Vallikivi 2014) and social implications of conversion (Buckser 2003; Gross 2012; Vallikivi 2009).

I employ the concept of conversion as a continuous process of radical transformation of self, characterized by narrative practices and bodily experience (Harding 2000: 34–35; Wanner 2007: 149). I borrow the concept of self from Tomas Csordas, who uses the phenomenological notion of intersubjective self constructed with language (Csordas 1997a). Processual
approaches to conversion imply the construction of a life-story—*testimony*—a specific intersubjective narrative with milestones, such as before and after conversion, and a liminal period of transformation (See also: Harding 2000). Although conversion to Evangelicalism is a radical life-change, it is not necessarily total and permanent, but may also be temporary (Glazier 2003).

Research on identity construction in Christianity mostly concerns an idea of what it means to be a Christian (Harris 2006). Tightly connected with the narratives of conversion, this problem scrutinizes the phenomenological construction of the new Christian self (Csordas 1997a). This self calls for a specific intersubjective everyday Christian reality, shared by fellow believers, reality *sui generis* (Schütz 1945). This reality is, at the same time, socially constructed and objectified in language (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

Anthropological study of the Bible and its role in Christianity emerged only recently, but has already formed into a promising sub-discipline. Most scrutiny is given to Evangelical biblical literalism, its role in the construction of everyday Christian theology (Bielo 2009), and wider cultural implications (Crapanzano 2000). Although most emphasis is put on the literal study of scriptures as a mode of transformation to the Christian self (Keller 2006), symbolical meanings of Scripture, even apart from its textual values, are also seriously considered (Engelke 2007).

Anthropology of Christianity has made a remarkable turn when the debate on inherent atheism of an ethnographer arose. Reflecting on Susan Harding's essay (1991) on doing research on fundamentalist Evangelical Christianity, some anthropologists refuse to regard Christians as "repugnant cultural others" (Howell 2007). Most of them acknowledge that their own Christian identity may influence their ethnographies, but there is no reason to claim that these influences are *wrong* or *biased* any more than those
coming from non-Christian researchers. An ethnographer's own beliefs, worldviews, and principles are always there, and the right thing to do would be to reflect on their role in the research (see, for instance, Bielo 2009: 29-43)

Orthodox Christianity plays a much bigger role than merely a religious belief in Russia. Throughout its more than 1000 years in Russian territories and among Russian peoples, it is deeply embedded into the history, culture, language, and politics. There is an obvious need of substantial ethnographic research on multiple sociocultural aspects of Orthodoxy in the modern Russia. There are, though, successful attempts to approach it, for instance, Jarett Zigon's study (2011) of Orthodox morality and dogmatics in connection to the context of neoliberal Russia and Vlad Naumescu's research (2007) on religious market and interrelations of churches in pre-Maidan Ukraine.

Much more attention is attracted by Evangelical movements in post-Soviet space, especially the process of conversion in the context of dramatic change, collapse of the Soviet Union, and further economic and social crises (Wanner 2007; Vallikivi 2014; Pelkmans 2009; Leete and Koosa 2012). A peculiar aspect of conversion to Russian Evangelical Christianity is its accumulation in social support (Caldwell 2004; Koosa and Leete 2014). Deprived of media and public attention, Evangelicals in Russia are mostly active in the spheres where the state fails dealing with marginal people (poor, homeless, incarcerated, sick, addicted, and so on) and marginal peoples (in the Far North or Far East).

My thesis focuses on one particular kind of Christianity, one of the christianities that I define as a branch of Evangelicalism. I focus on the Russian Baptist Church, emphasizing its sociocultural, historical, and
linguistic specificities in hermeneutics, theology, and dogmatics in every particular congregation, and every particular rehab facility I focus on.

**Thesis outline**

The thesis consists of two parts. Part one introduces the ministry of Good Samaritan with wider context the fieldwork research conducted. Part two analyzes the phenomena of Christian rehabilitation and Russian Baptist conversion.

Chapter 2 addresses the Baptist community in St. Petersburg and Leningradskaiia oblast', the congregation of the Church Miloserdie, born out of the rehabilitation ministry, a portrait of its pastor and founder of the ministry; and the ministry itself with particular focus on the premises, supply, program in detail, regime, rules, and people, staying there, emphasizing also the reasons why people quit the program early.

Chapter 3 describes my fieldwork research, the methods I used, and ethical considerations. It starts with the description of three modes of participation—a typology I used to distinguish between various sources of data: full-time stays in the rehabs, various trips and events in the Baptist community, and the study of addiction, Protestantism, and the Bible. The methodology is addressed in tight connection to the institutional limitations I had. Ethical issues are represented by reflections on self-representation, vulnerability of addicts in remission and neophyte believers, and the application of the concept of *halfie* in the field to my case.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the thick ethnographic description of four bright examples: a typical day in the biggest rehab and portraits of three elders, influencing my understanding of the rehabilitation and conversion processes the most.
Chapter 5 is an introduction to the problem of drug addiction in contemporary Russia. It provides further analysis of the Good Samaritan with a description of the medical, psychological, and moral problems that bring people to rehabilitation centers.

Addicted people are regarded as a cultural group. Firstly, I give a brief outline of the biochemistry of addiction, revealing its twofold nature: chemical and psychological. The phenomenon of rehabilitation and the situation with rehabilitation in St. Petersburg and surrounding regions is presented. A comparison of drug abuse and alcoholism reveals the discrepancies between physiological and cultural references to both.

Stigmatization of addicts, I further argue, leads to a set of problems, including inefficient and harmful state policy, misleading public service announcements, and increase of co-dependency. Everyday problems of drug users and specificities of drug use in prison are addressed in the concluding part.

Chapter 6 reflects on the combination of global and local features of Russian Evangelicalism. Outlining and elaborating on the history of Evangelicalism in Russia and the Soviet Union, the influence of oppressions, isolation, and neglect of believers on contemporary dogmatics and hermeneutics is discussed. Russian Baptists, as the focus of my thesis, are discussed in more detail, summing up the concept of Russian Evangelicalism globalized.

Chapters 7 and 8 provide a conceptual analysis of my data. Among the numerous issues one can focus on in such a complex field, I have chosen to emphasize the two mutually deductible and interdependent phenomena of Christian rehabilitation and biblical conversion.

I start the 7th chapter with the way Good Samaritan addresses the twofold nature of addiction, emphasizing the specificity of the focus on
psychological aspect, treating it as a slavery of sin. A comparative review of different rehabilitation programs is further provided. The focus on Christian Rehabilitation in Good Samaritan is supplied with a concept of radical conversion, suggesting a total break with the sinful past and dividing life into *before* and *after* periods. The narrative of such a break, expressed in the common Evangelical genre of testimony, is then discussed. The role of infrastructure in the process of rehabilitation through conversion is emphasized. The analysis of the narratives of prayer and glorification and their role in rehabilitation is provided in the concluding part of the chapter.

Chapter 8 deals with another aspect of the rehabilitation process through conversion, which is conversion on the basis of biblical literalism. Firstly, the peculiarities of conversion to Christianity in the post-Soviet context are discussed. A specific niche of Evangelicals in the contemporary post-Soviet societies is also exposed. The phenomenon of biblical literalism and its Russian language version is discussed in connection to the Russian Synodal Bible and sociocultural and historical context. Study and application of Scripture as the narrative of conversion and rehabilitation are represented in the final part of the chapter.

Coda reviews the research questions, suggests directions for further study, and concludes the whole dissertation.
Part one

2. "The assembly of the faithful"¹: Description of the church, ministry, and people

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the ethnographic description of the ministry. It starts with a general description of the Baptist community in the region, and introduces the history and general principles of the rehabilitation process. This process is very much influenced by more than limited funds, modest supply, a very detailed and tight schedule, and strict rules. The final part of the chapter describes people on the program, their typical life-stories and problems.

Baptist community in St. Petersburg

Good Samaritan is a ministry of the Church of Evangelical-Christians Baptists (ECB) in St. Petersburg. This congregation belongs to the Russian Union of ECB. The Church in St. Petersburg is itself an umbrella Church for many smaller congregations in St. Petersburg and surrounding Leningradskaya oblast.

Due to one of the Baptist Principles—autonomy of the local Church (Wiens 1924)—every Church is free to manage its own finances and elect a pastor. This gives even subordinate churches a substantial degree of autonomy, but, however, small local congregations are loyal to the Church in St. Petersburg, and ask for blessing for every significant decision in advance.

¹ Psalm 149:1: "Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful." In the Synodal translation—assembly of the holy ones or saints (sobranie sviatykh). The Church is often referred to as the assembly of the holy ones.
The major congregation in St. Petersburg is situated in the North of the city in the place historically called Poklonnaya Gora (symbolically, the literal translation is "Bowing Hill"). Consequently, the Church is nicknamed by the congregation as the *Church on a Hill* or *Poklonka*. Although administratively a city, and even surrounded by bedroom suburbs with 10-20-story buildings, the neighborhood is rural and mostly consists of private houses, unusual for St. Petersburg. There is also a chain of three Suzdalskiie lakes, one of which is just next to the Church. The Church conducts Summer Baptism sessions in the biggest of these three lakes, while during winters Baptisms are held in the Church's baptistery indoors.

The House of Prayer occupies a former building of the Orthodox Troitskaya (of the Holy Trinity) Church, which was built in the early 20th century. In 1938, the Church was closed, turned into a storage, and, in 1961, officially given to the ECB community. In the 90s and early 2000s, there were few attempts to reclaim the building for the Orthodox Church by an initiative group, but unsuccessful. Nowadays, it is home to the biggest Baptist congregation in North-West Russia, counting around 2000 active members. The churches under umbrella add about 2000 more.

However, since its foundation in 2009, the coordinating and counseling Church for the ministry is the Church Miloserdie ( Mercy). This Church was formed out of the Good Samaritan team and prison ministry, both headed by Pastor Vladimir Ezhov. The congregation of about 150 members consists mostly of either former rehabilitants, former convicts, or their family members. The Church rents two driving school auditoriums in the eastern St. Petersburg, and now finishes a construction of a spacious two-story House of Prayer outside the city limits. The top floor of the building is going to host a rehab for addicted mothers with small kids.
The founding pastor of Good Samaritan

Vladimir Ezhov, a pastor and founding minister of Good Samaritan, was raised in a family of convicts—his grandfather and father had both spent time behind bars. Young Vladimir continued the family "tradition" and ended up in prison at 18, after already having a suspended sentence at 17. After two years he was released; however, he was sentenced again for six years (initially facing fifteen). He frequently broke the discipline and attempted to escape. This resulted in three years being added to his sentence and he was sent to a maximum security prison in a distant part of Russia. On his way to that prison he organized a riot and, in attempt to disarm the guards, Vladimir was shot by an assault rifle.

Bleeding and nearly dying, Vladimir was put in a hospital where he spent eight months in bed. His sentence was suspended, and he was deemed disabled. There were questions at first whether he would survive at all and then, whether he would walk, for his backbone and several organs were damaged. While still in the hospital, Vladimir was frequently visited by the Baptist missionaries, who eventually converted him. (Most of this story can be found in his video testimony: Tolkachev 2011, online source)

He later recovered and can now walk and live an active life, which he perceives as a miracle. In 2000, he married a fellow congregant, with whom he now has two children. He was always active in Church, first a minister for prisons, then founded a rehabilitation ministry as a deacon, and now a pastor of a newly-established congregation.

The ministry of Good Samaritan

The ministry for the addicted people called Good Samaritan was founded by Vladimir Ezhov in 2004. He borrowed the model from a Siberian ministry that had the same name. The initial idea was to isolate the addicted
people from the temptations of the big city and network of peers, put in the centers operated by former addicts—a model known as *therapeutical community*—and evangelize them, so Christ works in their hearts and change their lives.

In the beginning, the *brothers* and *sisters* lived together, but when "the pregnant started outnumbering non-pregnant" (Max, the elder), and since many of them also had HIV and other infections, they got separated. Nowadays, they are strictly segregated, and not even allowed to talk or look at each other until the end of their programs.

Starting from a part of the household building at the Church on a Hill, nowadays the ministry has more than thirty rehabilitation centers in Northwest Russia, including St. Petersburg, surrounding Leningradskaja oblast, Karelia, Kaliningrad, Murmanskaja oblast, and even distant Voronezhskaja oblast, 500 km south of Moscow. There is also one recently opened rehab in Moskovskaja oblast (region surrounding Moscow) and in Lappeenranta, Finland, admitting Russian speakers.

The rehabs occupy several types of premises. Firstly, it is often a rural house, either wooden or stone, with a typical Russian rural modest infrastructure—firewood heating, no running water (a well in the yard) or cold only with a boiler for bathing, often a wooden toilet outside, and a separate *banya* (sauna) for bathing. Such a house usually has a fenced territory with a vegetable garden and warehouses. In some cases, this house also serves as a local Church. Then, Sunday services are held on the first (ground) floor, and the dormitories are situated on the second. Such rehabs are commonly smaller, with around 5-7 people on the program, and they are also commonly male-only.

Secondly, some centers occupy an apartment in a small town or urban type settlement (*posiolok gorodskogo tipa*). This apartment is usually very
small, also with few commodities. One such apartment I visited did not even have centralized heating and had an old barely working chimney. Apparently, the biggest problem was not the conditions, but the fact that there were illegal sales of spirits next door.

Thirdly, the biggest rehabs represent a slightly different sort of premises. Some of them are farms, with big stone houses, sometimes two different houses for men and women, and also farming facilities, like vehicles, gardens, and animals (rabbits, chicken, ducks, dogs, and cats, common for most rehabs). The commodities in such rehabs are still modest and mostly hand-made.

The biggest rehab in the ministry hosts men, women, and mothers with kids. The kids are being supervised by an appointed female minister or brought to school or kindergarten, while their mothers study Scripture and change their lives. This rehab occupies a part of the former administrative building of a local kolkhoz. It is a big grey brick building, also hosting a grocery store, cafe (with lots of drunk parties), and a post office.

There is a complex system of corridors, a big basement with a huge chimney for heating the whole rehab, and lots of various storage rooms with second-hand clothing, food, and just random old stuff. The doors between different zones (according to sex and stage of the program) are kept locked. This rehab was my first fieldsite. I spent there a month in January-February 2014 and returned on many various occasions.

**Support, supply, and local context**

Most rehabs, be it a farm or anything else, are hardly sustainable. Even if there are lots of facilities and plenty of work to do on a daily basis, most manual workers are unskilled and weakened by drug use, and they are mostly kept busy, rather than earning anything substantial for the rehab. The
supervisors—their elders and ministers—are also in a similar situation, and often even ask for advice from some of their better qualified protégés.

The rehabilitation program is absolutely free and survives on donations. The donations, in turn, are rare and modest, mostly from church gatherings or foreign missions. Most of donations are in natural form, containing food, second-hand clothing, and random goods. The food is commonly very cheap and of the worst quality. Most of the food is expired. The donations are sporadic and unexpected, oftentimes, so I often helped with transporting, for instance, many boxes of expired ice-cream, which was used instead of milk for the morning oatmeal. There were not enough refrigerators to store that ice-cream, so it was left melting and then put in saucepans and glass cans.

![Picture 1: One of the storage rooms](image1.jpg)

![Picture 2: Boxes of ice-cream delivered to the rehab](image2.jpg)

The donating bodies, besides the Christian ministries abroad, are often local businesses, which solve the problem of utilizing expired food, and private persons, usually Church congregants. Many neighbors of the ministry, grateful for the cheap or free manual labor of the rehabilitants maintaining and cleaning the common spaces, are willing to also help somehow.

The local authorities often have good or neutral relationships with the ministers, and sometimes hire rehabilitants or ask for free service for the community. Sometimes, the neighbors are suspicious of the sect, but rarely take any substantial action against the rehabs, besides writing over their ads
and leaflets with a black marker: "Beware of the sect!", or simply bullying rehabilitants on the street.

**Program**

Every rehab in the ministry uses the same program, with differences in minor details. The whole program lasts for eight months and consists of two stages. *Social Rehabilitation* takes two months and it is almost totally devoted to the study of Scripture, which at this stage is represented by the New Testament and the Book of Psalms. Usually, the Gideons' free-distributed edition is used. The rehabilitants are considered not *spiritually mature* enough to deal with other books of the Old Testament. Rehabilitation is an introduction to Scripture, principles of Christian life and dogma. The period of breaking with the previous *bygone* (*vetkhaia*) life, preferably through the act of being born-again, is called a repentance (*pokayanie*).

The second stage is called *Social Adaptation* and it takes six months. Adaptants live in another room, or part of the building. They read and study the whole Bible, and they work. The initial idea for the two stages is that the addicts revisit their life, break with their past, and repent in the beginning of the program, convinced by the biblical truth. Next, they learn how to live a peaceful, meaningful life, communicating and cooperating with others, working and earning their daily bread honestly.

Rehabilitation is supervised by an elder (*starshyi*). The elder is commonly one of the adaptants, most versed in Scripture and with the most leadership skills and discipline. However, in smaller centers there is often a shortage of working hands, so the least skilled manual worker is appointed to be an elder. The minister, the one who has already passed the program, supervises the whole rehab on spiritual and practical issues (the only female
ministers in Good Samaritan are those who directly supervise women or kids). In smaller rehabs, the minister is in constant contact with everyone, while in the bigger ones he may be seen once a week or less, dealing with numerous issues of supply and organization. Although the minister is constantly consulted by his own elder brothers, his personality defines the strictness and overall image of the rehab.

It is generally presumed that these eight months are not enough for most addicts. They are just given a general direction or purpose in life. Further spiritual work is to be conducted by themselves, with the help of the local Church and everyday study of the Bible. Yet there are additional programs, called a post-adaptation. However, there are few available positions there, though they last for an undefined period of time and require expensive housing. Commonly, post-adaptants are busy with constructing the house of prayer for the Church Milozerdie, or some other construction work that the local minister can find for them.

The most dedicated rehabilitants often stay after their programs to "serve God" as ministers. The minister is on duty 24/7, so he or she lives in the rehab constantly. There are days off, guest, missionary, or study trips, but many of the ministers are not even locals, so visiting their families (if they have any) is not only time-consuming, but also too costly. Most of the ministers "promise God and the brothers" to serve for some time to "give back," then they leave to solve their personal issues: restore families, get married, get some medical treatment, or find a job. The most devoted ones, though, stay indefinitely, claiming that they cannot think of anything to do with their saved lives now rather than serve God.
Regime

The schedule is more or less the same in every rehab. It is very tight and mandatory for all present on the program. One cannot, for instance, get up earlier or go to bed later than scheduled (besides those on duty to clean and wash the bathroom). The elders are usually the exception, for they have organizational and Bible study meetings with the minister during the night hours.

The Rehabilitation schedule is very detailed and has almost no free time or time spent outside of the dormitory. There are exceptions, for instance, if the rehab is small and Adaptation needs manual help, or when there are unexpected guests or missionary visits. In all other cases, the schedule is repeated daily, with some changes on Saturdays and Sundays, which makes the brothers annoyed and bored to death. I address the weekday schedule in more detail in the chapter 4, describing a typical day.

Most of the weekday activities on Rehabilitation are devoted to the study of Scripture and learning a Christian life. On Saturdays, half of the day—from breakfast until lunch—is devoted to the general cleaning of the premises. The rehabilitants can then be sent to otherwise inaccessible places, like adaptation, storage rooms, basement, or even to the fresh air to help out Adaptation. Sometimes, they are given senseless assignments to train obedience and humility. I was once appointed to toothpick the dust out of the holes in a wooden floor together with two other brothers.

Sundays are often lazy days, even in the strictest rehabs. The brothers are given free time for half or almost the whole day, when they are not merely allowed to talk and rest, but also sleep in their beds, though above the blankets and dressed. The space is yet limited even on Sundays, and all of the group should remain in their premises, with the exception of some rare cases when they can spend some time outside (also only in a group).
The rehabs combined with the local churches are less lucky, for the brothers or sisters have to prepare the hall for the Sunday service, clean it and put it back in order afterwards. Frequently, they also share a meal or tea with the congregation. In other rehabs, the adaptants and sometimes the most reliable rehabilitants visit the local church, if there is transportation available. There, they also prepare the service and clean afterwards. On Sunday evenings, there is usually a Christian film screened until bed time.

**Rules**

The rules in the rehab are very strict. Although there is a free exit, since the rehab legally cannot force anyone to stay and the courts cannot appoint the addicted criminals to a non-governmental Good Samaritan, the discipline is very tight. Its implementation may vary from one rehab to another, depending on the personality of the minister and elders. However, the rules are mandatory for everyone.

Firstly, anyone arriving to the program signs a paper stating his/her agreement with the rules. Then, the future rehabilitant gives all valuables, money, keys, and all documents, electronic devices of any sort, jewelry, and so on, to the minister, who makes a list of the items and locks them in a cabinet until the end of the program. One is only allowed to have clothes for inside and outside (eight months in Russia represent a great variety of weather), items for personal hygiene, and a couple of clean copybooks, pens and pencils. I was allowed to keep my wristwatch. Some bring their own mugs and towels. Some come empty-handed and are given simple utensils that the minister finds.

Possession of any electronic gadgets, cigarettes, or food of any kind is forbidden. The food that the newcomer may have is taken to the kitchen and distributed to the whole rehab. Some people, especially in the beginning of
the program, try to smuggle cigarettes, mobile phones, or drugs. However, disclosing possession of such contraband can lead to expulsion or to such punishment as leaving the whole Rehabilitation without sweets for several days. There will also be an inevitable face-to-face conversation with the minister with lots of biblical references about eternal damnation of the wicked.

Any talk about drugs, alcohol, crimes, sexual behavior, lies, blasphemy, use of swear words, or anything else considered sinful or just worldly are prohibited. The rehabilitants may talk about their past, including some remarks on addiction, vices, and lust, but only as a part of the analysis of their sinful bygone lives. Mutual relations are also regulated: judgement, envy, or anger is not allowed. The rehabilitants are expected to learn brotherly/sisterly love, obedience (poslushanie) and humility (smirenie).

The elders are responsible for both the discipline in the center and the spiritual state of the rehabilitants. According to the rules, the rehabilitants should be obedient to their elders. The elders may be wrong or unfair, but these issues should be resolved later, when such questions are raised by the minister or elder himself. At the moment when an elder is giving orders, no matter how absurd or humiliating these orders may seem, a brother should obey.

In reality, of course, these rules are far from followed at all times. A group of adults, with different harsh backgrounds, criminal histories, and harmful habits, living together for several weeks or several days, and being, at the same time, obedient, is hard to imagine. This is even harder to imagine when talking about a group of drug addicts, alcoholics, homeless, and convicted criminals.

Minor misdemeanors include talking or napping during reading time or talking when the lights are off to sleep. Worse wrongdoings comprise of
disobedience of any kind, including disputing orders given by an elder, or forgetting to turn off the light after using a toilet or bathroom (it is considered energy wasting, hence costly for the rehab). The worst misconduct is smuggling any sort of contraband, like cigarettes, alcohol, drugs (including medicinal pills), or mobile phones.

Considering the problematic and violent past of most of the brothers, one could expect fights between them, but I never witnessed any physical clashes and never heard of them, although verbal arguments could sometimes become tremendously heated. Another misdeed, rarely discussed publicly, but happening periodically, is love affairs between brothers and sisters. Again, I never heard about any same-sex relations, besides total condemnation of such in general terms. Since the time when brothers and sisters became strictly segregated, the affairs have only occurred between elders or ministers.

The penalties for disobedience and breaking the rules are not diverse. In most cases, when a rehabilitant expresses remorse and repents in prayer, the only penalty is a continuous conversation with an elder or minister with lots of biblical references. The common penalty for the systematic failure to turn off the lights in the toilet is a collective punishment of three days without sweets for the whole Rehabilitation. However, in most rehabs sweets are rare anyway, so this may even pass unnoticed.

The worst penalty is expulsion from the rehab, with or without warning. Depending on the minister, this may be applied quickly. For instance, once, I witnessed the immediate expulsion of an adaptant caught smoking in the street. Yet, it may only be a constant threat, formulated as: "Once again and we say goodbye to you" (Vasya, a minister, to a rehabilitant caught stealing candies from the kitchen).
The strict regime and rules are enforced by harsh conditions, especially in the bigger rehabs. This is never intentional, but always expected, echoing the Foucauldian disciplinary model (Foucault 1975). One of the ministry hotline operators, a mother of a former rehabilitant, once shared: "When I'm asked about the conditions in the rehabs, about food, I always say: 'The most simple.'" Humility and obedience are trained by means of strict rules, but simple, modest, and often bad conditions also play a substantial role.

Good Samaritan can be claimed as being more strict when compared to different rehab regimes (such as the ones described in Skoll 1992, Garcia 2010, and Zigon 2011), as coffee and smoking is forbidden. Although this comparison may be fair, such strictness comes out of dogmatics, and is transformed into rehab ideology (in the terms of Skoll 1992: 99-118).

Coffee is only prohibited for the time of the program. The ministers are allowed to drink it, and commonly drink a lot, though usually not in the presence of their protégés. The brothers in the program sometimes have a chance to have some on special occasions (guest visits or festivities). Coffee is claimed too stimulating for the recent addicts, and also claimed to provoke cravings for smoking.

In contrast to the cases of Skoll, Garcia, and Zigon, smoking is prohibited unconditionally; it is explicitly labelled as one of the Addictions. Thus, no repentant brother who successfully passed the whole program is expected to ever smoke again. Moreover, smoking is a clear sign of relapse (and in practice it almost always is). Smoking is commonly considered a natural supplement to drinking alcohol, hence in most cases, at least in my presence, quitting smoking was much harder for alcoholics, rather than substance abusers.
People in the program

People in the program have various and diverse, but at the same time very typical backgrounds. There are different regions, professions, and family-stories represented, but an addicted life reduces all life-stories to a very common one—with ruined families, crippled health, problems with the law, ending with total moral, material, and physical failure. The ones who do not admit such failure, despite the real state and the opinion of others, never stay at the rehab for a long time, seeing no good reason to.

Initially, most of the people have a very vague idea, if any at all, of what a Baptism means. Most of them are traditionally and formally Orthodox, implicitly accepting the notion of Orthodox Russia, but without any real deep immersion into dogmatics, doctrine, and practice. This leads to a situation where most are reading the Bible for the first time in their life while in the rehab, and they are even surprised to learn that the Baptist Bible is actually the same as the Orthodox one (further details about non-canonical books used by ROC are being learnt much later). Every newcomer is warned that the rehab is Christian, yet without much detail. So the ones actually making it to the rehab are usually Christians in principle, or believers "somewhere deep in my soul."

There are number of people who return to the rehab after one or several other attempts. Sometimes, these are the people who quit the program before. Sometimes these are the ones who relapsed sometime after passing the whole program. The latter are often entitled to a two-month rehabilitation program as strengthening (na ukreplenie). Such people are already familiar with the rules and may even personally know the ministers, hence they know what to expect from the rehab and program in general. They also know Scripture better than most of the newcomers. Yet, after the
three-day period, their role, moral standing, or progress of rehabilitation does not differ significantly from the others.

Various regions are represented in the rehabs. There are both locals, from St. Petersburg and surrounding regions, and also people from other parts of Russia (and neighboring former Soviet countries). There is a general rule of sending the people to rehabs far from home, for there it gives less opportunities to quit. For those who pass their program, the return tickets are often provided. Those who break with the program get nothing.

Different regions contribute to the diversity of people on the program, but since there are very few dialects or accents in Russian speech nowadays, other traits, like age or profession, play a much more important role. Different age groups are represented, as even minors are allowed with the consent of their parents, but the modal age is around twenty-nine to thirty-three.

This may be a coincidence (I started my fieldwork at thirty and finished at thirty-one), but it is probable that an average drug addict, who started using as a minor, reaches the point of physical destruction and moral failure at the approximate age of thirty. By this time, most addicts have had prison or some sort of criminal experience, families, often divorced and abandoned, and a substantial list of chronic diseases. The alcoholics in the program are usually at least 35 or even older, for they tend to accept their problem later2.

There are different educational backgrounds represented; yet, the majority does not have a higher education. Everyone I met had at least a high school certificate, yet some of them were slow and inexperienced readers. Some of the rehabilitants were skilled professionals, mostly in

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2 I discuss the late acceptance of alcoholics in more detail in the chapter 5.
manual labor, and some admitted that they had never done anything *good* with their own hands in their life.

Most of those I met in the rehabs who had higher education degrees had either bought their diplomas on the black market or bribed the administration of their colleges to graduate. There were exceptions. For instance, an opera singer who had an internship in Italy in his youth, but started drinking heavily later and ruined his career.

Many of rehabilitants had families before coming to the rehab. However, most of these families were abandoned or, in the case of the women, became single mothers. Some of the brothers had more than one ex-wife and children from different marriages. The marriages mostly ended as a result of either their addicted behavior or prison terms (which are, of course, also related). In the rehab, most of the brothers either planned to renew their relationships with their spouses or to find a new one, and this time be a good Christian husband. Almost everyone mentioned their mothers, wives, and children in prayers.

Drug addiction in Russia is indirectly, but very much explicitly criminalized. There is no punishment for the addiction itself or for using drugs, but addicts face real prison terms for possession, buying and selling, and producing the substances. There are also lots of crimes committed to maintain an addiction, and these are also brightly represented by alcoholics. Hence, most of the people in the program (both men and women) either had some sort of problem with the law (suspended sentences, weeks spent in jail, fines, or children taken away) or actual prison terms\(^3\). Some of the people I met served three or four terms, which collectively adds up to almost ten years behind bars. There was a variety of crimes committed:

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\(^3\) Jail here corresponds to the pre-trial confinement (*tyur'ma* or *Sizo*—*sledstvennyi izoliator*), and prison is the place to serve a sentence, usually called a camp (*lager*) or zone (*zona*).
from the common drug-related article 228 to murder, aggravated assault, and armed robbery.

The prison experience influences not only the topics of rehabilitants' natural conversations, but also examples they provide in their exegetics, and even the interpretation of a particular biblical thought is influenced by prison morality and logic. Even those who were never confined tend to follow the common trend and use some of the vocabulary and references. Cultural references from prison culture are considered *manly* and represent a tough experience of *real life*, along with serving in the army. Thus, some of the prison terms and notions are widely used in contemporary Russia (Oleinik 2001).

There is a number of rehabilitants whose addiction led them into homelessness. Homelessness in Russia is an independent complex field of study (Stephenson 2006; Höjdestrand 2009), yet it is important to note that in Russia, it is almost always somehow related to addiction, as most of the homeless rehabilitants assured me (Cf. Stephenson 2006).

Another significant feature of being homeless in Russia, especially in the northern and central regions, is tough survival in winters. Most of the homeless brothers I met in the rehabs had problems with frostbitten limbs or toes, some of which had been amputated. This can occur to anyone living on the street during the cold season, but mostly affects those who fall asleep intoxicated. One of the brothers, yet, lost his leg when he had fallen asleep on a railroad track—drunk, but not cold.

Addicted people also commonly have a whole bouquet of chronic diseases. The most evident ones for the IDU are hepatitis and HIV, and for former convicts it is tuberculosis. Consequently, even many ministers who passed the program successfully take their medicine daily for the rest of
their lives. However, repentant brothers and sisters are optimistic and pray to God for better health.

I witnessed two vivid examples of such optimism. The first is a married couple of ministers, both HIV-positive, who had just recently birthed a daughter, who was HIV-negative and healthy. The second is Kirill, another minister and former convict, who was HIV-positive (AIDS stage), suffering from cancer and several other harsh diseases. Besides the HIV therapy, he also injected himself every day to a specifically implanted tissue under his skin. "An addict's dream," Kirill sarcastically noted. The most impressive thing, though, was a pair of compressive lady-like stockings worn on his legs to protect the veins destroyed from the use of desomorphine (krokodil). When I met Kirill, he was planning his wedding to another former rehabilitant. Now they regularly post their happy faces on social media, together with their daughter from a previous marriage of Kirill's wife.

As I discuss in more detail in the chapter 5, alcoholics and drug addicts differ in their willingness to accept a problem and, consequently, in their identification of this problem. I have mentioned already that the average age of alcoholics in the rehab is higher. This is caused by the idea of drinking as a socially accepted and prescribed behavior in many cases. At Good Samaritan, alcoholics usually attempt to distance themselves from drug addicts when they first come to the rehab and introduce themselves, for they commonly also share the widespread stigma on drug addicts. They start their introduction with something like: "Well, I'm not like most of you here. I'm just an alcoholic."

Drug addicts support this distinction. They mock the seriousness of the alcoholics' "problems" and call them names, like blue noses (sizyie nosy) or politicals (politicskie)—this comes from prison culture: during Stalin's era, criminals distanced themselves from political prisoners in the same prison
camp). Hence the acceptance and identification of the problem differs in depth and in principle, for the alcoholics. When asked why they came to the rehab, the brothers respond remarkably:

Vladislav: "I boozed up a little (zabukhal chut'-chut') Well, actually I came here to find my inner harmony and learn how to love people."

Vova: "I just want to quit smoking."

Dima: "I want to get rid of my sex addiction."

54-year old Sergey Ivanych gave a very typical answer: "Well, my wife sent me here. I didn't know anything about it."

67-year old Andrey Viktorovich: "I came to get some treatment (podlechit'sia), and I'm very much satisfied with the therapy I'm getting here."

This idea of curing or treatment, summarized in the Russian word lechenie, is common amongst alcoholics at Good Samaritan, though no medical procedures are used. Although the bygone life (vetkhaia zhizn') of rehabilitants is discussed as an example to better understand Scripture, there is no specific time to discuss hangovers or drug use, much less to treat them therapeutically.

Hence, the main goal of rehabilitation for the majority of alcoholics, besides those who have no other place to live, is to get some treatment, whereas the drug users usually realize that they need more radical changes in their lives. This does not mean that they are more successful in the end, but points to an addiction narrative shared by most newcomers in the rehab.

Another common problem for the alcoholics in the rehab is smoking. Although almost everyone before the rehab is a smoker, quitting is much easier for the drug addicts. Besides many possible biochemical explanations one can think of, there is also a widespread stereotype that smoking is a natural supplement to drinking, which also plays a role.
Although alcoholics are much more resistant to accept and identify their addiction than drug users, there is one state that inevitably convinces them. It is called alcoholic delirium or DT (Delirium tremens), widely known in Russian as "White fever" or simply belochka. DT is a life-threatening state caused by alcohol withdrawal. The brightest manifestations are visual and auditory hallucinations. The occurrence of DT is a clear sign of an alcoholic in a very serious stage. Most of the rehabilitants who experienced DT would never claim that they are looking for "inner harmony" or just want to "quit smoking."

**Reasons to leave a rehab**

Substance abuse is a serious and complex problem. There are many efficient programs that rehabilitate people. However, each addicted individual has his/her own sociocultural, physical, moral, and psychological background, and there is no universal solution or mechanism for each and everyone's problems. Many people try different programs: religious and secular, Twelve-Step and psychological, spiritual and medicinal, and yet fail to maintain a more or less stable remission for a considerable period of time, or even fail to pass the whole program to the end.

Good Samaritan is no exception. When the ministers and coordinators in St. Petersburg prepare admission for future rehabilitants, they ask them to collect medical references and undergo a detoxification before arrival. However, this task is hardly doable in many cases. Firstly, there are homeless people who have no documentation and few chances to collect it. They also have no place to stay for the time of collecting. Eventually, they are brought to rehabs just as they are: dirty, cold, hungry, with no possessions, and often intoxicated.
Those who have a home and all documents, regardless if they pass detoxication, they cannot resist abstinence or boredom and get high on their way to the rehab. They come from other regions, which often takes days. Thus, with all the effort, many newcomers are still in bad conditions: intoxicated or under withdrawal.

Consequently, in every rehab there is a three-day rule, allowing a newcomer to rest in bed for the whole day. The story many rehabilitants often tell is about their feelings when, for instance, a brother who is feeling sick and disoriented, is woken up by a weird noise in the early morning. He opens his eyes, looks down from his bed (commonly newcomers on "three days" are given a second level, out of sight) and sees a group of men, sitting in a circle and singing a capella about God (the morning glorification is scheduled for 8.00). This image impresses him so much that he thinks: "What's going on here? Where am I? What kind of sect is that?"

The fourth day is commonly a turning point. Many people start participating and learning about the strict rules, but leave soon after. Many, even among those been in the rehab before, use those three days to detoxicate far from home and from the "contacts of dealers in my cellphone," with no intention to stay any longer. Some people, on the contrary, leave unable to bear their withdrawal, usually feeling sorry that they are heading home to actually continue using drugs.

The reasons for most people leaving in the first two months, during Rehabilitation, are commonly reduced to the strict rules and bad living conditions. People start complaining early, after sitting for one or several days reading from early morning until late at night. There is no free time; the schedule is tight and obligatory for all, no fresh air, no manual work or physical exercise, besides the daily cleaning for half an hour. Bad air circulation, cold or heat, very poor and bad food, often in very small
portions; all of these things are too harsh even for those with a big prison experience.

Basically, what differs between a rehab and a prison or jail is, most of all, a free exit. There is a three-day rule here as well: a rehabilitant should notify of his intention to quit three days in advance. The elders and ministers try their best to persuade the brother back, using biblical quotes, phone calls to the family or pastor (if he is a church member already), or just temporizing. Scandals and quarrels can make this time shorter, some brothers simply run away, later returning with the police to get their belongings back.

Bad relations between a brother and elder, or between brothers in program, are another frequent reason to quit. This happens at every stage of the program. I even witnessed a case when a brother left the rehab two weeks before the end of his program after a heated argument with the brothers and an elder, involving throwing a chair at the wall. Thus, on every stage, but especially during Rehabilitation, some brothers become "fed up" and quit.

Another common reason is provided by the conformist but impatient brothers. They are usually repentant, often at the stage of Adaptation, more or less obedient to the rules and elders. The reason is: "Now I've got it. I've got the whole thing. No need to be here anymore." Usually they swear not to take drugs, drink, smoke, or curse anymore. They promise to attend their local church, pray and read the Bible regularly. The elders and ministers are usually skeptical about such early insights, calling it self-reliance. Max, then an elder of Rehabilitation, told me of such excuses along with "I have to help my granny with her vegetable garden," or even "I forgot to turn my iron off." (several months ago!)

Many people leave the program early. There are no official statistics, although in some leaflets or online postings the ministry claims that "about
80% of those who pass the whole program remain sober permanently." This number is very tricky and problematic. Firstly, the ministry has only existed since 2004, and for the remission of an addicted person, ten or eleven years is not a guarantee against relapse. Secondly, such wording as "those who pass the whole program" makes a distinction. About one out of ten people, according to my very rough and subjective estimations, passes the whole program. Many only succeed after two or more attempts.

The idea of relapse and remission in Good Samaritan is seen through the prism of a Christian worldview. Whereas a secular approach sees treatment of psychological addiction as a permanent maintaining of remission and relapse as a break of this process, Christian Rehabilitation claims a complete recovery of the successful alumni. The rehabilitated brothers are totally free from addictions. Jesus gave them freedom from sin, for addiction is a slavery of sin (John 8:34). As long as one is with God, Good Samaritan claims, he has no addictions, and is even disgusted with drugs. But as soon as one steps away (ostupit) from God, one collapses (relapses) immediately. Max, the elder, once explained: "Those who quit the rehab, not passing the whole program, as a rule fall down much deeper than they were before."

The ministry keeps track of everyone who has entered the program, even without passing it completely. Some do not have phone numbers, hide or change them, but the ministers attempt to keep notes about as many people as they can. I also try to keep in touch with the people I met in the program, via phone calls or online. Although one rarely admits to starting using drugs or drinking again, it can be deduced from the online pictures, topics, use of swear words, smoking, and eye-witnesses.

My observations, along with the ministers' claims, led to the conclusion that almost all of the brothers who drop the program start using again
shortly after. The Baptists simply explain that such a person has not surrendered to Jesus with all his heart, and hence cannot resist Satan and his own weaknesses. Passing the whole program teaches obedience and humility, they claim, and for most brothers and sisters even eight months are not enough to learn how to live with God. The overall feeling of emptiness and no purpose in life, experienced by a psychologically dependent person, is simply not replaced with any meaning. In the case of Good Samaritan, it is not replaced with Jesus Christ.

Summary

This chapter is an introductory description of the Russian Baptist community in St. Petersburg and the rehabilitation ministry called Good Samaritan. The Baptist congregation in St. Petersburg and the surrounding region is represented by the Church on a Hill, an umbrella church for all officially registered Baptist communities in the region.

In 2004, one of its ministers, former convict Vladimir Ezhov established the first rehabilitation center for the addicted people. The ministry grew fast, and in 2009, Ezhov and a group of other ministers established a Church Miloserdie, where most of the congregants are former rehabilitants, convicts, or their family members. The ministry has grown to more than thirty rehabs, and the Church occupies a spacious building next to the Eastern border of St. Petersburg.

The ministry is organized as a therapeutic community, where the elders are former rehabilitants themselves. They live in isolated settings in rural houses, apartments, or farms, commonly 100-150 kilometers from the city. The brothers and sisters are strictly segregated.

The program is free and its support and supply is more than modest. Hence the conditions are often bad: the premises are old, with no running
hot water; toilets are built outside; the food is of the worst quality and often expired. Such conditions add to the strict regime, so there are many people who quit the program because of them.

The program takes eight months and consists of two stages. Two-month Rehabilitation is totally devoted to the study of the New Testament and the basics of Christian life. The program presents a tight daily schedule with almost no free-time breaks, few working assignments (only some time for cleaning the living premises), and no time for going outside. Most of the time, rehabilitants study Scripture in the form of reading, learning, or discussing. The rehabilitants are expected to repent, become born-again.

Adaptation is meant for the re-socialization of addicted people and to teach them to live and interact peacefully with others. They are given the full Bible and they have to work every day. This work is mostly focused on keeping them busy and it hardly contributes to the support of the rehab, but rather to some basic maintenance.

The rules in the rehab are very strict. Possession of any electronic devices, food, or literature is not allowed. All valuables, documents, and money are given to the minister and locked up until the end of the program. Inappropriate talks, smoking, consuming or discussing alcohol or drugs, gambling, cursing, blasphemy, sexual relations, and other sinful activity is forbidden.

Rehabilitants with harsh and violent pasts are not always willing to obey, and hence there are often issues when a punishment should be implemented. The most common penalty is a reasoning face-to-face talk with a minister. The offenders are expected to express remorse in repentant prayer to God. More serious misdeeds may be punished by cutting the sweets for the whole group or, eventually, expulsion from the rehab.
People in the program have varied though typical backgrounds. Most of them had problems with the law and some served more than one term in prison. They commonly have spouses and children, and they are often divorced due to their habits. The majority of them have several chronic diseases, the most common of which are HIV and hepatitis. Almost every person who was homeless before the rehab has frostbitten toes or limbs.

Alcoholics and drug addicts differ in the program, at least in the beginning. Alcoholics claim that they are not as bad as "those junkies", and drug addicts support this notion by mocking alcoholics and their "problems."

There are several common reasons why people quit rehabs early. Some people go there to detoxicate and have a brief rest outside of the big city with junkie environment. Some are even close to unconsciousness, and do not really have a good idea where they are and why. The others, on the contrary, cannot bear withdrawal and leave for a new dose to feel better. Some people are hiding from dangers, criminal investigation, or debts, but the ministry reports and registers anyone in the program to the authorities.

A significant number of people quit due to harsh conditions and the strict regime. Many brothers with respective experience constantly compare the regime in the rehab with the prisons they served their terms in. They often claim that it is easier in prison, for there is much more free time and much less limitations. Thus, they take the liberty of the only big advantage of the rehabilitation centers—the freedom to leave.

The next chapter reviews the methods I used, the ethical implications I had, and discusses my self-representation in the field.
3. "I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor⁴:"  
Methodology and Ethics

Introduction

This chapter describes my fieldwork in the ministry: the sources of data I use in my analysis, my methodology, its peculiarities and limitations, caused by institutional rules, Russian Baptist dogmatics and morality, vulnerability of recovering addicts and neophyte Christians, and my own personal background. My fieldwork research in Good Samaritan may be characterized as hectic and unstructured, due to unpredictable changes of gatekeepers' roles and their availability. Yet, I tried to make the best of it, filling the involuntary periods of absence in the field with the study of dogmatic, historical, and scientific contexts of both, substance use dependence and Russian Baptism.

My fieldwork research, thus, ended up being diverse, embracing multiple topics and different techniques. In an attempt to conceptualize all these field sites, pieces of data, and modes of presence and participation, I divide everything that I did for my research in the designated period into three main groups by the directness of the role they play in my study. I call them simply: primary, secondary, and tertiary data. The primary data stands for my full-time stays and participation in the rehabs, secondary data deals with other aspects of the ministry, as well as the Baptist community, tertiary data includes the study of contexts: Protestant history, dogmatics, and exegetics, and secular scientific study of biochemistry and psychology of addiction.

I conducted my fieldwork research from January 2014, when I first entered the rehab, with a preliminary meeting with the ministers over a coffee, until January 2015, when I attended a Baptism ceremony in the

⁴ John 4:38.
Church, shortly before returning to Helsinki. The ministry mainly operates in my home city; hence I lived in my apartment when not in the rehab. Most of the time, I used my car for transportation, for the ministry was short of vehicles and the rehabs were far away from the city.

Access to the field was granted long before the actual start of my research, when I was still planning future PhD studies during my Masters studies. At the end of 2010, I contacted a media representative of the ministry, Valery Tolkachev, via the web-form on the website http://narcostop.org. By that time, I was already acquainted with Vladimir Ezhov, the founder of the ministry, though he most probably did not remember me.

Valery soon responded and directed me to Vladimir, whom I met later in St. Petersburg. Although he immediately inquired about whether I was a Christian myself, he welcomed me to conduct my project and agreed to show me one of the rehabs when I asked. In the summer of 2011, I visited the rehab near Luga (the one in which I would start my research in 2014) with a coordinator of the ministry and a prison ministry team from the city of Kursk. Some of the people I met there I would later encounter again during my fieldwork, both as ministers and returning rehabilitants.

After that visit, there was a two-year gap where I was not enrolled in any university. I resumed my email contacts immediately after starting my Doctoral studies in Helsinki and by the start of my fieldwork in January 2014, I was already expected in the ministry. I met with the ministers in the cafe and, after introducing myself and my project, started the first immersion in January 20, 2014.
Primary research data: full immersion into rehabs

During the whole fieldwork period, I managed to participate in three rehabs. The first one is situated next to the small town of Luga, 150 km South from St. Petersburg. The rehab is located in the administrative building of the former kolkhoz in a beautiful village between two big lakes named Mezhozernyi. In the summer, these lakes are very popular among the population of Luga and surrounding villages, since they are clean and have sandy beaches.

I spent a month in the first stage of the program, Rehabilitation, participating full-time. During my stay, there was a very cold winter season. The windows were partly broken, so the room was very cold. The brothers from Adaptation, the second stage, were heating the premises with an old chimney, but hardly succeeded. The center's supplies were lower than usual due to the winter season, so the brothers complained a lot about tiny portions. My elder there was Max and the minister of the whole rehab was Vasya, both of whom I describe in chapter 4.
My second rehab, where I stayed for a fortnight in March 2014, was situated in the town of Priozersk, next to the great lake of Ladoga. The town is the center of a big municipality in Leningradskaya oblast', but the rehab is situated in the suburbs. The rehab is located in a local Baptist wooden house of prayer. The main hall is used for study and gatherings, and the second floor is used as dormitories. On Sundays, there are regular church services, and the brothers prepare the hall and share a cup of tea with the congregation.

The minister of the rehab and acting pastor Ivan suggested that I spend a week in Rehabilitation and a week in Adaptation "to try it all." However, since the rehab is small and hosts about 5-6 people in total, there was not much difference between those two stages. I stayed in the same dormitory for the whole time, for the Adaptation's dormitory was packed. Moreover, I was given working assignments even before my Adaptation, but, of course, during Adaptation I was given much more.

The work assignments I got in that rehab were varied. Besides the general cleaning of the territory around the rehab, I was sent to clean the neighbor's garden of the old logs, which we used as firewood in our rehab.
In exchange, we would also remove the garbage and, particularly, a pile of huge stones. There were three or four of us sent there, so the rest dealt with logs and I removed those huge stones with a crowbar and a cart.

Two times I was sent to mop and wash common stairs in the housing block. The rehab arranged that job with the local municipality and earned some money from it. Soon, the municipality was unsatisfied with the poor quality of the work and discharged us. Yet, when it was my turn to mop the stairs, my co-worker Slava paid me an unusual compliment: "You'd be a very good cook [of methamphetamine] (varshik). You do it pretty much meticulously."

My third rehab, which I had intended to attend for a month since November 2014, but had to leave after two weeks due to family issues, was something in between the first two. It was big enough, but not as strict as the first one. I stayed as a rehabilitant there and lived on the second floor of the male rehab. The females lived on the other side of the road. The rehab is situated next to the Finnish border, some 30 km from the town of Vyborg.

That rehab was most notable for my deepest immersion into prison culture. Although many of the brothers, including the ministers, are former convicts with several sentences, Rehabilitation at the Vyborg rehab was the most influenced by the vocabulary, various examples, and even morality from prison. The whole Rehabilitation, including me, tended to use the vocabulary and notions from the inmate culture. Most probably, we were influenced by the elder, Andrey, described in more detail in chapter 4.

The rehab's supplies were somewhat better, for its minister Armen had some connections in Finland, and his elder pastor from Vyborg—in Norway and Sweden. Yet, most of the food coming to the rehab was expired or of a cheapest sort. We had huge portions of expired Finnish bread and for several days we had fish sticks that were 5 years expired (luckily, frozen).
A big group of Norwegians connected to the local pastor attended the rehab annually. For one of their visits I was asked for help. I was the only one, besides the pastor from Vyborg, who spoke English. Hence I was asked to accompany and interpret Norwegians in the neighboring villages, where they distributed humanitarian aid amongst poor elderly people. They were given a representative from the local administration with the list of those in need, and we were riding two big tourist buses between the houses of recipients. The buses belonged to a tourist company headed by the leader of the whole group, who drove one of them.

I tried to schedule more stays, but the gatekeepers—the ministers and coordinators—were constantly busy with the real addicts, and postponed lots of our arrangements. Thus, I had to rely on my secondary and tertiary data, which yet contributes significantly to the diversity of the information I eventually got.

**Secondary research data: various trips, visits, and festivities**

During the secondary phase of participant observation, I engaged in much more diverse and various activities. These mostly included different
trips in my car. What is more important, I attended much more rehabs as a guest, and met lots of the ministers from other regions at the leadership meetings.

Although the ministers were always friendly and welcoming to me and most of them genuinely liked me, even though I was not repentant, they were commonly too busy to deal with my fieldwork precisely. Thus, I took every opportunity to combine my giving back with any sort of participation I could get.

Most of the time, it was manifested in the use of my car, which is a 7-seat minivan. I transported ministers, rehabilitants, missionaries, guests, and also all kinds of goods to the rehabs. Sometimes, rehabilitants or ministers were with their kids, so I used my kids' car seats. Sometimes my car was packed full with grains, potatoes, or ice cream, sometimes with clothes or furniture.

![Map](image)

Picture 6: Geography of my full-time immersions (The Internet service of Yandex.maps is used: http://maps.yandex.ru)

The most common kinds of trips were guest or missionary visits to the rehabs. The visitors were either missionaries from other ministries, often
from other regions, or the team of ministers from St. Petersburg, often bringing some clothes, goods, or food with them. They came to the rehab just for an evening gathering or for several days—in that case an eldership meeting was also scheduled. The leaders of the group, or the whole group if it was small, shared their stories—witnessed—and preached before the rehabilitants. Then they talked face-to-face with those who needed spiritual advice.

Sometimes there were ministers visiting various rehabs. Later on, one or two of them gathered with Rehabilitation in the dormitory and then they exchanged witnesses with each other. The ministers often brought a guitar and glorified God together with Rehabilitation. These visits were almost the only occasions when I could take pictures of Rehabilitation on the actual premises.

The guests were always well fed, even if the rehab was short of food. They were always served a separate table, commonly at separate time, and there were lots of sweets with their tea after the main course. If there were women at the rehab, they served the table and left until the end of the meal, only to come back later and wash the dishes, for such gender roles are taught in the rehabs as an element of a good Christian family.

Another frequent mode of attendance for me was Church services. In the ministry's new church, Miloserdie, there are three services every Sunday, and in the umbrella Church on a Hill in St. Petersburg there are two. There were also occasional services during the week, but most of the congregants regularly gathered in smaller groups at someone's home for the Bible study. These Bible studies are vital elements of Church integrity and brother/sisterhood (See also Bielo 2009).

Some of the services on Sundays were also devoted to a special occasion, like Christian festivities, Holy Communion (only baptized members of the
Church could participate), or Baptism. I was invited and attended the Baptism of Max and also a female minister from the Luga rehab. The Baptisms are held twice a year in the Church on a Hill, in the summer the people are immersed in one of the lakes next to the Church, and in the winter they use a baptistery inside the house of prayer. Church Miloserdie held its own baptisms twice, once in a lake, where they traveled by cars, and once they filled an air basin and used it as a baptistery. Before that, all the members of Miloserdie were baptized in the bigger Church on a Hill.

One of the vital elements of my participation was the eldership meetings of Good Samaritan. Organized either in the Church or in one of the rehabs (they are held for two or three days in that case), the ministers from different rehabs, often from other regions, together with the head ministers in St. Petersburg, gathered around a big table. They always started and ended with a prayer, then sang a couple of hymns in chorus. One of the head ministers led those meetings. They discussed some actual problems and needs, and introduced changes, for instance, a common daily prayer at 9 p. m. for the new people to arrive to the rehabs.

The regular form of those meetings included testimonies and presentation of particular rehabs' situation and needs (or whatever the responsibility of the particular speaker was) in turns for everyone present, so every time I had to present myself and my intentions also. I commonly knew most of the
ministers present already, but those who saw me for the first time often wondered: "So, you're an atheist then?" (Armen, when we gathered in his rehab, where I later would also stay) Every three presentations were commonly concluded with a prayer.

Besides the eldership meetings, where my car was often used for the transportation of attendants, I also frequently transported newcomers to the rehabs, or from one rehab to another, and also met some at the train station. Sometimes, the newcomers were mothers with kids, some of which were very shy and traumatized from their stressful life with (an) addicted parent(s). I was never told to transport those leaving the rehab before the end of the program, for it is a general rule not to help such people, and not one of them ever asked me, anyways.

One of my stays in the Luga rehab in July 2014 was a one-week guest visit, when I volunteered to help the rehab with their big truck. At the time of my arrival, no one in the rehab had a category C driver's license and experience to deal with such trucks, and I had both. Later that week, a man called Semen came back to the rehab after relapse. Semen used to supply the rehab with firewood on the truck during my first stay. This time, he was only allowed to ride the truck after two-month strengthening, for he had to reflect on his relapse and come back to Christ.

I had to replace some details and set the engine working. After that, I transported the furniture for the rehab. Supplying the rehab with firewood for the winter was also planned in advance, but the plans would later change. The rehab had very limited funds to spend on this truck, hence Vasya, the minister, only financed the most urgent spare parts, like a leaking fuel tank, but there were still many mechanisms, like an old worn-out carburetor, that needed replacement.
This time, and during several other visits to the Luga rehab, I helped Vasya do groceries and collect donated food for the rehab in my car. We travelled to wholesale stores and cheap supermarkets in Luga and, sometimes, in St. Petersburg and loaded my car with goods, which were later unloaded by Adaptants with our help. Sometimes, there were not enough fridges for the donated expired ice cream, so the sisters melted it, filled the sauce pots with it, and used it instead of milk for the morning oatmeal. The waffle cups were then served on a baking tray, slightly fried.

The less frequent occasions were study seminars, mostly organized by foreign visitors, predominantly from the USA. I was often just attending and transporting, but on occasion also interpreting for them. Once, I was accompanying a team of missionaries from California for two days. They went sightseeing around St. Petersburg, took a boat ride across rivers and channels, and climbed the colonnade of St. Isaac's Cathedral. Later, on the second day, they gave a seminar on Church planting, for which I also interpreted until the coffee-break, when the regular interpreter for the Church, a Baptist from a friendly congregation, arrived after a busy day at work.

The most pleasant events to attend were various festivities. Sometimes they were also physically exhausting, but nevertheless exciting. Once my
spouse and I were personally invited to the wedding of one of the head minsters. He was already my good friend, and he was marrying a never-addicted member of the same Church.

The wedding looked like a traditional wedding in St. Petersburg, with riding around and taking pictures at the historical sites of the city, and a big dinner. However, what contrasted from a regular local wedding was the fact that nobody smoked (though one of the groom's relatives, a non-believer, was shyly hiding behind the building for a quick cigarette) and there was not a drop of alcohol present the whole day, which is hardly imaginable at a Russian wedding, even if the newlyweds are irregular drinkers.

I attended several other festivities, like Protestant Christmas, Easter, or 10-year anniversary of the ministry. I commonly participated as a driver and a guest. Yet, one special occasion for me was a festivity called "Christmas Mystery" (Taina Rozhdestva). The festivity is held at the roofed marketplace every 7th of January, on the Russian Orthodox Christmas. The Baptists are not allowed to evangelize and invite to the Baptist Church on that marketplace, but allowed to celebrate Christ and Christmas without any
mention of their denomination. They still see it as a good chance to bring people to Christ, especially in a region with a prevailing Orthodox tradition.

The program included a concert: a worship team from the Church with invited choirs, Christian groups and theaters performed on stage. Various contests and entertainment for children went on at the same time. When I offered to help, I expected the usual transportation work with, maybe, some manual work with stage construction. However, to my surprise, I was asked to play a mascot. I was dressed as a duck (there were also opinions that it is a chicken—see picture 11) and was ordered to greet all the children and pose for pictures.

Summarizing, my secondary trips were not as intense as an actual participation in rehabs, but they were very varied. First, I visited many more rehabs than I could otherwise attend as a rehabilitant. Second, I saw them from an unusual side, being able to access both Rehabilitation and Adaptation, and also the storage and minister's rooms, commonly locked to rehabilitants. I had the chance to meet many people, both passing the program and ministers from almost every rehab in the ministry. I was also able to see and talk to women, though only those who already passed the program. The eldership meetings each contributed to the ideology of the rehabs, discipline, and prevailing dogmatics. Other activities served, at the same time, as my giving back to the ministry, tightening my good relations and strengthening my friendship with the ministers, and as a source of unexpected insight on various aspects of my project.

**Tertiary research data: study of addiction, Bible, and dogmatics**

I consider the sources of tertiary data everything that is not directly connected to the Baptist community in St. Petersburg. Without embracing those, my project would be further limited or even reduced to a superficial
understanding of the rehabilitation process. I initially intended to study addictions, while the study of Scripture, Protestant history, and dogmatics was borne upon the involuntary breaks in my project due to the availability or lack thereof of the ministers (also including their sicknesses or summer vacations).

First, I attended a three-day study seminar titled "Dependence-Codependence: The Principles of Aiding the People with Dependence Problem and their Relatives" in the secular Informational and Consulting Center for the Problems of Addicted Behavior in St. Petersburg. The seminar gave me a thorough introduction to the physiology and psychology of addiction, and the principles of aid. The seminar was held by the team of practitioners with experience in the psychological counseling and supporting of dependent and co-dependent people.

During the breaks in my research, I tried to fill the gaps in my fieldwork, and came up with taking online courses on Protestant dogmatics, Scripture, and addiction science. The courses I completed include:

On Coursera:
- The Addicted Brain by Michael Kuhar, Emory University
- AIDS by Kimberley S. Hagen, Emory University,
- Drugs and the Brain by Henry A. Lester, California Institute of Technology

On YouTube:
- Introduction to New Testament by Dale B. Martin, Yale University. (Channel: Yale Courses)
- Introduction to the Old Testament by Christine Hayes, Yale University. (Channel: Yale Courses)
• Historical Theology II by Nathan Busenitz, Masters Seminary.
  (Channel: Joshua Crooch)

Overall, the tertiary data can be only called so by the extent to which it is related to the Baptist community in St. Petersburg and Good Samaritan. However, without this data, a holistic and complete image of rehabilitation and conversion to Christianity in Good Samaritan would be hardly feasible. My understanding of the biochemical processes of the addicted brain, the psychology of addiction, the historical and literary context of Scriptures, and Evangelical dogmatics plays a vital role in my further analysis of Christian rehabilitation and biblical conversion.

**Limitations and ethics**

The main methodological principle of my project is ethnographic participant observation, with an emphasis on participation and being there. The mode of my participation in the rehabs was arranged in the beginning, when I first contacted the ministry. I was told that most of the people in the ministry were former addicts themselves, and those who have no such experience should try the program first, in order to comprehend the process and problems of dependent people.

The condition of anyone's participation and stay in the program was full-time adherence to the rules and schedule. For instance, one could not get up earlier in the morning or go to bed later (excluding going to the toilet). There was almost no free time and, thus, not much time to discuss any side issues. I had to participate in every activity: sing at glorifications, share the Word from Scripture that had been revealed to me, read and study the scriptural text, pass the seminars, and work.

There were severe limitations, both institutional and ethical, which significantly affected my methodology. Firstly, as anyone else in the
program, I was not allowed to have a mobile phone, camera, tape recorder, or anything of the sort with me. I could only take pictures when not in the program myself. Secondly, conducting an interview was unthinkable due to a strict regime and tight schedule. Moreover, discussing addiction and the consumption of drugs in rehab was prohibited by its rules, and I could not even touch upon such sensitive topics with most of the ministers outside without risking provoking a relapse.

Such limitations in my methodology forced me to reflect on my mode of participation and employ my own feelings, thoughts, reflections, outbursts, and fears as elements of analysis. My embodied experience of physical challenges, such as cold (or heat), hunger, spinal ache, eating disorder, insomnia, and lack of fresh air and physical activity, caused by harsh conditions, contributed to my comprehension and perception of the rehabilitation process.

The focus of my study was partly defined by my own research priorities—interest in conversion to Christianity and rehabilitation as interdependence of moral and bodily transformation—and significantly by methodological limitations. I ended up being focused on men, for my access to women was limited institutionally, even outside of the rehab regulations. Moreover, becoming mostly interested in the biblical conversion as the basis of rehabilitation, I concentrated on the Rehabilitation stage, where this process is accumulated and articulated the most. There were other themes I could take to direct my research, both based on substance abuse and Evangelical Christianity, but Christian rehabilitation and biblical conversion was and still is a perfect combination of my research interests and fieldwork opportunities.
Self-representation in the field

The question of my self-presentation in the field was first raised by the ministers shortly before my first rehab. When I met with two of the head coordinators over a coffee in St. Petersburg, after brief inquiry about my project in general terms, one of them, Vadim, expressed his concerns: "The people in the rehab will be uncomfortable if you say you come to study them. You do realize what kind of people there are, don't you?" I responded with the idea that we both would not tolerate my lies: they are Christians and I have my ethical code, besides being an honest man in principle. The ministers agreed. Then I suggested a neutral formulation of "trying the program myself."

As I have previously discussed, such a definition eventually appeared to be very accurate. Moreover, my self-representation did not become a big issue in most cases. The repentant believers were confident that it was God's plan that I had come to the Christian rehab, which I did not yet realize. The others were satisfied with such formulation as "I'm writing a dissertation," and being quite curious about what Anthropology means. "Are you going to measure our skulls?" some of the brothers asked.

Yet some of them became suspicious and annoyed with me writing notes every spare minute. I wrote in the same copybook I used for the study, turning it backwards and upside-down, for this was the only opportunity to write at all. The brothers compared me to a spy and half-jokingly asked if I was going to report on them using my notes. Although most of them had problems with the law before the rehab, I always retorted that I saw nothing significant to report on, and, moreover, I could hardly imagine one would hire somebody to report on abstinent and isolated addicts, many of whom are homeless and miserably poor.
Reflections on insider/outsider position in the field

Ethnography is always personal to a great extent. The very idea of participant observation implies devoting a part of a researcher's life, time, and personal freedom to the people who may have different standards and limits of those. The ethnography of Evangelical Christianity is even more personal, for the question of the anthropologist's personal beliefs is relevant from the very beginning until the very end (Harding 1987: 171). The ethnography of addicted people is no less personal, since such an experience is deeply embodied, deeply emotional, and deeply personal, and the issue of the ethnographer's own relation to the subject arises from the very beginning.

Following Kirin Narayan's famous essay (1993), I also consider myself a sort of halfie in my field. In my case, it almost does not involve ethnicity, for most of the brothers were as much culturally Russians as myself. However, there is a certain degree of typicality in the brothers' biographies and my own background, which allows me to use such an analytical category.

There were many commonalities between me and the brothers. Being Russian myself, I share the cultural and historical contexts of Post-Soviet Russia. The brothers and I reflected on most of the recent major transformations of Russia, either witnessing them ourselves, or hearing about them from the family members. I was in the second grade when the Soviet Union collapsed, so I grew up through the reigns of Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin.

I was born and grew up in Leningrad/St. Petersburg, the center of the ministry's activities. Hence I also share the local contexts of the area. As I have mentioned earlier, Rehabilitants came from different regions of Russia, since the ministry attempts to send brothers far from home, to give them less
temptation to quit. Yet, there are very few accents or dialects in the Russian language used throughout Russia; hence, my native Russian language, with all its sociocultural baggage, was also common.

The modal age in the rehabs was around mine at the moment—thirty to thirty-one years—few people were much older or younger. Thus, we did not merely share social and cultural contexts, but my physical appearance was seen as authentic among the brothers. The brothers immediately recognized no traces of addiction in my face. Yet, common age, ethnicity, cheap everyday clothes, skinny figure, and typical haircut attracted fewer attention to my appearance.

Despite being local and of the median age among the brothers, I had some substantial differences, not merely my individual features, as any other brother has, but specific to my outsider position as an anthropologist and non-believer. For instance, I was almost always the only one with a university degree in the program. My reading and writing was smoother and faster, although my handwriting is bad and, thus, fit better with the uneducated majority.

The fact that I had never been addicted was obvious from the beginning. I did learn junkie slang in advance, for it was crucial for understanding the brothers talking. Yet it would be awkward and harmful for me to pretend any relation to the junkie culture, besides some occasional anecdotes that happened to me when I lived in various bad neighborhoods of St. Petersburg.

Another important aspect, commonly related to addiction, is prison experience, which I also lack. Russian prisons represent a peculiar culture, with a strict moral code, economic laws, tight network of connections, strong hierarchy where everyone has a specific position, complex language and other symbolic systems, like tattoos (Oleinik 2001). A group of males in
a limited space with a restricted regime inevitably called for the prison context. Another legitimate parallel would be the army, but due to convictions, addiction, and/or bad health, the majority of the brothers had not served in the army.

Health issues, consequences of addicted living formed the embodied experience I did not share with the brothers, such as abstinent syndrome, skin and tissue damages, chronic illnesses, injuries from accidents and street fights. Even having experienced some health issues throughout one's life, one can hardly imagine the extent to which the addicted person may physically suffer. These issues also leave traces and scars on the body, serving as a sign or mark of a peculiar experience, and are easy to recognize.

Besides physical otherness, I am also often considered other in spiritual terms. My disbelief in God, commonly much more conscious than of the other brothers entering the program, made me feel different; and I was perceived differently. Belief is not a prerequisite for starting a program. Most of the newcomers, apart from those returning after relapse, have a very vague idea, or do not have any at all, of what Baptism is. Many often self-identify as Christians, both Orthodox and "a believer, in principle". The vast majority was reading the Bible for the first time in their lives in the rehab. Thus, my disbelief at the start of the program was not perceived as something uncommon.

The most awkward and obvious display of my lack of belief was the fact that I refused to pray. This refusal is an explicit manifestation of my overall refusal to pretend. I considered it going against the ethical code of an anthropologist and my own moral standards acting as somebody I am not, even for the sake of research (See also discussion in Coleman and Hackett 2015).
I skipped my turn in the morning and evening prayers, and refused when asked to pray before the meals. Eventually, I was rarely asked to do it, though sometimes an elder or a minister insisted. In that case, I asked whether he wants a false and insincere prayer, and that was enough. Yet, I enjoyed and enthusiastically performed many other religious activities, like reading and studying the Scripture, singing the hymns, and studying the basics of Christian life, for it was interesting and did not require pretending.

Besides calling me out for prayers, many elders or ministers attempted to convert me, mostly in convincing terms. Since, according to Arminian soteriology, the act of being born-again is a free-will expression of faith, no one can force an unbeliever to repent. Evangelizing, thus, is a constant attempt to provide a skeptic or ignorant person with arguments and bright examples from a believer's own life through testimonies. I did retort the arguments, but there were many claims I chose not to use, considering the vulnerability of neophytes and their probable relapse.

The obvious reason of my disbelief for many brothers was my lack of addicted experience. Some really surrendered to Jesus, some hoped to switch their mindset to any other program. One of them, Matvey, explicitly said: "You don't believe in God? Well, you're alright, you don't need it—So, it is a walking stick?—For me it is."5

Although most of them were puzzled by the fact that I do not have even some general belief in a higher power, the brothers had a reasonable explanation of my worldview—basically, for them it was lack of sufficient worldview. They presumed that maybe I am too lucky and inexperienced. One of the lead minsters once told me, discussing my first field trip: "Igor, if you don't believe in God, you cannot really go deep in your research, comprehend the reasons and motives of the people."

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5 Remarkably enough, this is the same Matvey whom I cite in chapter 5. He said that he wanted to switch from his addicted thinking to any other firmware.
How do I define my position in the field? Were my shared features advantages or disadvantages? What about my differences? Would it be more fruitful or meaningful to change one variable, say, if I was a foreigner? Or an older or younger person? Or a Christian believer? Hence, even more questions arise: which particular variable and to what particular extent would be meaningful to change?

The fact that I am local gave me considerable understanding, even without saying, of the historical and cultural context. I recognized the keywords, understood the irony, and had many stories of my own to contribute to the general discussion. However, being a part of this context remarkably reduced my analytical abilities and critical reflections on the matter, even though I am an anthropologist.

On the other hand, my lack of belief did not merely give me awkward moments and irritated the brothers, but it allowed me to critically analyze the mechanism of conversion and the role of religious belief in the rehabilitation from drugs. My conclusions about the critical role of biblical literalism in rehabilitation could be impossible for a born-again believer, who would see the process as performed by God. My lack of belief, on the other hand, did not allow me any embedded explanation of the religious experience, the state of repentance, perceived by many brothers as the brightest moment in their life. It even formally restrained many brothers from calling me a brother, for it implies a brother in Christ. (See also discussion in Howell 2007)

Conclusion

I was both an insider and outsider in my field. Such a dichotomy may be outdated, a simplistic understanding of participant observation. There are numerous examples of field research, starting from Malinowski, where the
investigator is an *obvious other*, and finding similarities in the cultural contexts is encouragingly challenging. In other cases, the ethnographer belongs to the group she/he studies, and the dissimilarities are constructed by the fact of the research itself.

Since I am a Russian studying Russians for a foreign university, it is crucial to reflect on the tendency or even expectation in academia that foreign *native* or *indigenous* students research *their own culture*, at least *their in principle*. This may be pragmatic and beneficial, since some amount of expertise and language fluency is expected, but may also frame and limit the possibilities of a young scholar.

In my case, I see *my people* as both, exotic others and my peers. It starts with the question I want to ask, or with a set of dogmatic prejudices that I may have. I saw my Baptist friends, at first, as nice people, but in constant need of a walking stick to maintain their remission. But after the fieldwork, I have eventually started respecting them much more, and not merely because I have made some great friends. I now see that they are not simply believers in the supernatural without evidence. They do have the evidence and a deeply rational interpretation of this evidence, though my mode of rationality may differ.

The following chapter depicts the ministry using detailed ethnographic examples. It focuses on a typical day in Rehabilitation and presents the portraits of three people who influenced my notions of Christian Rehabilitation and *lay hermeneutics* the most.
4. "Deny yourself totally!" Ethnographic description of typical day and (un)typical people

Introduction

This chapter provides the description of the ministry with particular examples. Firstly, it describes a typical day in Rehabilitation, based on the biggest and strictest rehab. The people described here are real people I met during my stay, but their names have been substituted with pseudonyms. For the portraits of the three people who influenced me the most, I also describe

7:00 — Rise, bathroom
7:15-8:00 — Free study of the Scripture
8:00-9:00 — Morning gathering (glorification, sharing the Word, common prayer)
9:00-9:15 — Breakfast
9:15-10:00 — Cleaning the premises
10:00-11:30 — Reading, preparation for the class
11:30-13:00 — Class (Bible-study)
13:00-13:20 — Lunch
13:30-15:00 — Reading, preparation for the class/seminar
15:00-15:30 — Break
15:30-16:30 — Reading, preparation for the class/seminar
16:30-18:00 — Mon, Thu - Seminar; Tue, Fri - Class; Wed - Audio (video) sermon
18:00-19:00 — Questions on the Scripture
19:00-19:20 — Dinner
19:30-20:30 — Reading, preparation for the gathering
20:30-22:30 — Evening gathering (glorification, sharing the Word, common prayer)
22:30-23:00 — Bathroom
23:00 — Bed time

Picture 12: Daily schedule in the Luga rehab

three real people, who were aware of my research and my intent to employ their examples using pseudonyms (we joked about the ones that I was going to use, especially with Max).

Remarkably, all three were elders (Vasya was a minister, which also means an elder who has already passed the whole program). Firstly, they were made elders mostly because of their fluency in the Bible and Baptist dogmatics. Secondly, the elders are those who stay in the program for longer, have a stronger motivation and commitment than most of the others, and I also knew them better and longer, than the leaving brothers.
Typical weekday on the program

The typical day I describe here represents one particular rehab, next to the town of Luga, 130 km South to St. Petersburg, where I stayed from January to February 2014, and came back many more times for shorter visits. It is known as the strictest in terms of regime and rules. This rehab is also the biggest one, and it has males and females (both for Rehabilitation and Adaptation), and also a program for mothers with children.

The strictness of the rehab rules is determined mostly by its size, necessity of separating men and women, and the personality of Vasya, then a minister. The strictness and poor conditions of this particular rehab are determined by its significant size. The most remarkable features of the ministry are accumulated in one case, Rehabilitation in the Luga rehab. Most of the other cases resemble the Luga rehab and, most commonly, they are more relaxed in the implementation of some rules, or some of the conditions are better.

The description of a typical day represents a weekday, for on Saturdays and especially on Sundays the schedule is different. About half of Saturday (from breakfast until lunch, or even for some time after lunch, if the minister decides) is devoted to general cleaning. Analogous to the Russian army, it is called PKhD (пекхдё), which stands for park and maintenance day (Parko-khozyajstvennyi den’). There is also an extended evening gathering, when Adaptation joins Rehabilitation, and on the basis of Scripture, they together discuss a certain topic, given by the minister earlier during the week, for instance: "Love," "Obedience," "Repentance," "Sin," etc.

Sundays are lazy days. The wake-up time is an hour later, and everyone is free to do whatever they want. However, they are still obliged to stay in Rehabilitation and are limited by the rules of general conduct; the brothers
may even sleep in their beds (yet dressed and above the blanket). There is still one morning gathering on Sundays, later than usual, and after dinner Rehabilitation joins Adaptation to watch a Christian movie. In other rehabs, some of the trusted brothers visit the service at the local Baptist church with Adaptation. In the Luga rehab, it is only for trusted adaptants.

So, it is 6:50 in the morning. A small alarm clock is ringing. Max, a thickset bald man of thirty-three, wakes up from the lower bunk of two-tiered bed in a big dormitory, puts on his old sweat trousers and a sweater, sneaks to the corridor and then to the bathroom to clean his teeth. At 7:00 he turns on the lights in two adjoining dormitories (the door between them must be open at all times) and vocally proclaims: "Good morning!" Some of the brothers respond with the same. Most of them start waking up, dressing, and heading to the bathroom, but some try to catch some two or three minutes of sleep.

When it is almost 7:15, Max hurries everyone up, since it is time for reading. From 7:15 until 8:00, everybody reads the New Testament, trying hard not to fall back asleep. Max reads his Bible, since he is on the second stage of the program, Social Adaptation, and his ministry is to supervise Rehabilitation. He is appointed because of his leadership skills and knowledge of Scripture.

At 8:00, after the reading, Petya (a 24 years old homeless orphan, not an addict) gives everyone a songbook, called The Song of Revival, containing 799 or 2001 (depending on the edition) Baptist anthems. The glorification (proslavlenije) in Rehabilitation at this particular rehab is performed a capella (Max cannot play guitar and rehabilitants are not allowed to), and since just a couple of brothers are more or less musically talented, it is sometimes hard to follow the melody. Some of the hymns are famous, like Russian translations of "Silent Night", "Amazing Grace", and "How Great
"Thou Art" and some are written by Russian authors, mostly in the beginning of the 20th century. The ones unknown to the brothers are performed arbitrarily.

The time before glorification is called a free-reading time. Yet, most of the brothers are seeking for an excerpt, the one revealed (cht otkrylos') to a brother. This excerpt is reflected upon in connection to the brother's own life, both past and future. For about 25 minutes, starting at 8:30, the brothers each share his own revelations, based on the excerpt from Scripture. Usually the topics are their bygone (vetkhaia) life in sin and their current transformation towards Christian life. Those who are less fluent in Scripture choose excerpts they do not understand. Max leads the discussion, interprets and explains the verses. Sometimes, when there is enough time, Max also shares his revelations and feelings.

When it is about 8:50, everybody kneels in a big circle around the carpet and takes turns in prayer. The prayer usually includes some general praise and gratitude to God along with more actual needs, like good health, understanding of Scripture, patience, and humility; family members are also often mentioned. At the end of every prayer everybody echoes: "Amen!"
Max concludes with his prayer, mentioning the same subjects, and also the challenges of his duty as an elder. After his prayer, he says: "And accept our common prayer," and the Lord's Prayer is read in chorus.

Some fifteen minutes before the breakfast, Roman, a cook responsible for the kitchen, steals away to serve the table. The sisters cook for the brothers (in smaller male-only rehabs the brothers cook for themselves), and since they are segregated, a minister or some of the elders usually bring the meal to the kitchen in a big saucepan. When everything is ready, Roman calls for everyone, mentioning how many chairs are needed from the dormitory.

Before the breakfast, everybody stands next to his designated place and one of the brothers reads the prayer. The same brother also prays after the meal and everyone concludes in chorus: "Sincerely grateful!" (Serdechno blagodarim!)

The breakfast, as any other meal, is usually poor: a small portion of oatmeal, sometimes with some jam in it, a cup of cheap tea (rarely with sugar), and one or two thin slices of white bread. Since the meal is poor, there is no problem eating it in the arranged 15 minutes.

After the meal, the brother scheduled to wash the dishes for the whole day does so in cold water with soap. There is a boiler, but due to a total economy it is only turned on for bathing, one hour on Wednesday and two hours on Saturday.

After breakfast, the brothers start cleaning the room. Some of them wipe the dust from all surfaces, some sweep and wash the floor, clean the carpet, toilet, and bathroom. Max puts an emphasis on the process rather than on the result. The brothers try to do everything just about on time. If they complete their task sooner, they are given another assignment, or even asked to redo the same. If they complete it later—Max rebukes them. When there
are about five minutes left, Max says annoyingly: "Can you at least pretend that you're actually working!"

At 10, everybody goes back to reading. This time there is no pressure in choosing any part of the Scripture, which is why some of the brothers do something else: write in their copybooks, talk to each other, or even sleep with the book in their hands. Max, obviously, does not approve of these misdemeanors, but in many cases he does not notice them, occupied with his own Bible or being called to the corridor by Vasya, a minister for the whole rehab.

At 11:30, the class (urok) begins. The brothers read a chapter from the Gospel one by one, two or three verses each. After finishing, they start over and explain, interpret, and, if possible, apply the verses to their own life. Some brothers have trouble understanding Scripture, and many of them are even bad at reading. Max corrects and explains the verses, giving examples and appealing to the additional literature that he is allowed to read (for instance, Old Testament, Geneva Bible, and the Bible with commentaries of John F. MacArthur6).

6 MacArthur is a famous US preacher, pastor, and theologian. Although he is most
After lunch, scheduled for 13:00-13:20, there are 10 minutes of free time (however, everyone must be in the dormitory if not in the restroom). There is also a 30-minute break between two reading periods of an hour and a half. At the breaks, everybody commonly chats, shaves, visits a bathroom, or writes down seminars or songs. Lying on the bed is not allowed. Max fully participates in chatting, telling stories from his bygone life or joking. Eventually, the brothers touch upon their addictive habits. Max does not approve of them, and they are not allowed. When someone starts such a talk, Max rebukes him. Sometimes, it is he who recalls something, but then he collects himself and asks God for forgiveness.

During the long reading periods, when Max occasionally leaves the room, the brothers chat about their former lives, discuss their relationships with each other, and complain about the regime. They also often discuss the prices and features of the drugs they used to take.

![Image](image_url)

**Picture 15:** Study materials: copybooks, Gideons' New Testaments, and elder's black Bible. Taken in May 2014, four months after my long stay in this rehab

The heaviest burden for them is to sit still and read for almost the whole day. One brother, Vladislav, has calculated that there is about twelve hours of reading a day. Petya calls life in Rehabilitation a "Groundhog Day", famous for his radical Calvinism, the Russian translation of his detailed word-by-word commentaries to the Bible is highly recommended by the elder brothers, though commonly with a warning about his take on some chapters (like, say, Romans 9), so they should be approached carefully.
referring to the popular movie where the same day repeats several times. A 54-year old alcoholic [Sergey] *Ivanych* grumbles about aches in his spine and legs due to continuous sitting.

Twice a week, at 16:30, there is a *seminar*, when everyone repeats two or three assigned verses from Scripture by heart, then the seminar's *material*. The whole course of fifteen seminars concerns Christian life, sin, Scripture, and characteristics of God (for instance, who the Holy Spirit, God, or Jesus Christ are). Many brothers, affected by their addictions, have serious problems with memory, especially at the beginning of the program. However, without passing the whole course they are not admitted to the second stage—adaptation (in smaller rehabs this rule is not strict).

![Image of two men sitting in a room](http://vk.com/photo-36674858_323692592, accessed April 22, 2015)

On Wednesdays, there is an *audio-sermon*, which is in fact a video screening. There is also a prayer before and after the screening (some brothers are unsure what to pray for. The *proper* prayer mentions "learning from the film, seeing God's will in learning"). On most occasions, some of Kent Hovind's video lectures are screened. Since the rehab is short of DVDs, and many of them are old and worn out, most of Hovind's videos are repeated frequently, and the brothers are fed up with them. Most of them try to use this time to take a nap while Max does not see them, and those who
actually watch it make embarrassed comments, like: "What a fraud!" (Tolya) or "I'm with the Nazis anyway" (Tolya and Dima).

The time from 18:30 to 19:00 is scheduled for questions on Scripture. However, it is rarely used for this, and mostly everyone has some rest. After Dinner, the morning block of reading, glorification, revelation, and common prayer is repeated.

However, during the evening revelation, some of the brothers provoke a quarrel. 37-year old Vladislav is an alcoholic and a devoted vagrant from Belarus. He, though, claims that he has come to the rehab "to find inner harmony and to learn how to love people." Vasya, the minister, once retorted: "Maybe you've came to the wrong place then."

During the evening gathering, Vladislav starts a heated argument with Max about the meaning of the scriptural words or concerning the relationships among brothers. Some brothers try to contribute, and Vladislav freaks out in anger: "You just don't know me! Who are you, after all? I don't wanna listen to you all here! I'm sickened! [Mne pretit!] I'll rather be silent!" Yet the majority of the brothers tiresomely wait until the brawl is over.

After the communal prayer, everyone cleans their teeth and prepares to go to sleep. When the brothers attempt to go to bed before 23:00, Max gets angry about it and forces everyone to get up, sit, and wait for his command. When it is about 22:55, he finally lets everyone to go to bed, and at 23:00 he turns the lights off.

After that, he is usually occupied with organizational issues with Vasya or leave for a Bible study for elders, thus going back and forth, in and out of the dormitory. Some of the brothers whisper in conversation, and Max stops them. Shortly, yet, all the brothers fall asleep. They are exhausted from reading, lack of the fresh air, proper food, and bodily motion.
Ethnographic portrait of Max, an elder

One of my key informants, and later also a good friend, is the man I call Max. When I came to my first rehab next to the town of Luga, he was an elder on Rehabilitation already for a month, passing the fifth month of his program. Max was made an elder of Rehabilitation because of his great leadership skills and deep knowledge and understanding of Scripture.

Although he had only superficially read the Bible before coming to the rehab, Max became really fond of reading it in the program. During Adaptation, he was allowed to have supplementary literature and read the whole Bible, thus he made tremendous progress in studying, learning, and memorizing large parts of it. Max's interpretation of the Bible, his reflections and speculations on dogmatics, Christology, cosmology, sin, and all other aspects of the Russian Baptist Christianity had an impact on and contributed to my understanding of the narrative of conversion and rehabilitation in Good Samaritan.

Max grew up in the family of a military officer and doctor. He spent his early childhood in Middle Asia, then the USSR, in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Later, the family moved to Leningrad/St. Petersburg, where Max went to school and lives to this day. He then went to a military college, but did not graduate. Later, he started working at a telecommunications company, and soon after started his own business and became successful and wealthy.

He was buying expensive cars, though never bothered to get a driver's license, relying on bribing, but was rarely even stopped by the road police. He also purchased several big apartments. He was twice married. After the divorce, his first wife took their son and immigrated to Australia. His second wife also bore Max a son, but later divorced him.
The cause and reason for both of Max's divorces, and eventually ending up in rehab, was his alcoholism. He started off in the company of friends or colleagues, but soon he got addicted and began drinking alone. He first drank expensive and fancy alcohol, but with time he became much less picky and drank whatever was available.

By the age of thirty-three, when he ended up in the rehab, he had already experienced alcoholic delirium two times. Once he was left alone with his son for several days. He began to hallucinate intensely, and behave inappropriately, and later realized that his son, who was less than ten at that time, was in great danger. After that case, his wife took the kid and moved out of his apartment. Max began drinking even more and, eventually, on another occasion of DT in the city center, he was seen shooting lasers out of his fingers to fight aliens.

Despite owning a four-room apartment, Max was tramping around his neighborhood, sleeping on common stairways of housing blocks, eating waste food, and, like he put it: "living with bums." Realizing the extent of his problem, he tried to quit drinking by switching to taking drugs, for he considered it a good solution.

Once, Max's homeless mates told him that there was a soup kitchen organized once a week by the local Baptist church. So Max went there several times to eat. During one of his visits, a minister, a former rehabilitant himself, asked Max if he wanted to go to the rehab. Max had lost the will to live and was actively considering hanging himself. He quickly agreed, deciding to give it a go. After spending a week collecting medical references, he was directed to the rehab.

In the first days of the program, Max had a horrible torturous hangover. While slowly getting back to normal, Max started reading and participating. In the beginning, he did not feel there were solutions to his problems, but he
started enjoying reading Scripture and "rediscovered" the Bible. At first, he
was just reading it out of interest, and did not take Vasya's advice seriously.
Vasya, his elder, later a minister of the whole rehab, claimed that Scripture
had all the answers and solutions for Max, but Max could not figure them out.

Once, Max was reading Acts 17:27: "so that they would search for God
and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from
each one of us." This passage struck him like lightning. He realized that he
was actually searching for God all of his life: he was looking for any
meaning of life in "Eastern philosophies," pleasures, books, various
religions, and, eventually, changing his mind with psychoactive substances.
The second part of the verse: "though indeed he is not far from each one of
us," revealed the answer to all of Max's questions: "I realized that God is
near me and always was. He loves me whatever I do and wherever I go. I
just didn't want to notice his presence."

He went on reading and the next verse: "For 'In him we live and move
and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too
are his offspring," revealed to Max that God is the giver of life, he
maintains life, and we belong to God fully and unconditionally. Max, a
sinner, always ignored God, or even rejected him, but this rejection led to a
total moral and material failure.

That same evening, Max asked Vasya to talk and pray face-to-face in the
kitchen, and with his support and in his presence, repented with a sinner's
prayer.

After repentance, "everything became in order" for Max (vse vstalo na
svoi mesta) and most of all, Max got rid of the overwhelming feeling of
emptiness and loneliness. At that moment, he felt the constant presence of
God, craved for his will in the Bible, and started changing his life. Max
realized that these changes would not come in the blink of an eye, but required persistent spiritual work, rejection and denial of worldly experience and self-reliance. Once, he explained that denial for the stubborn brother, who wanted to leave the rehab:

Deny yourself totally! (Otwrgni sebya polnostju!) There's no need to show your rich life experience and habits, because all these brought you here. You and me—we're crap! You should break yourself until the Bible becomes a part of your life.

A sinful nature and habits are strong, for one accumulates them for years, and Satan holds sinners tightly. One, thus, should not expect to radically change in a month or two. Even the eight-month program only gives a direction, a vector for the spiritual growth and change of life:

Right now, I'm not ready to leave the rehab and start solving my problems. Sooner or later, I won't be able to resist and gulp (zhakhnu) a shot of cognac. Or even add one drop to my coffee to take delight (posibaristvuj). I need to solve many problems, and before I start dealing with the people I used to deal with and explain them why I don't drink, I've got to have as much fellowship with Christians, otherwise my old friends will pull me back there.

Max thought much about his younger son and ex-wife. He doubted that they would ever be together again with her, but he feared losing his kid. He also wanted, at least, good and friendly relations with his ex-wife. He realized how much trouble and pain he caused them, and supposed that the way to forgiveness would not be that easy:

We try to recover our old relationships with wife and child. Yet we need to build the new ones. When I imagine that I need to forget my old past, I'm really scared.

As a neophyte, Max was very much eager to achieve more and convert others. However, unlike many other recent converts, Max realized that it takes time and patience and was very enthusiastic to learn and study. When I heard his reflections on Scripture, with a very deep, consistent, and with almost encyclopedic knowledge of historical and even linguistic context, I could not believe that Max had only started learning Scripture on the
program five months ago. Yet, I clearly saw the dogmatic influence of a particular denomination in a particular historical and cultural setting. Although he once read the Bible in his school years, it was without much scrutiny.

Together with Vasya, the minister of the whole center, Max was the one who met and admitted me, which involved writing down my personal information in the journal, inspection of my personal belongings, locking up my documents, money, keys, and mobile phone, and a brief introduction to the main rules. Max was told in the beginning that I was a researcher and was genuinely interested. A self-taught intellectual, Max always had an opinion on politics, economics, literature, history, and many other issues.

The question of my lack of belief obviously came out in the very beginning, and Max was very curious about my worldview, and immediately started convincing and converting me. Once on a Sunday, when there was free time, he invited me over to the kitchen, and we talked for almost an hour.

At first, Max started providing me with creationist arguments, which I rejected, claiming that biological questions have nothing to do with the existence of God. Then Max switched to me personally. I explained that I was not a militant atheist, like he presumed, I simply never had a good reason to believe. Max suggested to start praying and asking God to reveal himself to me:

Try to assume that God exists. You're conducting your experiment, anyway. Imagine that you're a spider, and you come to the place where there are lots of flies. Try to be more active: set up a spider web. Try speaking to God. Try praying.

Max was not the only one who suggested I pray to learn that God exists, but he was the first one, and he provided me with many rational arguments. The rationality and logic of these arguments calls for a specific reality, the
Christianity of Russian Baptist rehabilitation as an everyday intersubjective reality, in the sense of Alfred Shütz' phenomenology (1945). Thus, calling these arguments irrational may be legitimate for an activist or a militant atheist, but under no circumstances for an ethnographer.

Max soon became a good friend of mine (and remains so even now), though this friendship affected his eldership. Considering my literary background, he, an intellectually-minded person himself, was much more interested in discussing certain issues with me, rather than with the rest of the brothers, some of whom could hardly read and most were much more experienced in street life.

Once during Scripture study, Max and I both used the term extrapolation discussing possible interpretations of a certain verse. Roman, one of the brothers, looked at the face of Petya, a 23-year old homeless and barely literate orphan, who always had big problems with understanding and interpreting the scriptural text. Roman shrieked with laughter: "Oh, come on, brothers! Extrapolation! Petya's head is gonna blow now!" (U Peti seichas fajly zakipiat! Literally: "Petya's files are going to boil now!")

Max's interpretation of Scripture represented a classical Evangelical literalism. He emphasized inerrancy and sufficiency of the Bible for faith and practice: "Every word in the Bible is truth. If it's written: this is black, and this is white, then it is so and nothing else." However, Max was always eager to discuss and share the cultural, historical, and linguistic context with brothers. Max did not know any of the biblical languages, though.

Max, then thirty-three years old, was a short but strong man. His head was always shaved bald. He had a low and loud voice and big brown eyes. One of his eyebrows was crossed with a big scar, which made him look a bit scary and made his smile sarcastic. Most of the time in Rehabilitation, he
wore sweatpants and sweatshirt, and blue jeans with dark jackets when outside. He was commonly energetic and full of motion.

His leadership skills were great, but he himself had troubles with obeying Vasya's orders, often disputing them. Vasya is ten years younger than Max, and in the first days of Max's program, this was a big problem for him, since obedience to the older brothers (in rank, not in age) is one of the major rules in the whole ministry, applied even to the ministers themselves.

However, on Rehabilitation there were no questions on Max's authority. Max was not always calm and collected, yet he always had his limits and even when angry he did not yell or curse. Max was rather moody: sometimes he was constantly joking and giggling and even disturbed others during reading time, but sometimes he was silent and sulky, easily getting angry if someone misbehaved.

Max had a good sense of humor and loved to joke and reminisce even on subjects not allowed in the program. He later scolded himself and asked God for forgiveness. Max accepted and listened to different opinions, though he had a firm and principal position in some cases, especially on the tenets of faith. He often recognized his mistakes and asked for a pardon, if he felt wrong.

Max was simple and unpretentious, even indifferent to comfort. He slept less than others, for in the late nights there were gatherings for elders, and he also got up 10 minutes earlier to wake others up. He never complained about bad conditions. Even being constantly hungry and nicknamed kishkoblud (glutton) by the adaptants, he never complained about food: "A big minus of this center is that we get everything for free (nahaliavu) here."

During the common prayers, Max commonly prayed longer than the brothers. He expressed all his concerns, the current issues of the rehab, mentioned his family members, the brothers who had specific problems,
even concerning relations with him, and often prayed about me that I let
God in my heart. Commonly, he repeated "Lord" (Gospodi) very often, after
almost every phrase. He also frequently prayed alone in silence. Before
going to sleep, he would often kneel on the floor with his head on his bed,
and pray for 15-20 minutes. During glorifications, Max eagerly sang with
his thick bass, but had a very bad ear for melody.

After I left that rehab in mid-February 2014, Max remained an elder.
Max spent the last two months of his program as an elder in the newly
established small rehab, located in a one-room apartment in the half-rural
area South-West to St. Petersburg. After passing his own program, he was
made an elder of Adaptation back in his first rehab next to Luga. He served
as an assistant to Vasya for about three months, including my one-week stay
to help fix and drive the rehab's truck.

His relations with Vasya became worse and he eventually decided to
leave the ministry. Vasya blamed Max for not noticing him in advance, for
Vasya needed much help. However, after a heated argument (I still do not
fully comprehend the reasons), Max even broke with the ministry's patron
church, Miloserdie.

Max did not, however, break with his faith and the Russian Baptists, and
soon joined the main congregation in St. Petersburg, the Church on a Hill.
After sufficient training, he got baptized by full immersion (I was invited
and attended) and remains nowadays an active member.

**Ethnographic portrait of Vasya, a minister**

Another key figure in my research is the then-minister of the Luga rehab
that I call Vasya. Vasya made a great contribution to my understanding of
the everyday reality of a rehab, connection between *lay hermeneutics*,
discussed in detail in chapter 8, and real life, with the most remarkable
example of rehab discipline. Unlike Max, Vasya was always associated much more with disciplinary, rather than spiritual or hermeneutical authority. On the other hand, this authority and Vasya's charisma was unquestionable and unbelievably strong for a then-twenty-three year old. Vasya too became a friend of mine, though maybe not as close as Max.

Vasya supervised the whole rehab, but the spiritual counseling for women was given by a female minister in St. Petersburg through their elders (or directly, during her visits), for the situation of distancing men and women, not related to each other, was considered more decent. Vasya regularly talked to each of the brothers, about once or twice a day, concerning their spiritual state and disciplinary problems.

Besides spiritual authority, leading the common weekly gatherings in a big hall, and disciplinary supervision, Vasya also operated the large rehab premises and supplies. Aside for a part of an administrative building of a former kolkhoz, owned by the rehab, containing both living premises and storage rooms, there were also three vehicles. By that time, only one of them, a four ton truck, could more or less ride.

Vasya was always very busy, rushing around the rehab, sometimes joining the gatherings or talking to a certain brother face-to-face in his room, but mostly dealing with technical and organizational issues, frequently talking on his mobile phone. He also often travelled 20 km to Luga, to arrange a supply of cheap or even free expired food, or to meet a new brother at the train station.

The complexities of the rehab management took all of Vasya's time, and he was always in a rush, often available to talk just for a brief time, but frequently interrupted by phone calls. Vasya coordinated and justified every more or less important decision with his own elder—a minister in St. Petersburg responsible for three rehabs.
Vasya grew up in the city of Ukhta, Komi Republic. It is a Russian Far North region with severe winters and rather short, though warm summers. The region is infamous for hosting many of the GULAG system prisons, all with strict regimes and bad conditions. Some of the prisons are still active and Vasya served a term in one of them.

Vasya often made references to Komi people, mostly in mocking terms. For instance, when he speculated about the possibility of finding a future wife back home, he said: "Well, there are lots of girls there, but the problem is they are Komi (komyachki)."7

Vasya did not tell me much about his family, besides that he grew up as the single child of a single mother. He started breaking the law early, and used his martial arts trainings to beat up even older kids at school and rob them of their pocket money. He served his first term in a juvenile prison. Altogether, by the age of twenty-two when he started his rehabilitation, he had already been convicted three times.

Vasya got addicted to heroin while part of a street gang. He later continued in prison, for it was easier to find and buy drugs. During his third term, he decided to quit, but only managed to quit smoking, though he was very proud even of this achievement. While using heroin, Vasya become an expert in a street drug sales. So much so that he can immediately recognize an addict on the street, whether he is a dealer or looking for one, or comes home intoxicated. Vasya explained and showed it to me on the streets of Luga when we were doing the groceries for the rehab.

Since his childhood, Vasya associated himself with the Orthodox Church. He occasionally attended the services, even in prison. There was also a small Pentecostal group in prison, which Vasya disliked and mocked,

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7 Vasya was probably referring to cultural, rather than ethnical features of the local girls, for the Komi population of Ukhta makes only around 8% (Komistat 2010, online source). I thank Art Leete for pointing this out to me.
mostly because of their heresy from the Orthodox viewpoint, but also because of their ecstatic prayers. Whenever he mentioned them to me for some reason, he called them poltinniki (half a rouble—50 kopecks. In Russian, Pentecost is called pyatidesyatnitsa, which is a literal translation of "the fiftieth day" from Greek).

In rehab, Vasya originally rejected the idea of becoming a Baptist. Vasya had never been a devoted believer or regular church-goer, but the Orthodox identity had played an important role in his life before. The Baptist close focus on the Bible eventually convinced Vasya.

The first question Vasya had to deal with in rehab was: "Am I an addict?" At first, Vasya could not admit the seriousness of his problem: "When I came to the rehab I didn't think I was an addict. How's that? I quit smoking already in prison. Yet I was shown quickly that I actually was an addict."

Vasya shared a common attitude towards other brothers. A newcomer often claims that he is not as deep in trouble as the others. The typical arguments are: "I'm not an addict, I'm just an alcoholic," "I'm not like the others, I still have my job," or "I'm not a bum, I have my home and family."

After his repentance, getting used to the rehab, and making it to Adaptation, Vasya was sent to do some manual work for the first time. He was ordered to replace a fluorescent lamp, which at first was not an easy task for him. He had to figure out how to open the cover, how to remove the lamp without breaking it, and how to place a new one in the end: "I was struggling a lot with this lamp. I tried this, tried that, and finally I made it. All by myself! I had never done anything before with my own hands, this was the first time." Vasya marked this event as the start of his new pious and moral life.
Vasya passed his program in the rehab next to the Finnish border, some 30 km from Vyborg. That rehab was the last one I stayed in. After his program, he served there as a minister for some time and then was sent to Luga, where he was first an elder of Rehabilitation and then became a minister of the whole rehab. He had already been there for almost a year when I arrived. Vasya was the first one who met me at my first rehab. He was only warned about my visit several minutes before meeting and admitting me for a whole month. His elder minister told him when I called for instructions facing the locked door of the rehab.

Such late warning is a common policy in the rehabs for both rehabilitants and ministers. Nobody is commonly warned about any event or change in advance. Sometimes, a group of 5 to 10 ministers travel to a particular rehab for a guest visit, and they call a minister of that rehab from the car on their way there.

Andrey, a Rehabilitation elder from another rehab, once complained: "It is always like this here. They may drag you out, saying: 'Get ready, let's go,' without saying where and what to take with you." The reasons for this policy are not explicitly discussed. It was only stated, for instance, by Vasya himself: "Well, you do understand what kind of people we have here."

After admitting me, Vasya called me to a face-to-face conversation later that day. He asked me about my research, family, and if I had any concerns. He also told me that I was allowed to call my family from his room, but I had to keep it in secret from other brothers, for they may stumble (pretknut'sya)⁸. Vasya was generally sympathetic to me, but nevertheless strict, and rebuked me for anything he assumed wrong.

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⁸ "To stumble" corresponds to a biblical reference from, for instance, Romans 14:21: "it is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble."
Vasya was twenty-three at the time I met him. His face looked accordingly to his age, but he was well fit, rather big, and about my height of 182 cm. He always had his hair cut short, sometimes even almost bald. Despite his prison terms, he did not have any tattoos. He did not possess many clothes. Most of the ones he had were from donations to the rehab, and since he rarely performed any manual work himself, mostly supervised and coordinated others, his clothes were always clean and tidy.

His voice was soft and had light tones of an accent. His manner of speaking was influenced by his prison past, the region where he grew up, and his constant study of the Bible. Thus, he chose his words accurately, using many synonyms when trying to explain something, and he often spoke in a mentoring manner. I never heard him raise his voice emotionally.

Despite his very young age, especially compared to most of the brothers, he had charisma and an unquestionable authority. Although he was a minister, not merely a supervisor, his authority was mostly associated with discipline, and much less with spiritual leadership. Yet, his authority and strong personality was acknowledged even by those who disliked him. Whenever he tried to convince or rebuke someone, even when he punished someone, he never raised his voice or lost his temper, but always tried insisting on his point with biblical references and from the position of power.

Most of the brothers in the program considered Vasya to be too strict and authoritarian. Many of them blamed Vasya for the harsh regime and bad conditions, suspecting that he intentionally reduces their portions and turns off the heating. Even his elders acknowledged that Vasya could be too harsh sometimes. His elder minister once told me:

After we returned from vacation, Vasya became incredibly harsh (stal lyutovat’), as I was told. Then he told me: "You know, after this vacation I reflected a lot and prayed. Now I will strive even harder." That's the way he strives harder!
Vasya never expelled anyone during my stay, but he threatened several brothers, and some of them left on their own accord. A homeless orphan, Petya, was warned for stealing food from the kitchen and fifty-four year old [Sergey] Ivanych was reprimanded for smoking when sent outside to help Adaptation. Once, the whole Rehabilitation was left without sweets for three days for failing to switch off the light in the toilet several times. The rehab was always short of money, and electricity was a serious expense.

The idea of leaving Rehabilitation without sweets was borrowed from the juvenile prison, as Tolya, the most experienced brother in prison life, explained. Tolya himself was locked up four times by that time (now it is five already), which totaled about ten of his then-thirty years of age. Tolya said: "This [idea of cutting off the sweets] comes from the juvenile [prison] (s maloletki). He probably was an elder (starshak) there."

What amazed me the most in Vasya was that despite his young age and colorful past, he was always calm and collected. This contrasted with his young face, but was enforced by his soft voice and paternalistic manner of speaking. He was always confident and relaxed when he talked with a rehabilitant, but shy with his elders, especially those most respected. He graduated from high school in juvenile prison and was not a very fluent speaker and preacher, but nevertheless, he led big gatherings with sermons and prayers when needed.

Vasya always had an opinion on biblical interpretation and his reading is a unique example of lay hermeneutics, discussed in chapter 8. He often freely rephrased and applied particular verses to a certain situation. For instance, he arbitrarily used the idea of "do not uncover the nakedness" (Leviticus 18), arguing that sunbathing topless is an abomination.

The whole discussion started when one brother complained that he could barely handle his lust when seeing short-skirted young women on his way to
and from work. Vasya discussed the "shamelessness" of contemporary women in their appearance, yet mentioned that his own lust became much easier to handle after his repentance.

Vasya sometimes joked or discussed various things, especially when no rehabilitants were around. Yet, in the presence of anyone in the program, Vasya remained serious and rebuked others: "This is a rehabilitation center. The people are here to obtain salvation from God. And all these empty talks, about internet or cars, they are unfavorable (nepolezny)." When Max and I were teasing each other, Vasya reprimanded: "Express your love to each other in some other place, not in sight of rehabilitants."

Vasya was sympathetic to me, as I mentioned before. He also tried to convert me, but mostly in a gentle way. He never called me a brother, like most of the other ministers and rehabilitants did, rather calling me a friend. Vasya was interested in my life style and choices, and related some moral and biblical arguments in attempt to convince me: "Would you like your kids to be Christians? To be honest, decent people? I don't know, I don't have children myself, but I guess you want the best for your kids."

In the fall of 2014, Vasya briefly visited his mother in Ukhta, then he was brought to the Church in St. Petersburg to help with various ministries. He is nowadays an active member of the Church, and I have met him every time I have attended a service. Vasya is always glad to see me and constantly invites me with my family to the Church. When I cannot make it, he always half-jokingly rebukes me and makes me promise that next time I will come.

**Ethnographic portrait of Andrey, an elder**

The elder of Rehabilitation in my last rehab, Andrey, has not contributed much to my understanding of Christian Rehabilitation. However, he articulated many notions, ideas, and concepts that others either took for
granted or even failed to understand. Andrey's biography is remarkable, though typical: long prison terms, drug addiction, and a new life after repentance. Yet, his formulations and speculations on Russian Baptist dogmatics and Christian life are the brightest example of *lay hermeneutics*.

Andrey was appointed an elder while progressing to Adaptation. He, thus, basically never moved down from the Rehabilitation room on the second floor of the rehab. In the last weeks of his two-month Rehabilitation he was frequently asked to lead the gatherings, which was when he figured out that he was going to be the next elder. His predecessor was made an elder of Adaptation and, later, of the whole rehab, where he later stayed as an assistant minister.

Andrey was born and grew up in the town of Rybinsk in the Central Russia, 670 km Southeast from St. Petersburg. He had a full family, with both parents and a sister. He started drinking and using drugs early and was sentenced to maximum security prison for his first term. As well as a significant part of the prison population in contemporary Russia, Andrey did time under the 228th article of the Russian Criminal Code: "Illegal buy, storage, transporting, manufacturing, reprocessing of narcotic substances..."

Andrey served four terms altogether. He used drugs both in prison and out. It is commonly easier to get drugs in prison, as Andrey and many other experienced brothers explained to me. Andrey, for instance, described one of the ways to smuggle drugs inside. After all money transfers are made (through various complex channels), at the designated time someone familiar with the prison territory, often a former convict of that particular prison, throws a package over the fence so that he knows where it is going to land. The sites where the packages are usually thrown to are the most isolated and least overseen—behind the kitchen or next to the warehouses.
Between serving his prison terms, Andrey became a skilled construction worker. He could easily perform a very big number of tasks. He was often made a leader of the construction team and earned very good money. However, he always spent most of it on drugs, and after completing work on a project, he only brought a modest sum of money home, and even that sum disappeared quickly. He later complained that he could not even buy new clothes, and was always wearing something old and worn-out, despite earning much more than his peers and family.

He was respectable in prison, though he never belonged to the thieves (vory)—a higher rank in prison. The thieves are not just anyone convicted for theft. It is a complex phenomenon, a life-style and complicated career with limitations and a moral code so severe (for instance, one must not have a family and must never work in his life) that most inmates do not even attempt to become one.

A significant part of Andrey's adult life was spent in prisons, hence most of his reflections and examples were from there. In rehab, he was not proud of this experience, though not of it ashamed either. He perceived it as an undeniable fact of his life, and in his new Christian life he strived for change. A past in prison always revealed itself, both explicitly and implicitly. For instance, in such slips of the tongue, as: "I will have to work on myself, even after my release...Oh, darn! 'Release!' These words!"

Andrey did not believe in God in his youth, though he traditionally considered himself an Orthodox. Every time he was approached by evangelists, especially in prison, he mocked them. In rehab, he recalled:

Non-believers often react inadequately when someone preaches the Gospel to them. I used to respond: "Get lost, you alien! (inooplanetyanin)", for I considered them insane. Now I realize what it means when the Bible says that "We are fools for the sake of Christ." (1 Corinthians 4:10—I. M.)
Andrey was almost converted in the Pentecostal group inside the prison, where he served his fourth term. However, he later joined the Baptist group, when they came to his prison, and there he finally repented: "I had never sought God, but then I found him, praise God!"

After repentance he abstained from drugs and any other activities he considered sinful, but after his release Andrey relapsed again. He started dating a woman, found a job, but with the money, his old habits came back. He soon found himself an addict again, his girlfriend broke up with him, and finally Andrey admitted he needed help.

Andrey's parents disliked the idea of going to the Baptist rehab: "My parents kept telling me: 'What do you need this all for? You can do it yourself, no need to go anywhere. It's some sort of a sect,' that's how they paved me a wide road to hell." Yet, through the local church, he found a coordinator and was soon directed to the rehab far away from his home, next to the Finnish border. I met him there in November 2014, in the middle of his eight-month program.

Because of his prior repentance in the Baptist church and long experience of locked-up living, Andrey easily adopted to rehab life. He eagerly studied the Bible, never complained about the living conditions, and was willing to supervise Rehabilitation when Armen, the minister, appointed him. At the time of his program, Andrey was thirty-four, had four prison terms and almost twenty years of injected substance abuse. He mostly used heroin, but also methamphetamine in the form of pervitin (street name: vint —"screw"), drank alcohol, and smoked.

Despite his long history of addiction, Andrey looked good: well fit and looked slightly younger than his age. He worked out in prison, but he lost considerable weight while in rehab due to the poor meals and lack of physical activity. His hair was cut short, with a small fringe. His body was
covered with multiple tattoos, both decorative and with prison symbolism. Two of them, finger seal-rings symbolizing the term and rank of prison, he removed during his last term with a piece of pumice, for they were initially made to show off his prison experience.

Andrey was almost always calm and in a good mood, but could be annoyed with the misbehavior of others. However, he rarely raised his voice, mostly trying to convince or shame a brother. He was always talkative and even often talked about his drug abuse in a manner that was prohibited in the rehab. Most of his stories, naturally, were about his prison life, but sometimes he also mentioned his work, family, or friends, though almost every time there were drugs involved.

Andrey's voice was low and he had a slight regional accent. He used the vocabulary that he was used to in prison, yet he abstained from swearing and offensive words. Although there were only two people with prison experience during my stay in that rehab—him and Oleg (one more brother, Sergey, IDU, had been briefly put in jail)—everyone else, even me, tended to call many things by their prison names: shkonka or shkonar' (bed), dal'nyak (toilet), and so on.

Despite his eldership, Andrey behaved more egalitarian than Max and especially more than Vasya. Even when he gave orders or rebuked someone, he always referred to the rules and emphasized that he is equal to anybody else, it is just his ministry and duty to supervise others.

Once, during reading time, twenty-nine year old IDU Matvey fell asleep, as often happens. Andrey was outside of the room and when he entered, Oleg, a thirty-five year old alcoholic with three prison terms, and I called Matvey by name to wake him up. Oleg also added: "Are you gonna study the seminar?" to make it sound credible. Andrey, however, immediately
understood what was going on, and got angry: "[It's] like in prison! Why are you making me a guard? We're here before God, not before people."

Among the three elders I describe here, Andrey tried the least to convert me. Firstly, he was instructed by Armen, the minister, "to remind, advise everybody about repentance, but an individual should decide by himself." Secondly, Andrey's egalitarianism allowed him to respect others' opinions, even when he expressed his views. There were no signs of Andrey's support of the Calvinist notion of salvation for the elect. Most probably, Andrey believed in free will, and in the sufficiency of Bible study and testimonial examples. He called them "a fifth Gospel," meaning that radical changes in a sinner's life are very powerful.

Although he never pushed me or anybody else to repent, Andrey freely speculated about the foolishness and delusion of non-believers, either forgetting that I am one, or thinking I was on my way to conversion. As is often the case with many believers, especially with former addicts or convicts using their own examples, Andrey associated disbelief with a life full of vice: "For we were never ashamed of boozing, smoking, swearing. It was pretty normal for us. So now we don't have to be ashamed of being Christians, of not swearing."

The most remarkable quality of Andrey for my research is his unique formulations and interpretations of the scriptural text. Like Vasya, and unlike Max, when he did not know the prevalent or prescribed interpretation of a particular piece, he often tried to come up with his own conclusions. When the piece was too hard, he did not hesitate to consult the complementary literature (as usual, mostly MacArthur's study Bible), but when it looked feasible, he attempted to unpack the meaning by himself.

Take, for instance, the story of Jesus cursing a fig tree, Mark 11:12-14:

On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he
would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it.

When Andrey was explaining this excerpt, using the common idea of Jesus expecting the fruit of men's work and life, he was asked by inquiring Sergey: "But wait, it is written: 'it was not the season for figs.'" Andrey immediately found a solution: "It was not the season for gathering figs, but he didn't find any, even green fruits. So here we are: it's not the time to gather, but our fruits should ripen." Noteworthy enough, it was the Synodal translation that helped Andrey. In Mark 11:13, the Synodal translation contains the word "gathering" in square brackets, which means that it was a disputable addition, probably by a translator. In most other translations the word "gathering" is not present.

Ephesians 4:29 ("Let no evil talk come out of your mouths...") is most frequently interpreted by Russian Baptists in the contemporary Russian context, both linguistic and sociocultural. Andrey is no exception here: "Any evil talk (here as in the Synodal Bible: gnileoe slovo—literally: rotten word, I. M.) is not necessarily swearing (mat). It's these discussions, say, on wine, drugs, crimes."

Andrey's position on Orthodox beliefs was straightforward, echoing the common Baptist perception, and stressing the irrationality of Orthodoxy. Besides icons, liturgy, and clergy—most spread focus for Evangelical critique—Andrey blamed the laymen for worshiping the artifacts, namely the notorious Belt of the Virgin Mary, during the gathering:

Colossians 2:20-22: If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch"? All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings.

Andrey: There should be no mystics in the life of a Christian. We stand in wholeness of the word of Christ. There are some miracles going on out there, some icons are crying. Maybe it is all true in some way, but it doesn't have
any influence on my salvation. My salvation is influenced by my obedience to God. No slippers will earn us salvation. *(Tapochki ne dadut nam spaseniiya)*

Andrey's views on salvation mostly followed the Russian Baptist line, but in small details, he had his unique perception of the mechanism of repentance. Most commonly, repentance is regarded as a radical break with the past, a highly emotional moment of total surrender of one's life to Christ. One should not necessarily repent in the presence of others, but if it is occurs in solitude, it is expected that one should also testify *(zasvidetel'stvovat'*) in public—in Church or at a rehab gathering. Andrey, however, did not share the idea of instant repentance in every case:

Repentance can occur much earlier than you yourself realize or make such decision at all. [It occurred] when God allowed me to comprehend.

Well, sometimes you don't notice when it happens. I certainly had had it earlier [than in the prison Church, where it formally occurred]. Sometimes it goes simultaneously. But sometimes it is a process, a long-lasting one.

Influenced by Andrey, the brothers started reflecting on their own possible repentances. Up to that moment, nobody else in Rehabilitation was born-again, though everyone but me, claimed that they believed in God, prayed, and agreed on dogmatics in general. Armen, the minister, had instructed Andrey not to push people, for only sincere free-will repentance counts. Matvey, for instance, tried to identify his own repentance in the past: "Apparently, I already had my repentance." "Apparently?" Sergey sarcastically asked. "Well, yes. I confessed all my sins, lived through them. I now only have to repent in the Church."

Oleg once tried to further develop Andrey's notion of unconscious repentance: "Well, deep in their hearts everyone believe in something. For the repentance it is enough to simply say two words: 'Lord, forgive [me]!'" Andrey, however, rejected such simplicity: "First of all, repentance should bear certain consequences."
These consequences, aside from striving for piety and God's will, still reveal a bygone sinful past, claimed Andrey. Since "flesh (plot') will never repent," there are going to be sins anyway. Even the Epistle writers had realized that, argued Andrey: "Every Epistle is addressed to the believers in the first place. But believers still have this bygone nature inside of them."

Andrey once told a story, illustrating the bygone nature of a repentant believer:

One day, I was going through the [prison] camp and found a thrown-over package (zabros). Although I was repentant already, I could not help checking inside. When I opened it, I found out that it's fake, filled with flour. Someone was tricked, apparently. I decided to check on my friend, also repentant, so I brought it to him. I came inside the barracks and found him. "Here," I said. "Look what I found." I knew for a fact that he repented and that he also quit drugs. But when an addict sees it, his first reaction is obvious. What do you think he said? "Got a rig?" (baian—a syringe, I. M.)

In the neophytes, this bygone nature often reveals itself as zeal: "There is such thing in brothers, who's just repented half a year ago: I'm gonna save everyone, I can do everything, and I'm gonna cast the mountains! (gory svernu)"

The best way to avoid such zeal is to study the Bible more. Andrey once explained why studying the scriptural verses by heart is required on Rehabilitation, using the example of the Temptations of Christ (Luke 4:1-13): "Notice, how Jesus responds all the time: 'It is written.' Well, that's what is written for us: 'Keep awake!' (For instance, Mark 13:37—I. M.) That's why we learn the verses, to be prepared."

All these interpretations, either following the mainstream Russian Baptist hermeneutics or deviating from them, are the brightest example of the specific and unique biblical interpretation I call lay hermeneutics. These hermeneutics are not merely constructed with a particular branch of Protestant dogmatics, the Russian Synodal Bible, 150 years of historical and sociocultural context of the Russian Baptists, and Russian language, but also
with particular application of the biblical narrative to the rehabilitation of addicted people and particular backgrounds of the interpreters, including prison culture, street life, and features of their home regions. Andrey's hermeneutics were not distinct or unique, in terms of his own specific thoughts and ideas. They were individual and typical at the same time, and that is what makes them a uniquely remarkable example of lay hermeneutics in Good Samaritan.

As of July 2015, Andrey is a minister for the whole rehab. He briefly visited his family at home and returned back to serve God. He got baptized by the local pastor, and now he remains a minister in the same rehab until "God shows me further."

**Conclusion**

This chapter is an introduction to the ethnographic settings and the people I worked with during my fieldwork. These settings and the people form the basis for my further analysis of biblical conversion and Christian rehabilitation. A typical day represents a weekday in the strictest and biggest rehab, which allows me to accumulate and summarize moral and physical challenges that the brothers face in the rehabs.

The portraits of Max, Vasya, and Andrey represent the typical stories of successful rehabilitants. All three had various experience in their bygone lives, but at the time of my fieldwork they all grew stronger in faith, which in terms of Good Samaritan means fruitfully studying, learning, and adopting Scripture not merely as authority for faith and practice, but also as the basis for the narrative of conversion, language of communication, thought, and reasoning.
Part two

5. "Beware of 228:" Substance abuse in today's Russia

Introduction

Even though this thesis is focused on the process of conversion to Christianity in the sociocultural context of the Russian Baptist Church, the ministry it is focused on is working with addicted people, and this chapter is an introduction to the problem of substance use dependence in Russia, and for this purpose I regard drug and alcoholic addicts as cultural groups.

When addicted people arrive to rehab centers, be it Good Samaritan or any other rehabilitation program, they commonly realize that the problem they are dealing with is not medical, or not strictly medical. Even the newcomers, most of whom have already tried different kinds of addiction treatment, understand that the rehab is not the place to receive medical aid.

The addicts compare rehabs to state hospitals, where they mostly receive droppers (kapel'nitsy) and pills. These hospitals are the first place where they are sent by parents, spouses, or local narcologists. Many addicts, especially injecting drug users (IDU), are happy to spend some time in such a hospital, because after droppers they feel better, get some rest from their constant dope hunt, and, most importantly, significantly lower their dose, which saves them some time, health, and money.

Hence, even the addicts themselves commonly realize that they need much more than just medical treatment. For instance, Matvey, an IDU I met in one of the rehabs, disclosed his initial motivation to go to the rehab: "When I was heading here, I thought: 'I don't care (pofig) what's in there. The main thing is to fix (popravit') my head. Any firmware (lyubuju proshivku)."
Besides clear understanding that addiction is a psychological problem, no less than medical, and addicts need radical re-programming of firmware, there is commonly a clear understanding that addiction is a moral problem. Every addict faces both implicit and explicit disapproval of his/her habit, manifested in fear, neglect, and contempt, as well as formally in divorces, dismissals, and often incarceration. There is a strong explicit opinion, shared by most of the people addicts face outside of their own circles, that drug addiction is the lowest state of human nature. Eventually, most of the addicts also admit that.

This chapter represents an account on the cultural, political, and socio-economical discourse of the substance use addiction in contemporary Russia. I thus provide the analysis of Christian rehabilitation in Good Samaritan with a context, showing the kind of people that enter the program, and the sort of problems they face on a daily basis. Good Samaritan attempts to change the addicts' way of living, thought, and reasoning. Compared to the rest of this thesis, dealing with change and new life, this chapter discusses what it is to be changed.

**Anthropological study of addiction and addicts**

Addiction is a problematic concept, involving both physiological and sociocultural implications (Keane 2002). Moreover, it is often perceived as a medical, moral, legal, or even economic or political problem (Hansen 2013), and dependent people are claimed to be fully responsible and immoral offenders. The focus on cultural groups of addicts contributes to the understanding of the everyday problems they face and, partly, to the reasons of their harmful behavior, both toward themselves and to the society.
The first notable attempt to approach drug addicts as cultural groups was made by Michael H. Agar (1973), who showed possible directions to deal with significant cultural elements of narcotic addiction, given that addicts experience a transformation of everyday reality during the process of recovery. Agar pointed out specific moral, linguistic, and economic reasoning that addicts use to construct a system of interrelations and group interaction in order to maintain their drug use.

Philippe Bourgois revisits addiction from the standpoint of economic and cultural implications of people involved in selling and using drugs (Bourgois 1996). In yet another study, Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg stress the role of reciprocity and of moral economy in homeless drug users. They form communities of addicted bodies to be able to survive and maintain their drug-consuming habit (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009).

Geoffrey Skoll's ethnographic description of a residential drug treatment facility (1992) unfolds the ideologically consistent repressive institution for court-appointed rehabilitation. Skoll emphasizes the role of psychoanalytic counseling in the facility, and entangles it with the correctional ideology, manifested in the highly structured and hierarchical regime. For instance, drinking coffee and smoking, both allowed, are significant elements to building a hierarchy of the inhabitants and constructing the narrative of the therapeutic talk.

In her book on a residential facility in New Mexico, Angela Garcia (2010) stresses not rehab itself, but most of all the historical and geographical contexts of addicted people. Garcia links the landscapes of Northern New Mexico and its history of colonization and dispossession with the overwhelming addiction that struck the region. New Mexico now has the highest rates of heroin addiction in the USA. Addiction, Garcia argues, as long as any manifestation of it, like overdose, suicide, or crimes, is at the
same time very much personal and common, even communal. Heroin addiction becomes a part of life, each one's personal story, and everyday reality.

Eugene Raikhel elaborates on the specific attitude towards alcoholism in Russian state medicine (2010). Narcology, a sub-specialty of psychiatry in Russia, regards alcoholic addiction as a mental disorder and, thus, treats it with behavioral mechanisms based on fear. One of the most widespread treatments is an injection of the anti-alcohol drug disulfiram to some of the patients, along with the injection placebos into those most likely to relapse. Raikhel regards such behavioral therapy of threatening with harsh consequences of disulfiram as the Soviet legacy of control over mind and behavior.

Jarett Zigon's study of a church-run Orthodox rehabilitation center near St. Petersburg, Russia (2011) emphasizes morality as the main mechanism of rehabilitation for drug addicts. The addicts are taught to live a normal life, at least for the time of their rehabilitation. This narrative of normality is constructed on the basis of the moral discourse of Orthodox dogmatics and neoliberal political context of contemporary Russia.

**Biochemistry and psychology of addiction**

Any sort of analysis of addictive behavior should take the biochemistry of addiction into account. There are three paramount points that shape a working narrative of substance abuse from the standpoint of the social sciences. Firstly, addiction is a disease. It is classified by the World Health Organization as "dependence syndrome" (WHO 2015, online source), and such classification is a good, non-judgmental starting point for studying dependent people without stigmatizing them.
Secondly, substance use dependence is a chronic, progressing, and incurable disease. This means that any dependent person remains as such until the end of his/her life. The adaptive changes in the addicted brain are irreversible. However, thirdly, there is always the possibility of remission, even up until the end of one's life.

There are two main aspects of addiction: chemical (or physical) dependence and psychological addiction (Volkow and Li 2005: 1429). Chemical dependence is caused by the impact of psychoactive substances (PAS) on the human body, mainly on the brain. Depending on the sort of PAS, the brain blocks the production of one kind of hormones and stimulates overproduction of others.

There are two main groups of PAS, if classified by their impact: stimulants and depressants. Stimulants, like cocaine or amphetamine, cause exaltation and euphoria, they mobilize physical and cognitive abilities, and allow for faster reactions. Depressants, including, for instance, heroin, alcohol, and nicotine, provide relaxation, but lead to indifference, slower reactions, and reduce irritation caused by external factors.

The brain reacts to hormonal imbalances according to its evolutionary developed mechanisms. The PAS are used for an insignificantly short period of human evolutionary history and have not caused any evolutionary changes. The brain reacts to such states as to naturally occurred, and lowers the threshold of perception by developing tolerance to drugs.

When an addict abstains from drug use for a long period of time, the brain again experiences a significant imbalance, which in the process of getting back to normal sometimes causes unbearable suffering, known as abstinence or withdrawal syndrome. This state is often called a hangover or dope sickness. In some cases, an addict can handle the abstinence, but sometimes medical aid is needed, either in life-threatening situations
(mostly abstinence from alcohol) or when pain is impossible to bear (for instance, heroin or methadone withdrawal, although the pain is mostly phantom sensation).

When the abstinence lasts for a considerable amount of time, PAS leaves the body of an addict naturally. The chemical dependence, thus, is overcome. However, as I claimed earlier, changes in the brain are irreversible. Even after substantial time, the brain suggests an easy solution to any kind of psychological problem: spending free time, dealing with joy, sadness, spleen, anger, fear, and other psychological problems. Any other solution than using PAS again would involve big efforts and strong will. And, moreover, such psychological problems are themselves caused by lack of respective substances, such as dopamine.

**Addiction treatment: Cure or rehabilitation?**

What should an addicted person do then? Is there a chance of living a full life, or to stay alive at all? Apparently, there is a chance of maintaining a life-long remission and live a full life with some limitations. These limitation include total abstinence, evading of visiting certain places, and dealing with certain people, associated with the habit.

Substance abuse is a medical and a socio-psychological problem at the same time, hence it cannot be cured, but an addict can be rehabilitated. An efficient rehabilitation is directed towards maintaining remission for the maximum possible time. Any efficient program of rehabilitation reflects on the twofold nature of addiction and combines detoxication with psychological aid.

In Russia, however, official or commercial narcology mostly deals with detoxication and further abstinence (Raikhel 2010). In big cities, where medical help is available, there are almost no problems to detoxicate. Some
additional psychological counseling may also be suggested to the patients, but detoxication is regarded as a sufficient cure for substance use dependence.

Non-commercial and religious programs are commonly much more oriented on the psychological aspect of addiction, and since, in Russia, obtaining a medical license is almost impossible for such organizations, they can only suggest prolonged isolation for detoxication. Emphasis is mostly put on psychological dependence.

In St. Petersburg and surrounding Leningradskaya oblast\(^9\), where most of the Good Samaritan's rehabs are situated, there are three types of non-governmental, non-commercial rehabilitation programs. The Twelve Step program (widely known as *Anonymous* groups) is based on surrender and acceptance of helplessness before addiction, and learning to live a life without drugs. Combined programs also use Twelve Step techniques along with clinical psychology or with religious component.

Religious ministries, including Good Samaritan, suggest a radical transformation of self with total change of values and getting new meaning of life. Secular views on the latter would admit a powerful psychological framework for dealing with and solving most psychological problems, by also putting an addict into the dense community of people sharing the same experience.

**Is alcohol a drug? Biochemistry vs cultural references**

Most rehabilitation programs, besides the narrowly specialized Twelve Step groups, do not distinguish between alcoholics and drug addicts. Yet, Russian legislature, history, culture, and public opinion regard narcotics and alcohol (and also nicotine) as substantially different phenomena.

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\(^9\) Leningrad used to be a part of this oblast', but in 1931 it became an autonomous administrative subject, which was confirmed for St. Petersburg in 1992.
Alcohol and nicotine are not exceptional amongst PAS causing dependence. They are both very harmful and addictive (Nutt et al. 2007). The mechanism of its impact to the brain is the same as any other depressant. However, the cultural context and legal regulations, based on this context, segregate alcohol, constructing thus a number of specific problems.

Drinking in various situations can be not only acceptable, but even a prescribed behavior. It can be a marker of masculinity ("A real man!"—nastoyaschij muzhik), an important event, an ice-breaker, a cure for stress, and much more. Drinking alcohol for a reliable cause is a perfectly normal behavior: "I am like anybody else. Everybody does that." Moreover, alcohol is consumed in forms and doses unthinkable for any other PAS—in liquid form and in hundreds of grams.

This cultural diversity makes the people, alcoholics, also different. They tend to admit their dependence and ask for help much later than, say, injecting users, whose practice immediately marks one as an addict (narkoman). This late acceptance often leads to a much tougher and less successful rehabilitation. Moreover, the overall availability of alcohol outside rehab often increases the chance of a quick relapse.

When compared, alcoholics frequently reject any similarity to drug users, claiming that they are not actually that bad. I often witnessed such an attitude in rehab, especially when some new brother introduced himself in the first days of the program: "Well, I'm not like most of you here, I'm just an alcoholic." The real drug addicts, in return, mocked alcoholics and their problems.
Stigmatization of addicts in Russia

Terms such as "addict" (narkoman) or "alcoholic" have explicit negative connotations in contemporary Russia and worldwide. It is bad to be an addict, not merely because drugs destroy the body of a user. In Russia, there is a widespread idea of the anti-socialness of addicts, meaning that a drug abuser is ready to commit any crime for the dose, forgetting any moral principles: "A junkie would kill for a dime (za desiatku)." Thus, an addict is associated with addiction itself, and any deviated behavior is assigned to an addict's voluntary behavior (cf. Volkow and Li 2005: 1430), not to the disease. There is commonly no mention of disease at all.

Thus stigmatization leads to serious ethical and social problems. Firstly, addicts are commonly neglected and ignored even by those entitled to provide them with care: doctors, policemen, or rescuers. The passersby have an even worse attitude towards such people, if they happen to be in trouble on the street: "He's a junkie/drunkard anyway. He deserves it. Why should I care to help him?" This commonly applies to any unusual or inadequate behavior in public, which often ends fatally for the people with heart attacks, strokes, or diabetes.

The stigmatization of drug and alcohol addicts, thus, contradicts the basic principles of humanism, implying that every person in trouble deserves help. The main reason for this stigmatization is the association of the addicted person with his/her addiction. Such a person is blamed and claimed fully responsible for every action he/she performs while intoxicated. Moreover, intoxication is an aggravating circumstance in criminal cases.

However, the chain of events leading to a committed crime is hardly ever taken into account. The following questions arise: Why does this particular person have such a long, addicted experience? Did he/she receive help? Was he/she able to receive such help? What are the options for rehabilitation
available in the region where this addict lives? These questions, when asked in time, can contribute not only to the investigation, but also to the prevention of crimes.

The association of an addicted person with his/her problem reveals a misunderstanding of the biochemical and psychological nature of substance dependence. Such a situation is caused by a lack of elementary knowledge on substance abuse and addiction, and state politics in Russia, which I discuss in more detail later. This leads to a view on addiction as a rational choice and immoral behavior, which significantly reduces chances of successful rehabilitation.

Therefore, stigmatization does not solve any problems, rather makes them worse. The common counter-argument to such perspective is thus: Who forced an addict to take the first shot? Or an alcoholic to drink the first drink? No doubt, this was a conscious act. My response would be: partly, yes. However, most of the drug addicts and alcoholics first start using before the legal age. There are lots of stories about the first shot or first drink at the age of 13 or 15, which is scary for many, but hardly surprising for anyone.

Most of the crimes, even those committed by minors, occur when an addict is already at an advanced stage, unable to control him/herself, and consequently, in a difficult financial situation. The important question to ask thus is: When a minor takes their first shot at the age of thirteen, fifteen, or even seventeen, who is legally responsible for that? And morally? How did this minor acquire the drug? How did this drug arrive to the city or country, where it became available for this minor?

The court and penal system are punishing offenders, claiming them fully responsible for the crime, but the police, school administration, or parents, failing to keep them from drugs 10 or 20 years earlier, do not share the
responsibility for the crime caused by substance abuse. (See also analysis in Volkow and Li 2005)

**Russian anti-narcotic policy**

State policy towards substances of abuse does not use a biochemically determined classification of PAS, but rather historically and culturally defined one. For instance, harm caused by legally available alcohol prevails over illegal marijuana on every biochemical and complex social variable. However, alcohol is freely sold, with certain limitations, and the possession of more than 6 grams of marijuana leads one to end up in prison (Decree 2012, online source).

With respect to substance control, the Russian state pursues the policy of limitations and prohibitions, significantly jeopardizing palliative and veterinary medicine. There are lots of well-known scandals concerning the criminalizing of veterinary doctors, misusing or miscalculating the drugs, most of which are not available in small clinics anyway (Antonova 2014, online source). Moreover, even in more or less well-off Moscow, there are numerous shocking reports of suicides committed by oncological patients, who could not bear their pain, trying to pass all bureaucratic obstacles in quest of prescribed opioids (Gordeeva 2015, online source).

The function of law enforcement towards drug-related crimes is shared between the police and a specific agency called the Federal Drug Control Service of Russia (also known as FSKN or Gosnarkokontrol'). The latter has a mandate for investigation and apprehension of suspects. Even though FSKN was established in 2003, with the task of focusing on big consignments of substances, in most regions, the police and FSKN perform the same functions and compete with each other (Knorre and Skugarevskii
2015, online source). The rumors and accusations towards FSKN frequently involve charges of corruption and even engaging in the sale of drugs.

Using such tactics, Russian authorities approach substance abuse as a rational choice, rather than a disease. In 2013, the Criminal Code article number 228 ("Illegal buy, storage, transporting, manufacturing, reprocessing of narcotic substances...", Criminal Code 2013) was revised in favor of longer prison sentences. The sentences given under this article commonly exceed those given for murder without aggravated circumstances.

There is a widespread stereotype that "a murderer takes only one life, while a drug dealer indirectly takes dozens and hundreds." Yet, most of these "dealers" are common users, trying to earn some extra money by reselling and mingling in order to save some more doses for themselves. Big dealers are mostly covered by law enforcement, and get arrested either during police raids, or when they start cheating their protection.

State narcology, besides focusing on detoxication as the major treatment, also stigmatizes addicts by registering them in local narcology centers (dispensery), which leads to certain circumstances and limitations in their work places, on the job market, obtaining permits and licenses, to say nothing about public shame. Thus, many addicts, especially the non-acceptant alcoholics I have mentioned earlier, resist the free services of the state clinics or resist any help at all, to avoid registration. Offenders, though, can be registered by a court rule.

The regulatory and prohibitory narcopoly (narkopolitika) also affects the media and, especially, online sources. Roskomnadzor (Federal Department for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media) holds a special register for websites banned within Russia. Among the propaganda of pedophilia, homosexuality, and extremism, there is also a ban on propaganda of substances of abuse.
The term *propaganda* is vague, hence even a neutral description or discussion on drugs may be, and often is, considered propaganda. For instance, articles on cannabis were blocked within Russia on both the Russian version of Wikipedia (Cannabis n. d., online source) and Lurkmore, the explicit encyclopedia of Internet memes (Hemp n. d., online source).

**Public service advertisements as a narrative of Russian narcopolicy**

*Social ads (social'naya reklama)* aimed against drug use appeal to moral and rational arguments. Most video ads or banner messages depict drug addicts as losers; bodily destruction, collapse of the family, loss of job and friends, and criminal sentences are emphasized. The targeted people are suggested to report on their friends and acquaintances, in order to *save their lives*, and to report on the known dealers with guaranteed anonymity (See analysis in Yakovleva 2014).

![Public service advertisement](image1.png)

Picture 17: Posters of the Federal Drug Control Service: "Using drugs you become alone," and "Take part in your friends' destiny! Call..." (Antiprop n. d., online source)

The addicted people I met during my fieldwork were commonly sarcastic about such a discourse, and they never took official state or institutional explanations of what they themselves experience on a daily basis seriously. Most of them had a long list of chronic, even sometimes terminal diseases,
had abandoned their families and children, lost friends, had job applications rejected, had criminal convictions and prison terms, and so on. Such advertisement aimed towards dependent people did not reach them.

A significant number of billboards and TV ads focus on potential future users, attempting to keep them off of drugs. The common arguments are the same, including rational choice and fear. The dangers of consuming are represented in a terrifying way. However, since such a fearful message is hardly supported by any evidence, besides some statistical statement, it seems unreliable when there are so many addicts who are still active, working, partying, and living with their families. Advertising such as this obviously lacks any rational argument and appears to be a huge exaggeration, especially in a situation of overall ignorance and no educational programs (besides medical training) concerning substance dependence.

![Image](image.png)

Picture 18: "Having fun?" (Antiprop n. d., online source) Anyone aware of drug addiction would notice veins in unnaturally good condition, although under such stage of injection abuse they are damaged and almost invisible.

**Everyday challenges of addicts in Russia**

There is a whole set of typical problems and challenges that Russian addicts, as in any other country, face every day. There are, however, two characteristic issues that particularly concern Russian substance abusers.
Both are directly connected to the anti-narcotic policy and criminal laws in Russia.

Firstly, the overall spread and availability of new online means of communication, combined with the tendency to secure drug sales due to the rise of sentences, led to new sale techniques, the most popular of which is packages (zakladki). A potential customer makes a call or sends a message to a number registered to some fake identity and orders a substance of some sort and quantity. A dealer sends the message back with credentials for the electronic payment to an anonymous account. After receiving a transfer, the dealer or hired accomplice hides a package with drugs somewhere in the neighborhood—inside the pillars, in bus stops, bushes, holes in the wall, common stairways in housing blocks, and so on. Then, the dealer sends the coordinates of the place, often with a picture, to the customer.

The ads with telephone numbers can be found all over the place but ordinary people do not notice them or do not understand their meaning. The ads are painted with patterns on the asphalt or walls, there are paper leaflets, telephone messages, and specific webpages and posts in the social media. The most spread terminology from these ads includes Mix (written in Latin or miksy in Russian) for synthetic cannabinoids, grecha (buckwheats), perets (pepper), or porokh (gunpowder) for heroin, miaso (meat) for methadone, soli [dlya vann] ([bath] salts) for synthetic opioids. The sums in thousands of roubles are often written reduced to roubles, for instance: "Grecha—3 roubles, miaso—4.5 roubles." Such messages sometimes confuse poor elderly people, constantly seeking cheap groceries. Big assortment is marked as "sports nutrition."

This way of selling drugs is considered more or less safe for both sides. A seller does not contact the user directly, uses an anonymous phone number and web service, and leaves the place before sending the
coordinates to the buyer. The buyer, in turn, cannot be caught via money transfer. Sometimes dealers deceive the customers, and hide nothing even after a transfer. That is why most of the addicts use already well-known dealers, or ask their friends for reliable contacts.

These packages lead to certain unseen problems, despite the idea of secure transactions. Direct sales construct a wide network of social connections: from big suppliers to the retailers, couriers, and occasional resellers, trying to earn or to get some extra dose. Nowadays, with the introduction of packages, a significant part of these connections go online, which leaves an ordinary user all alone with his/her addiction.

Clearly, the practice of buying and consuming together in small groups still exists, but the community of addicted bodies (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009) is now reduced to the minimal circle of consumers, taking the economic tools of earning and maintaining the habit off of them. Most importantly, they are losing the immediate availability of the using experience of their peers, including the street basics of pharmacology, sanitation, dosing, detoxication, and abstinence treatment. All this knowledge is an inherent part of the community of addicted bodies, and an addict inexperienced in street life learns it from the internet, and relies on rumors and intuition, which may lead to fatal circumstances.

Secondly, at a certain stage of substance dependence, an addict faces a significant downfall of their material and physical state, and strives for a fast and cheap dope (or alcoholics—for a cheap drink). The prohibitionist policy of Russian authorities is most explicitly represented in the example of opioids.

In the 80s and 90s, a poppy straw was used as cheap dope. In the late 90s-early 2000s, it was codeine, which was synthesized from various pills at home, resulting in the production of the infamous desomorphine, known
under the street name *Krokodil* (crocodile—the name is given for the frequent symptoms of abscess: skin scales or *bitten off* limbs due to necrosis and gangrene).

After the regulation on prescription-only sales of codeine in 2012, a new group of opioids appeared in the Russian drug market—bath salts, or simply salts (*soli*). Salts are synthetic opioids, masked as various chemicals, for instance, fertilizers or bath salts, which is where they got their name.

Underground chemical laboratories, mostly situated in China, compete with Russian prohibitions in a sort of *arms race*, trying to use some new component before it is banned in Russia, so there is a possibility of legal supply and sales for some time. The salts commonly have very strong effects and almost totally unpredictable cerebral consequences. Thus, the Russian anti-narcotic policy banning one sort of substances inevitably stimulates the spread of others, some of which are much more harmful and dangerous.

**Co-dependence in Russia**

Co-dependence is a very complex topic and it obviously deserves an independent ethnographic study. It is addressed in studies of Twelve Step programs (for instance, Raikhel 2009: 215-222), for this is where the notion originated. However, most religious programs in St. Petersburg also recognize such a concept, and Good Samaritan, for instance, even organizes groups for the co-dependent (mostly mothers and sometimes wives attend).

The Twelve Step narrative argues, that co-dependent people experience almost the same obsession and shift of behavior as their addicted partners. Moreover, their co-dependence also remains until the end of their lives. Religious programs may not accept such radicalism, but they generally
share the view of co-dependent behavior as making things worse for the addicted with hyper-care (*giperopeka*) and total paranoid control.

Russian co-dependence may be generally characterized with a lack of substantial education on substance use addiction, both for alcohol and drugs. The co-dependent, peers, and, eventually, decision makers mostly rely on stereotypes and intuition, rather than counter-intuitive scientific evidence and facts concerning substance abuse and dependence. The attempts of the co-dependent to *break* or convince their addicted relatives, using threats, blackmailing, physical force, or simply scandals, end up with even worse abuse or have no effect at all, which leads to even more arguments and scandals.

**Drugs in Russian prisons**

Another under-examined topic is the practice of drug use in prisons. Russian prison life is a very old, historically and culturally rich and deep phenomenon, with its languages (sign, bodily, tattoos, and semiotics), arts, hierarchies, moral economy, and so on (Oleinik 2001; Oleinik 2003; Piacentini 2004). Drug use in prison involves complex networks of social, financial, hierarchical, and technical interrelations between inmates, guards, and outside actants, delivering and transporting the substances to the inside.

The most paradoxical phenomenon is that earning a daily dose and getting the drugs is much easier in prison, and the penalties for possession are incomparably lower on the inside, as many of the rehabilitants with the respective experience told me. The biggest problem for the ethnographic study is few possibilities for participant observation and the common negative take against the babblers (*boltuny*), sharing too much information about the inside to the outside.
**Criminal article 228 as a cultural phenomenon**

According to various estimations, from twenty to thirty percent of Russian inmates serve their term under the Criminal Code article number 228 (see, for instance, FSIN 2014, online source). Such a huge number, besides being an evidence for the low effectiveness of anti-narcotic policy, is also inevitably reflected in the cultural discourse of drug addiction. Most users feel the constant threat of facing law enforcement and conviction, thus they constantly make ironic or concerned references to 228 (*dva-dva-vosem*').

These references go far beyond the addicted community and also serve as a popular *meme* and theme for merchandise: caps, t-shirts, posters, and so on. Occasional teenage smokers of marijuana often use this symbol to pretend living on the edge and being mature. Anti-narcotic slogans also use 228 to point out the destiny of every user of drugs. The famous Russian rap song summarizes this discourse: "Beware of *dva-dva-vosem*' if you powder your nose." (AK-47 2010, media source)

**Summary**

This chapter is an introduction to the problem of drug addiction in contemporary Russia, regarding addicted people as cultural groups. There is an ongoing tradition of such an approach to dependent people (Agar 1973; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009), which allows a better account of their social, legal, and moral problems to be given, and also a better understanding their role in the society to be provided. Ethnographic research of rehabilitation facilities focuses on the disciplinary implementations of the correctional ideology (Skoll 1992), local historical and cultural contexts (Garcia 2010; Raikhel 2010), and moral discourse put in the context of the current political system (Zigon 2011; Hansen 2013).
A brief outline of the biochemical basics of substance use dependence unfolds a twofold nature of addiction. Chemical addiction persists only while the substance is present in the body, and it is mostly manifested in the state of being *high* and in the torturous symptoms of withdrawal. Psychological addiction remains even when there is no substance left in the body, due to irreversible changes in the addicted brain, both creating numerous psychological problems and suggesting an *easy way* of solving them.

The successful treatment for any kind of chemical dependence\(^{10}\) should address both aspects of addiction. In reality, none of the non-governmental and non-commercial rehabilitation programs in St. Petersburg and Leningradskaya oblast' have a medical license, and hence they can only treat chemical addiction with a prolonged isolation and total abstinence. However, chemical addiction is overcome more or less easily, with or without medical help, and all these programs emphasize the psychological aspect, including my focus of study, Good Samaritan, where addiction is approached as a spiritual problem.

Such rehabilitation does not distinguish between alcoholics and other substance users. Twelve Step programs do separate them, but only for the sake of narrow specializations of the Anonymous groups. In Russian popular culture, history, and politics, however, alcoholism and drug addiction represent very different discourses. This also affects the users themselves, for the widespread practice of frequent consumption of alcohol on a big number of social reasons makes alcoholism much harder to accept.

Total misunderstanding due to lack of education on addiction leads to the stigmatization of addicts. Addicts are deemed fully responsible for both

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10 There is a widespread idea that non-chemical addiction also causes the same changes in the brain, and should be treated likewise. This is how, for instance, Twelve Step programs understand numerous obsessions of contemporary human beings, organizing groups for gamblers, sex-addicts, shoppers, and so on.
their obsessive consumption and their actions committed while intoxicated or in a state of withdrawal. This directly leads to the frequent refusal of help even by appointed helpers (doctors, police, and rescue services) and indirectly to the tragic incidents with anyone who may resemble an intoxicated person. Another moral and legal problem of this stigmatization is that most of addicts start using much earlier than their legal age, yet they are still blamed for the choice they made then.

The state anti-narcotic policy in Russia is fully based on stigmatization. Addiction is treated as rational choice and is thus regulated with prohibitions, limitations, and punishment. The sentences given for the crimes related to drugs grow longer. Any neutral discussion on drugs and drug use may be considered a propaganda and hence banned. State medicine also adds to this stigmatization, putting addicts in a special registry, leading to social shaming and serious limitations in their legal rights. PAS themselves are regarded with historical and cultural bias, giving legal status and segregating alcohol from other substances of abuse.

Public service announcements, especially TV ads and billboards, also regard addiction as rational choice, and thus emphasize the dangers of making the wrong choice and the total moral, bodily, and material failure of addicts. Such a message hardly reaches its target, for it lacks substantial evidence, proof, and usually contains some banal basics that addicts themselves know much better from their experience.

The everyday reality of drug addiction in Russia is a complex and culturally rich research problem. The two most evident problems, especially with Russian addicts, are the online shift of drug sales and the arms race of drug production and supply with the prohibitionist government. The former creates the feeling of safety for both, dealers and users. Yet, it breaks the multiplex network of drug distribution, sales, and consumption, leaving an
addict alone without the street wisdom of peers, which includes, for instance, the basics of dosing and first aid. The *arms race* is provoked by new prohibitions, regularly introduced by Russian legislature. They do not solve the problem, but rather misbalance the drug market, making the most dangerous and unpredictable drugs more available.

Co-dependence is another understudied topic, combining the psychological, social, and moral problems. All rehabilitation programs in St. Petersburg acknowledge the phenomenon, though see it differently in details. The co-dependents in Russia are mostly ignorant about addiction. Hence their hyper-care or total control actually makes the situation with their addicted relatives worse.

Russian prison culture is a rich yet obscure field of research. The complicated economical system in prisons includes drug trade as one of the most important elements, making even purchasing and consuming in prison easier than outside. The cultural influence of prisons also affects popular culture, with the most explicit example of the symbol of drug consumption in Russia: Criminal Code article number 228.

The major interrelated problems I selected in the chapter are: overall lack of education and ignorance about the biochemistry and psychology of addiction, consequent misunderstanding of addicted behavior as brought about by rational decision, and subsequent stigmatization and prohibitionist policy towards addicted people, which make the problem of high rates of addiction worse.

This chapter provides the rest of the thesis with political and sociocultural context. The stigmatization of addicts in contemporary Russia makes them some of the most despised, hated, feared, and neglected people. The addicts, in turn, are deeply affected by such an attitude, no matter if
they accept it or not. This affection is addressed in rehabs, by treating everyone as a human being in the company of equals.

At the start of the program in Good Samaritan, most addicts already realize that their dependence is not a solely medical and, maybe, legal problem, but also very much a psychological and even moral one. Even if they do not believe in the particular rehabilitation program, they still acknowledge that they need a radical moral transformation, change of thought and reasoning (Cf. Robbins 2004a), and Good Samaritan is focused on such transformation and such change.
6. "A prophet has no honor in the prophet’s own country":
Glocalization of Russian Evangelicalism

**Introduction**

This chapter is an introduction to the study of Russian Evangelicalism. Good Samaritan is the brightest example of a synthesis of universal widespread features of Evangelical Christianity and unique and specific Russian sociocultural, political, and linguistic contexts. The twofold Christian rehabilitation unfolds this synthesis and allows me to select the main comparative points of local and global in Russian Evangelicalism.

Christian conversion in a post-Soviet space and time is specific. Besides the rich and complex context of economic and political crises, health issues, crime, substance abuse, and so on, spiritual and political domination of the Russian Orthodoxy or, in some cases, Islam, significantly impacts the place and role of the Protestant communities, and especially affects conversion.

Conversion in the situation of spiritual monopoly of a Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) (and especially Islam) becomes a radical decision and a life-changing experience. A convert to the heretic Western sect faces misunderstanding, rejection, or even persecution. Evangelical born-again conversion thus becomes even more radical, dividing the life of a repentant sinner into before and after periods.

Another crucial feature of Russian Evangelicalism is its linguistic peculiarity. It is a complex process of Russification, or rather Russianization, of Evangelicalism with the Russian Synodal Bible and its specific reading and interpretation through the prism of contemporary sociocultural discourse. Russian Evangelicals, predominantly Russian-born, Russian-speaking members of the most spread ethnic groups, developed a

11 John 4:44.
12 This chapter is a revised and extended version of Mikeshin 2015, online source.
distinctive Christian community throughout a long history of isolation. This community is very much Russian in all senses—linguistic, cultural, and political. And, yet, it neatly represents global Evangelical Christianity.

Westernizing homogenization and indigenizing differentiation of Pentecostals and Charismatic Christians

This chapter addresses the paradox scrutinized by Joel Robbins (2004). Robbins marks two simultaneous processes in Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity (P/C) as Westernizing homogenization and indigenizing differentiation. I argue that Russian Evangelicalism's relation to the Russian culture is *global* in a similar way: "a relationship of both rejection and preservation." (Robbins 2004b: 137) Russian Baptist congregations, as well as P/C, are also to a great extent autonomous, egalitarian, and focused on evangelism.

Robbins problematizes a rapid growth of P/C and suggests to look for an explanation in the perfect combination of global and local features in planted and growing churches. P/C churches commonly adhere to the globally spread dogmatic ideas of unmediated charismatic experience and direct communication with God through the Holy Spirit. Such churches call their members for instant evangelism of their peers and kin, practice egalitarianism, and thus do not require any sufficient preparation, besides receiving the Holy Spirit, to spread the Word.

Despite the Western routes of P/C movement, such chain reactions of evangelism are very efficient, even within anti-American cultures, since the narrative of conversion easily adapts to the local sociocultural context. Local beliefs, political issues, cultural traditions, hardships and challenges, and social problems are addressed in a way of incorporating them into the
Gospel message of sin and a sinful life, Satan and evil forces, and God's will and the acts of the Holy Spirit.

There are remarkable differences between Westernizing homogenization and indigenizing differentiation of P/C Christianity, as presented by Robbins, and Russian Evangelicalism, constructing a distinct glocalized narrative. These differences go beyond denominational features, or even explicit displays of the Holy Spirit by P/C, and they rise from dogmatics.

Firstly, the emphasis on the direct interaction with God was spread through the activity of P/C missionaries. Initially, it took the form of planting and growing churches by the Western ministers, which can be also seen in Russia after 1991. However, Russian Evangelical groups, even Pentecostals (excluding emergent Charismatic movements, formed or arrived after 1991), originated from the spiritual endeavors of certain Russian intellectuals, most remarkably Ivan Voronaev (Pentecostal) and Ivan Prokhanov (Evangelical Christian). They brought Western teachings to Russia, interpreted and transformed them on the basis of the Russian Bible, and constructed the narrative of response to the Orthodox spiritual monopoly and Russian sociocultural context.

Naturally, Russian Pentecostals place a strong emphasis on glossolalia and prophecy (Panchenko 2013). Yet, Russian Evangelicalism tends to recognize direct communication with God mostly through Scripture and prayer. Rejecting the P/C notion of overwhelming and immediate spiritual experience as a starting point for evangelism (Robbins 2004b: 124-125), Russian Evangelicals stress the importance of Bible study and education in general, though throughout the history of persecution their educational ventures were restricted.

I illustrate the idea of glocal Russian Evangelicalism through the comparative analysis of its global and local features. I start with its
specificities and peculiarities, not merely represented in a particular take on Protestant dogmatics, but rather shaped by the historical, sociocultural, and linguistic context of late imperial, Soviet, and Post-Soviet Russia. Its global attributes are manifested in dogmatics, referring to the Martin Luther's five tenets of Protestant faith (five solae).

**Historical outline of Russian Evangelicalism**

Russian Evangelicalism is a recent field of anthropological interest, though it attracts some scrutiny as a specific and influential phenomenon, both culturally and historically. Yet, in the social and political life of contemporary Russia, Evangelical Christianity remains marginal and obscure, and suffers from a number of prejudices as an alien Western influence, and sometimes explicit hostility from Orthodox fundamentalists as heresy.

It is crucial to note that Russian (russkii) here corresponds to the linguistic community, rather than nationality or ethnicity, thus also embraces a significant part of Evangelicals in former Soviet republics and worldwide. Russian Baptism (russkii baptizm), for instance, is a concept used by both believers and researchers (for instance, Mitrokhin 1997).

The historiography of Russian Evangelicalism commonly starts from the mid-1860s, when Russian citizens started small Evangelical groups (Coleman 2005: 2-3; Nikolskaia 2009: 22-23; Sawatsky 1981: 11). There was a number of Protestants present in Russia since the early 18th century, but all congregations belonged to foreign Diasporas. Historians also acknowledge the significant role of Russian heretical sects (Molokane, Khlysty, Dykhobory, Skoptcy, and others), who rejected clergy, icons, and complicated liturgy of the ROC, thus preparing the ground for Evangelicalism as a response to the traditional Russian idea of God-seeking
(bogoiskatel'stvo) (Batalden 1993: 3-12). Eventually, large portions of these movements joined the newly emerged Protestant Churches.

_Shtunda_ or _shtundisty_ were traditionally considered to be the first Russian Evangelical movement. It was formed on the basis of thorough Bible study, influenced by German-speaking Protestants (German _Stunde_—an hour [for the Bible study]). After a mission by the British missionary Lord Radstock, promoted by a rich nobleman Vasily Pashkov, a new movement emerged, mostly in aristocratic circles. Firstly, these groups were called _pashkovtsy_ (after Pashkov), but later their activities led to the foundation of the Church of Evangelical Christians.

The most prominent preacher of the Evangelical faith was a missionary and presbyter Ivan Prokhanov, raised as _Molokanin_ (member of an Old Russian anti-clergy and Bible-focused movement) and later as Baptist, and even later he became one of the leaders of Evangelical Christians. First Seventh-Day Adventists and Pentecostals appeared somewhat later, in the 1880s and 1910s, respectively (Nikolskaia 2009: 23), and together with the Baptist groups they defined Evangelicalism in Russia up until the early 1990s.

The conversion of Russians to the Protestant faith was not welcomed by the authorities and ROC, and was formally prohibited. Facing persecution at first, Evangelicals yet enjoyed some religious freedom, starting with the liberalization act of 1905 until the reign of Stalin. After the 1917 revolution, the Protestants were even shortly considered allies of the young Soviet Republic, since their biblical views on equality and brotherhood had much in common with the communist utopia (Coleman 2005: 154-179), but this freedom ended abruptly.

Stalin is responsible for the repression of various groups of people, but hardly focused on Evangelicals specifically. There was a trend of
persecuting religion, as an imperialist or counter-revolutionist propaganda, and most likely Protestants, also representing foreign traditions, were treated as spies and revisionists. Moreover, the anti-militarism of Evangelicals, though not universally shared, forced them to reject a mandatory military service, which was often considered a serious criminal offense (Nikolskaia 2009: 86-87, 89-90, 103).

During World War II, Stalin's government significantly liberalized its policy towards religions, calling for patriotic feelings of believers and allying with the clergy and religious leaders. ROC was reestablished as Patriarchate, and in 1944, Baptist communities were allowed to register, though under the umbrella of the governing union.

The very idea of a governing body is hardly compatible with one of the distinctive principles of Baptism—autonomy of the local congregation. The main features of such autonomy are the right to elect a Pastor and control over the Church's own budget. Under Soviet legislature, these two functions were given to the Union, enacting a tension inside of the community.

The Union gave a chance to obtain an official status for many persecuted groups, and even some of the old-Russian sectarians joined, for instance, Molokane, whose teachings were close to Baptist dogmatics. In 1945, some Pentecostal groups also joined, but most of them remained unregistered and outlawed.

The possibility to register only one Evangelical union catalyzed the merging of dogmatically close Baptist Church and Church of Evangelical Christians under the later adopted name of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (ECB). The name and unification mostly remains nowadays, but soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union and liberalization of religion some of the Evangelical Christian congregations left the union and formed their own.
The dogmatic differences between the two groups mostly concerned their views on predestination. Baptists adhered to the Calvinist soteriology, proclaiming salvation for the elect by God's grace. Evangelical Christians were Arminians—followers of the 17-century Remonstrant movement and Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius. This doctrine allows salvation for all repentant, and the ability to reject or lose grace. Liturgically, these views led to a specific take on membership, manifested, for instance, in closed (distributed among baptized members of the Church) or universal (all believers) communion. Contemporary ECB combine strict rules on membership and conservative dogmatics with closed communion and Arminian soteriology.

The unification under a governing body, with bureaucratic and hierarchic structure, exposed another significant problem. The majority was ready to give up some freedom in return for being acknowledged and officially registered by the state. However, the union went further, and adjusted the liturgy and membership rules to the Soviet legislature.

In the Instructive Letter and Regulation (Polozhenie) of 1959, the All-Soviet Council of ECB prescribed the local congregations, for instance, prohibition of baptism before the age of thirty, church attendance of children, missionary activities, and so on. Tension grew, and eventually the Initiative Group formed. This group attempted to organize a special meeting of the Union to revisit the prohibitions, but did not succeed.

After several attempts of overthrowing the leaders of the Union and canceling the Regulation, the Initiative Group formed its own Union (The Council of Churches of ECB) and symbolically excommunicated the leaders of the registered union. The reformed community was never registered (they still refuse to do so nowadays) and faced immediate persecution. Reformed leaders and activists were often arrested, given long prison sentences, had
their children taken away, and had houses hosting church services destroyed (both private and Church owned).

The unregistered Baptists, in turn, established a vast network of underground activity: printed journals, distribution of the Bibles and Christian literature, mutual support, writing and mass signing of petitions to the State officials, public demonstrations, issued regular bulletins about locked-up brothers and sisters, and contacted foreign Christian foundations (See more on reformed Baptists in Sawatsky 1981).

The persecutions of unregistered groups were part of Khrushchev's Anti-Religious Campaign. While Stalin's government numerically executed, incarcerated, and exiled many more Evangelicals, Khrushchev's policy directly aimed at further marginalizing Christian movements. All religions were attacked in the press, literature, and other public domains, but most oppressions were directed toward Pentecostals, the unregistered pervert sect (izuverskaia sekta), and already mentioned reformed Baptists.

These two groups were outlawed and accused of hypnotizing their members, mistreating children, and of direct influence and support from the West. The believers were represented in the media as poorly educated (access to higher education was restricted for believers), delusional and miserable people, controlled by greedy and corrupted charismatic leaders. The sectarians were claimed as rejecting of scientific progress and the joys of life.

Persecutions of the unregistered Evangelicals remained until the mid-80s, when Perestroika and liberalization of the society led to religious uprising and, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, huge flows of neophytes and diverse religious movements came from abroad. Previously outlawed groups, most still refusing to register, started an intense evangelizing of the previously inaccessible areas, especially in the North (Vallikivi 2014).
The place of Evangelicals in contemporary Russia is ambiguous. Besides the emerging Charismatic movements, deserving of an independent study, Evangelicals are commonly marginalized in the press and in public opinion. Yet, they are very numerous. Most of their activities are focused on missions and evangelism in marginal regions and with marginalized people.

However, from a societal point of view, Evangelicals occupy an important niche of free social support for the miserable (Caldwell 2004; Koosa and Leete 2014). Evangelicals are particularly active in prisons, hospitals, orphanages, retirement homes, working with the inmates and recently released, homeless, drug and alcohol addicts, ill, poor, lonely, and abandoned. Despite the 150-year history, a significant number of Evangelicals are converts, mostly in the above-mentioned ministries, and thus particularly active and devoted.

The outline of Evangelical History in Russia exposes three main interrelated features: alienation, persecution, and isolation. Since the time of the first Shtundist groups, Russian Evangelicals were perceived as something alien, foreign to Russian culture and traditionally Orthodox people. After Orthodoxy as state ideology was rejected and substituted, the role of the Protestants remained yet marginal.

The persecutions of Evangelicals led to triple isolation: isolation from the Orthodox majority in religious sphere, isolation from the secular society as a religious group, and the Iron Curtain isolation from the outside world, precisely from the brothers [and sisters] in Christ abroad. Isolation of this kind lasted for more than 100 years, leading to the construction of specific dogmatic, liturgical, and everyday life narratives of Russian Evangelicals, yet influenced by the tenets of Protestant faith. The inevitable need for self-definition or self-distinction, under pressure of such isolationism, forced the construction of denominational and doctrinal frames.
Russian Evangelical interpretation of the tenets of Protestant faith

Another important peculiarity of Russian Evangelicalism is its biblical literalism. I regard Biblicism as one of the defining features of Evangelical Christians, even often self-defined as Bible-believing Christians. They claim that Scripture is inerrant, God-inspired, and the everlasting truth. It has supreme authority over any other piece of literature, teaching, or thought.

The common Evangelical doctrine represents a twofold combination of self deductible *sola scriptura* principle and other four Luther's *solae*. *Sola scriptura* claims the Bible to be the only authority for faith and practice. Biblical literalism, based on this *sola*, regards biblical text as inerrant and written by God himself using human hands. Commonly, Evangelicals acknowledge possible mistakes in the translations they use daily, but they are strongly committed to the idea of inerrant *original* text. I leave the discussions and examples concerning diversity and availability of *the originals* aside (see, for instance, Crapanzano 2000: 60, 67), pointing out the simple fact that Evangelicals do hold such beliefs.

*Sola Scriptura* is not the only tenet largely applied by Russian Evangelicals. The application of all of Luther's *five sola* in the dogmatics and everyday practice by Russian Baptists is remarkable. The other four *sola* are *sola fide*, implying salvation by faith alone and good works as a consequence and evidence of repentance; *sola gratia* (justification by Grace alone)—an apple of discord between Calvinists, claiming that God defines the elect to be saved by his sovereign Grace, and Arminians, claiming that everyone is free to accept, reject, or lose salvation; *soli Deo gloria*—a classical Protestant response to Catholicism, stating that God alone should be glorified, not saints or holy artifacts; and *solus Christus* or *solo Christo*, including actually two tenets: the sole headship of Christ over church and
believer's life and salvation through Christ alone, by accepting his atonement sacrifice.

These five solae formally define Protestant dogmatics, but in practice they define Evangelicalism. Some Protestant doctrines, the ones that could be hardly conventionally defined as Evangelical, adhere to various deviations from five solae: they either acknowledge justification by both, faith and good works, or tend to emphasize prima scriptura (Scripture first) over sola scriptura (Scripture alone). Some even have clergy as mediators between humans and God or practice infant baptism, contradicting thus Evangelical interpretation of solus Christus and sola fide, according to Evangelicals.

The Russian discourse of Sola Fide is constructed as the major objection to Orthodox soteriology, based on good works together with faith. Orthodox doctrine of good works does not only address pious living, but also observing biblical law. The Orthodox reading of this law implies belonging to the community of believers—the Church—without which salvation is impossible.

The interpretation of Sola Gratia in the Russian case mostly touches upon soteriology. Russian Baptists, predominantly Arminians, usually portray humans as weak and miserable sinners, who can only do things worse when trying to live a life on their own. Thus, the only way is to let God control one's life totally. In their testimonies, recent converts brightly illustrated what happens when one lives based on one's own wisdom and experience, using the examples from their bygone life: addictions, crimes, prison terms, abandoned families, terrible illnesses, and so on.

Soli Deo Gloria in the anti-Orthodox context means a rejection of worshiping patron saints, Virgin Mary, or icons. Russian Baptist lay hermeneutics also stress that worldly sinners worship fame, money, and
their own self. Repentance, in this case, is a sort of rejection of self, an acceptance of one's own helplessness and worthlessness, and a surrender to God and his will.

Lastly, *Solus Christus* also responds to the Orthodox doctrine of good works and patron saints, and especially to the existence of hierarchical apparatus of clergy. With this *sola*, Evangelicals reject any mediators between humans and God besides Christ. Evangelical pastors are merely most experienced *elder brothers*, "And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven." (Matthew 23:9)

**Specificities of Russian Baptist Biblicism**

The most specific features of the Russian Evangelical conversion come from the Russian Bible. The vast majority of Russian-speaking Christians, both in Russia and worldwide, use the same translation of the Bible—the Russian Synodal Bible. The Russian Orthodox Church also recommends this translation for home study, but uses the Old Church Slavonic version for the liturgy. Russian Synodal translation was done in the 19th century and the history of its creation was full of controversies and political context.

The Russian Bible Society was established in 1812, after emperor Alexander I had been convinced that the supply of Scriptures across Russia had not been fulfilling the need. Shortly after the Society started, a grand project of the modern translation was also approved by Alexander I. The first head of the society was Alexander Golitsyn, an aristocrat and high-ranking official. Golitsyn was impressed by the mission of British and Foreign Bible society and attempted to create an ecumenical trans-denominational society, focused on Bible distribution without any dogmatic or confessional influences. The translation started in 1816. In 1819, four
Gospels were published, with the full New Testament in 1821, and the Book of Psalms in 1822. (Tikhomirov 2006, online source)

In 1824, the modern Russian translation became highly controversial and largely disputed in clerical and political circles. There was a translation of Pentateuch ready for the print, but it was decided to expand the publication to eight books. However, after a political scandal, Golitsyn resigned and his position was taken by a clergyman—Serafim, Metropolitan of Novgorod and St. Petersburg. The idea of a translation to the modern Russian language was considered dangerous for the Orthodox liturgy (still held in Old Church Slavonic) and the eight-book publication was burned in a brick factory. The Society was closed in 1826 by Nikolay I. (Ibid.)

At the crowning ceremony of Alexander II, the Synod officials were convinced by Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, to resume the translation. In 1860, the Gospels were again published and the full New Testament—in 1862. There was a heated argument about the proper source of the Old Testament. Some parties argued against the Hebrew text, for it was claimed perverted against Christianity by Jews. Thus, the first editions of the Old Testament, namely Pentateuch of 1868, Historical books of 1869, Wisdom books of 1872, and the Prophets of 1875, were translated from both the Greek and Masoretic Hebrew versions. The full Bible was published in 1876. Greek additions were given in brackets, and the disputed and contradictory places were judged by the Church Slavonic text. (Ibid.)

This method of translation was highly criticized by some of the participants, and eventually, the 1882 version of the Bible had the Greek additions removed, though carelessly, even the rhetorical additions put in brackets were removed. Most significantly, this version of the Synodal Bible was published without non-canonical apocryphal books, also claimed
good and edifying by the Orthodox Church. (Ibid.) This 66-book version became widely acknowledged by Russian Protestants as canonical.

Russian Baptists, as a typical Evangelical Church, totally adhere to the sola scriptura principle. The Bible is taken as God-inspired and written by God himself, who used the hands of men. The authorship of the biblical books is undisputed, despite all scholarly debates. For instance, the whole Pentateuch is claimed to have been written by Moses, the epistles—by James, Peter, John, Jude, and Paul themselves, the Gospels—by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and so on. The Russian Synodal Translation is highly valued and praised by Russian Baptists. As I said before, they acknowledge some minor inaccuracies in it, arguing that the originals in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek are inerrant and never contradict each other.

However, the specificity of Russian Baptist literalist exegetics lies in the historical, dogmatic, and, especially, in hermeneutical context. The Russian Synodal Bible differs from most of the modern English translations used by Evangelicals. Firstly, the number of sources known in the middle of the 19th century was much lower than we now possess (though higher than used for the King James Bible). Secondly, the translations, for instance the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible—problematic for contemporary biblical scholars—were used in combination with the Greek Septuagint. Moreover, as I have said earlier, the whole text was impacted by the Old Church Slavonic version, mostly for ideological reasons.

The Synodal Translation is very much rhythmic and poetic, which makes it highly appreciated even by secular readers. This poeticism, especially the 19th century Russian lexis, despite all later adaptations, strongly influences an understanding of particular verses by contemporary readers. For instance, the first phrase of 1 Corinthians 6:12 is read: "Vsyo mne pozvolitel'no, no ne vsyo polezno," which literally means: "Everything is permeable to me, but
not everything is useful." The most problematic word here is "polezno," which a contemporary Russian speaker reads as "useful," rather than "beneficial," "helpful," or "good," as various English translations suggest. Another translation, The New Testament: Present-day Translation (2011) suggests a version closer to the Greek συμφέρει: "на пользу."

Sometimes, the Synodal translation does not cause confusion or misunderstanding, but creates new meanings. In the Russian Baptist narrative of conversion, the old sinful life before conversion is called vetkhaia zhizn', which literally means bygone or ancient life. An old-Russian adjective vetkhiy is used for the translation of "Old Testament"—"Vetkhiy Zavet." Thus, it does not merely mean an old life, but is also associated with the fulfillment of the Hebrew Law by Jesus, and also with contemporary connotations of the word vetkhiy, like "worn-out". In Good Samaritan, I also heard interesting transformations of vetkhiy, like "vetkhost" (bygone-ness): "Éto vse tvoya vetkhost' lezet!"—"This is your bygone nature still coming out!" (Max, an elder, rebuking a rehabilitant talking inappropriately).

Apart from biblical scholars and seminary graduates, most believers, even ministers and pastors, do not read other translations. Some of the recent converts, like addicts or convicts, only have access to one basic version of the Bible, and also interpret it in the context of their life experience and everyday situation. Most of the Baptists dedicate much time and effort to Bible study, learning the basics of exegetics and historical context, but these basics are commonly superficial, and such lay hermeneutics, rather than thorough seminary study, construct the everyday biblical narrative of Russian Evangelicalism.
Russian Baptists as Evangelical community

Baptists are the oldest Russian-speaking Evangelical community in Russia, if regarded beyond the formation of the Union of ECB and state registration. Throughout Russian history—since the late 19th century until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991—it would be fair to consider three main branches of Evangelicalism: Baptism (including its variations and the Church of Evangelical Christians), Pentecostalism, and Seventh-Day Adventism.

There are serious dogmatic differences between the three. As for the Baptists, they do not share neither the specific Pentecostal emphasis on the visible works of the Holy Spirit, mostly expressed in speaking in tongues and prophecies, nor the Adventist eschatology and emphasis on certain Old Testament laws, like primacy of Saturday and strict dietary rules.

The Russian Baptist message puts emphasis on Scripture and prayer as the predominant ways of communication between men and God. Men address God in prayers and God, in turn, responds in two major ways. He may arrange the situations or certain circumstances, sometimes even miraculously. Yet, for the most situations in human life, God already provided exhaustive instruction in Scripture.

Baptists do not expect hearing the voice of God or seeing him or his messengers. They learn to interpret God's will and reflect on the situation with Scripture, and thus learn to correctly interpret Scripture. Baptists reject the exalted worship of Pentecostals, and most of their Church services are conservative and decent (blagopristoinyie).

Russian Evangelical Christianity as a glocal phenomenon

This chapter is a focused review of Russian Evangelicalism, mostly observed by the Russian-speaking majority in politically central regions.
The analysis of homogenizations and differentiations of Evangelicalism in the context of religious diversity and pluralism in Ukraine (Naumescu 2007; Wanner 2007), a strong Muslim identity and religious monopoly in Central Asia (Pelkmans 2009), or social cost of conversion in Far North (Vallikivi 2009), to name just a few Post-Soviet regions, deserve an independent comparative study.

The globalization of Russian Evangelicalism has a glocalizing turning point: when common Protestant dogmatics adapt to the contemporary sociocultural challenges, historical and linguistic context in Russia. One can regard, for instance, the Russian Baptist Church as just one more Evangelical congregation, with precise conservative dogmatics and strict membership rules. But these formal criteria alone fail to produce any valuable ethnographic explanation of its specificities.

Russian Evangelicals share common tenets of Evangelicalism, roughly summarized in *five solae*. Particular churches also adhere to some particular doctrines, like the Baptists do to Arminian soteriology. What makes them specific and, most remarkably, glocal, is that the application of all these dogmatics and doctrines constructs a peculiar narrative of Russian Evangelicalism. This narrative is a response to the dominant Orthodox Christianity of good works, the worship of the Mother of God and saints, the hierarchy of clergy, and the complicated liturgy. This narrative is also a reflection on everyday challenges of contemporary Russia: drug and alcohol abuse, crime, prison culture, instability, pessimism about the future, and poor economic situation, to name just a few. This response was articulated under a constant pressure of isolationism and rejection of *Western sects* throughout the 150-year history of their presence in Russia. Lastly, all this narrative is framed by the linguistic context of the Russian Synodal Bible, quite poetic and beautiful, though very much specific and stand-alone.
Summary

This chapter elaborates on Joel Robbins' concept of Westernizing homogenization and indigenizing differentiation of P/C Christianity worldwide. I argue that Russian Evangelicals, especially the three main branches, with their history of more than a hundred years, namely Baptists, Pentecostals, and Seventh-Day Adventists, also tend to follow this pattern.

However, they have relatively different characteristics and attributes of glocalization. P/C Christianity, according to Robbins, rapidly spread because of its egalitarianism, virus-like evangelism, and emphasis on unmediated spiritual experience. Russian Evangelicals, in turn, focus primarily on the intellectual study of Scripture, conservative dogmatics, and tradition.

The first Evangelical communities started forming in Russia in the 1860s, under the name of Shtundisty. They were focused on Bible study and because of the influence of British preachers, the first Baptist groups formed. Russian Pentecostals and Adventists appeared later, but also before the Revolution of 1917. Any deviation from Orthodoxy of the Russian people was not welcomed by the authorities and ROC, but the liberation of religious rights came into force in 1905.

Evangelicals enjoyed significant freedom for 12 years, and even some time after the Revolution, for they were shortly regarded as allies for the young Soviet Republic. These were the times of the active ministry of prominent Baptist ministers and preachers, such as Ivan Prokhanov, Robert and William Fetler, Jackob Wiens, and others. This freedom ended with Stalin's repressions and the ministers either emigrated, or faced incarceration or execution.
Stalin's repressions were directly aimed at Evangelicals, though they costed them many lives, still counting. As to Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign, its main subjects, besides the general idea of total elimination of religion and "showing the last priest on the TV", were rebellious unregistered groups of the perverted sect of Pentecostals and reformed Baptists. All these groups were convicted of abusing children, brainwashing the congregants, and acting in the benefit of the West.

The persecution of unregistered groups lasted up until the proclaimed liberalization during the Perestroika, starting in 1985. From the late 1980s until the strengthening of the ROC in the political sphere in the early 2000s, Russia experienced an increase in religious conversion and an influx of religious movements. Although Russian Evangelicals are significantly large in number, even registered bodies of Baptists or Pentecostals outnumber, for instance, Catholics. Yet their position in the media or public sphere is marginalized.

This marginality is compensated by the specific role of Russian Evangelicals in the contemporary Russian spiritual market. They are most predominantly linked to marginal spheres and marginal people: their main ministries deal with miserable people, rejected by the society, and distant, almost inaccessible regions.

Russian Evangelicals, especially the Baptists, are dogmatically conservative, and their doctrine is based on Luther's five solae and Arminian soteriology. For Russian Baptists, two major tenets of Protestant faith are sola Scriptura and sola fide, emphasizing primacy of Scripture for faith and practice and justification by faith alone, respectively.

The other three are sola gratia, soli Deo gloria, and solo Christo or solus Christus. In the Russian sociocultural context, they respectively imply: the grant of salvation offered by God to anyone; call for worshiping God alone,
rather than money, fame, or one's own self; and rejection of any mediators between God and men besides Christ, who is also the only way to salvation, for he paid for our sins with his life sacrifice.

There are various kinds of literal interpretations of Scripture, all dependent on current sociocultural, historical, political, and linguistic context. Russian Baptists base their foundation on the Russian Synodal translation of the Bible, which is very much poetic, rhythmic, but already more than 150 years old and far from being accurate.

Russian Evangelicalism commonly shares all typical denominational features, including dogmatics, liturgy, preaching and evangelizing techniques, and way of life. However, Russian Evangelical dogmatics, especially the interpretation of a scriptural text, are greatly influenced by a peculiar history of oppression, isolation, and neglect and social, cultural, and economic challenges of contemporary Russia. The Russian Synodal Bible is also a specific phenomenon, relatively old, and very much poetic. Both characteristics distinguish the Russian Bible from other translations, and, thus, impact Bible-centered Christianity in Russia.
7. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak":" The narrative of Christian Rehabilitation

Introduction

When I was planning my fieldwork research, reading and studying the online activity of the ministry, I expected observing a twofold process of rehabilitation through conversion and conversion through rehabilitation. What was unclear to me at that point is the way conversion works. I presumed that the converts are somehow convinced into the Baptist version of Christianity, using the Arminian free-will soteriology and *sola fide* principle. I was looking for a specific narrative of convincing, constructed as a narrative of conversion and based on the Baptist dogmatics and the Bible.

The major inconsistency in such an expectation is that this narrative appears not to be about convincing someone by someone else. It is about learning and adopting by the convert him/herself. The narratives of rehabilitation and conversion constitute one twofold complex narrative. I will first analyze the aspect of rehabilitation, how this narrative copes with addiction, and I will then scrutinize the narrative itself, how it is constructed, what it looks like, and what other narratives it consists of.

Focusing on the process of conversion I emphasize the first stage of the program, Rehabilitation. This is the stage when most people either leave or accept the rules: pray, study Scripture, and repent. The majority on the second stage, Adaptation, is repentant already and at least in very general terms shares the theology and dogmatics of the ministry. The first two months is the time when all memories of *bygone* life are still fresh, abstinence and other physical consequences of drugs still present, and the

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13 Matthew 26:41.
biblical context is not yet familiar to the first-timers. This is a period of uncertainty and doubt, of emotions, mental and physical suffering. The brothers are with each other twenty four hours a day and seven days a week, and their interrelations became of major importance for these two months.

The role of an elder at this stage is paramount. He moderates their discussions, supervises them, and gives orders and spiritual counseling. At the same time he, being in the program himself as an adaptant, shares his time, bedroom, meals, and hardships with them, often participating in friendly chats and emotional quarrels.

**Twofold narrative of Rehabilitation**

The main goal of the ministry, as is constantly stated by the ministers and elders, is to bring people to Christ. Since addiction is regarded as a *slavery of sin* (John 8:34), the initial purpose of the ministry is not to rehabilitate addicts. Yet, since at least some of the addicts maintain their remission and abstinence, it would be crucial to define the position of Christian Rehabilitation in Good Samaritan in the frames of the secular addiction science.

Substance use dependence is a complex problem that is both medical and social. Commonly, it is regarded as twofold in nature: biochemical and psychological (Volkow and Li 2005: 1429). Chemical (or physical) dependence is caused by psychoactive substances acting on the body of an addict, and they are manifested not merely in the various states of being high, but also when one abstains from them for a substantial period of time. One then experiences severe pain or suffering, widely known as "hangover" or "dope sickness".

When, eventually, the substances leave the body, either naturally with time, or with medical aid, one becomes detoxicated. However, commonly
the use of drugs resumes after a short time. This happens due to irreversible changes in the addicted brain, significantly reducing production of certain hormones, reacting thus to their overproduction caused by drugs. This reduction causes serious psychological problems, usually associated with emptiness or loss of the meaning of life. The most natural solution to such a problem involves going back to drugs.

Good Samaritan, as any other non-governmental rehabilitation in the St. Petersburg area, has no medical license. Thus, the only means of detoxication suggested (besides the cases of emergency, when the ministers arrange medical help) is a prolonged abstinence by the means of isolation in rehabs far away from the big city. Psychological dependence, on the other hand, is a primary focus of Christian Rehabilitation. Rehabilitants receive a powerful psychological basis, a foundation teaching them how to live without using drugs even in the most psychologically challenging and painful moments of their lives. Moreover, a dense and solidary Baptist community, mostly consisting of former addicts, former convicts, and their close relatives, creates a favorable environment for them, excluding them from the situation of their addicted past, and putting them in the company of most understanding people.

**Faith vs Good Works: Two different dogmatic approaches to rehabilitation**

Christian Rehabilitation fills the emptiness of the addicted heart with Jesus, while it is not the only way to deal with the addiction through Christian conversion. An Orthodox rehabilitation center, called the Mill, is the field for Jaret Zigon's ethnographic study (2011)\(^4\). Zigon puts the Mill in the context of the Russian Orthodox moral teaching and neoliberal

\(^4\) The Mill has now moved to another place and has changed significantly.
discourse of the post-Soviet Russia. Both the Mill and Good Samaritan are therapeutic communities operated by former addicts (and both were founded and now lead by never addicted pastors). But there is a key dogmatic difference in the two approaches.

Christian Rehabilitation in Good Samaritan is based on Arminian soteriology: a convert should repent responsibly, accept Christ and his atonement sacrifice, and, thus, "let Christ into his heart". The Baptist salvation does not require good works, based on the Luther's *sola fide* (faith alone) principle. Good works are the consequence and evidence for salvation. Any born-again Christian is expected to live a Christian life, which implies following God's will—not his own—and such a life represents what can be called a *good or moral* life.

The Orthodox rehab bases itself upon fundamentally different dogmatics. Orthodox soteriology requires both faith and good works. Good works, according to Zigon, are conceptualized in the Orthodox morality (Zigon 2011: 73-93), implying that the rehabilitation process focuses on correction of the moral self, making the sin of addiction simply unthinkable (Zigon 2011: 63).

These dogmatic differences are also represented by different approaches to sin. Orthodox rehabilitation sees sin as an immoral act, breaking God's law (Zigon 2011: 78), while for the Baptists, sin is a resistance to God and his will. Both approaches see addiction as a slavery of sin (Zigon 2011: 75), but there are different ways of overcoming this sin. The Orthodox rehab attempts to construct a new *moral self*, by teaching people to live a *normal life*, at least for the time of the program, which eventually should lead them to Christ (Zigon 2011: 148-158). The Baptist rehab, in turn, attempts to *bring people to Christ* first, which should inevitably result in a *Christian life* of the convert.
Different dogmatics and different ideologies of rehabilitation

There are a variety of other rehabilitation programs, both in the region and worldwide, and Good Samaritan is neither the most popular, nor the most efficient in numerical terms. The major differences are dogmatic, or ideological (Skoll 1992), if compared to secular programs. There is also the specificity of Russian legislature, which does not allow court-appointed rehabilitation in places like Good Samaritan or the Mill, for they are both non-governmental and religious. There are only plans to create a system of court-appointed rehabilitation centers and Russia is a secular state by Constitution.

There are several other religious—predominantly Christian—rehabilitation programs in St. Petersburg and the surrounding region. The bigger one is called New Life (Novaya Zhizn') and it is run by the Charismatic congregation called Source of Life (Istochnik Zhizni), affiliated with the Word of Faith movement. The Church is notorious for its controversial pastor, Mikhail Kotov, who became very popular on the Russian Internet for his eccentric preaching style. The New Life program is based on labor therapy and also implies conversion to Christianity. There are rumors, which I also heard from the brothers in Good Samaritan, that this ministry is involved in money laundering schemes and abuses cheap labor of the addicts, while also not feeding them very well.

The Pentecostal rehabs are dispersed and rarely registered officially. The focus of the program there, following the Pentecostal dogmatics in principle, is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is an immediate spiritual experience. The Holy Spirit is claimed to act directly on believers, healing them at once, and filling them with God's power and might. A believer's reaction to such a baptism is commonly emotional and vocal, frequently
manifested in glosolalia. All believers, for instance, pray simultaneously, unlike the Baptists who take turns and only say the Lord's Prayer in chorus.

Twelve Step program was initially based on Christian faith. Nowadays, it is claimed a secular approach. Yet, many Twelve Step programs in St. Petersburg are affiliated with the Orthodox Church. Generally, the program suggests a cognitive model of Higher Power, which may be also understood as God by religious people.

The major ideological difference with Good Samaritan lies in the concept of acceptance. While Twelve Step programs start from the idea of helplessness before addiction and an addict permanently labels him/herself an alcoholic or narcotic addict, successful rehabilitants of Good Samaritan explicitly claim that they overcome their addiction and become former addicts: former alcoholics (byvshyie alkogoliki) and former drug addicts (byvshyie narkomany).

The infamous and controversial institution called City without Drugs (Gorod bez narkotikov), established and located in Ekaterinburg, 2000 kilometers to the East, has no branch in St. Petersburg. Yet, every rehabilitation program is sooner or later compared to City without Drugs. It is often suspected of using force and handcuffs in the rehabs, and also its leaders accused of having criminal connections (some rumors even included connections with drug mafia), most of whom had problems with the law in their past.

The most controversial figure is the founder, former president of the foundation, and now mayor of the city of Ekaterinburg Evgeny Roizman, who served a prison term in his youth, and has often been suspected of approving the use of excessive force and other violation of human rights in the rehabs. Besides rehabilitation centers, the foundation is also involved in investigating and reporting on drug dealers and drug sales points.
The differences in methods and techniques make various programs efficient for certain individuals. A universal solution to the problem of addiction is simply not possible. Twelve Step programs suggest a total surrender to the problem, learning to live with it and maintaining a maximum possible remission. Forced methods or methods focused on detoxication and social transformation emphasize the chemical aspect of addiction and peer pressure, ignoring all other possible factors. Labor therapy and Orthodox tutoring focus on the gradual moral transformation of the addict, leading him/her to come to Christ as a responsible decision of the transformed individual. Good Samaritan uses a different mechanism and narrative of Christian Rehabilitation. It is based on the radical break with the addicted past and starting life from scratch.

**Radical conversion as moral transformation**

Russian Baptist conversion generally follows a common Evangelical narrative of a radical break with the past and being born-again (Meyer 1998). Yet, there are linguistic and dogmatic specificities. The process of being born-again is usually called a repentance (*pokayanie*). This term explicitly reflects on the peculiarities of Russian Baptist conversion. The most emphasis is not put on being re-born, or totally breaking with the past. The essence of repentance is admittance of one's sins in a sinner's prayer, helplessness to fight them, and total surrender of one's whole life to Christ.

From this point, all sins are considered forgiven. This does not mean that converts do not sin anymore, for it is obvious that they do. It means that they change the direction and purpose of their life towards Christ and his will, whereas this direction and purpose were previously defined by sin and self-centeredness. Converts are expected to sin less after conversion, define and confess their sins more easily, and learn God's will. The body,
nonetheless, is sinful, worldly, and always tempting to sin, as Andrey, the elder on Rehabilitation, put it: "Your flesh [plot'] will never repent." Andrey's own flesh was for a long time subjected to substance abuse and several long prison terms.

The major concept of the Russian Baptist morality concerning conversion is bygone life (vetkaia zhizn'). Vetkaia combines several meanings, influenced by the use of the Russian Synodal translation. Firstly, vetkhii stands for "old" in the Russian title of the Old Testament. Hence the reference to the fulfillment and obsolescence of the Old Covenant by Christ. One of the modern meanings of vetkhii also implies "worn-out," which neatly contributes to the construction of the concept as a moral category.

The bygone life is claimed a total failure. All efforts of the addicted sinner to manage his own life are claimed wrong and delusional, for they all brought him to rehab. It is not necessarily implied that a sinner follows the will of Satan and worships him, but self-reliance, self-righteousness, and self-esteem result in the total moral, material, and physical destruction of an addict (Cf. Robbins 2004a): he is addicted, sick, poor, abandoned, despised, neglected, and rejected.

All these failures obviously point out to the incapability of managing one's own life. Without God's help or God's instruction in Scripture, one simply cannot find the right way. One may feel they are living a good, happy, and righteous life, but without Jesus this life will lead to defeat and collapse. If not in this life, then in the afterlife, which is immutable and forever. Thus, worldly values such as wisdom, experience, or education are devalued, if their source does not come from God.

The radical break starts from denial of all these values and of oneself. The idea of denial of oneself comes from Synoptic Gospels, for instance, Matthew 16:24: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny
themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (the parallels are Mark 8:34 and Luke 9:23) The past cannot be forgotten or totally rejected, but it should be denied as a sinful life directed towards the wrong way, wrong purpose, wrong values, and goals. Max once summarized the failure of worldly wisdom and the concept of denial in the evening gathering\textsuperscript{15}:

Deny yourself totally! There's no need to show your rich life experience and habits, because all these brought you here. You and me—we're crap! You should break yourself until the Bible becomes a part of your life.

Former addicts or former convicts, converted in extreme near-death situations, when reflecting on the radicalism of their transformation from such horrible past, often have a sense of superiority over the people who were raised in faith. The term DVR is a derogative term for the children of believing parents (\textit{deti verujushikh roditelej}). There is a shared idea that "they didn't go through what we went through. They got their salvation easily." Only total moral failure and physical breakdown can show the real consequences of sin and preciousness of repentance.

The DVR can afford praying automatically, attending church services out of habit, and participating in ministries without much reflection on their meaning. "There are some sisters in my church," complained Ivan, an acting pastor. "Fifteen years in faith, and they haven't even read the whole Bible. The brothers in rehabilitation know Scripture better."

Only by hitting rock bottom, by losing everything, can one really comprehend Christ's sacrifice. The rehabilitation or prison ministries supply the Church with the most sincere and daring (\textit{derznovennye}) brothers. Vadim, one of the leaders and coordinators of Good Samaritan, once said at a leadership meeting: "We are all fanatics, in a good sense. Because there is nothing to do here for non-fanatics."

\textsuperscript{15} Also quoted in chapter 4.
What is implied in this term "fanatic"? Baptist "fanatics in a good sense" neither give emotional public speeches, nor extravagant performances. The performative aspect of the Russian Baptist Church is very much conservative. Russian Baptists, even hardcore converts, rarely express their faith emotionally or expect immediate mystical experience. Fanaticism here involves radical transformation and a radical devotion of one's own life to Christ. A truly repentant and revived (vozrozhdenyi) Christian strives for God's will in every aspect of his/her own life, be this aspect major or minor, significant or insignificant by the worldly standards.

Dogmatically, Russian Baptist repentance elaborates on Martin Luther's principle of solo Christo — justification through Christ alone. The principle states that salvation can only be granted through Christ, and the only way is to accept his atonement sacrifice. The book of Romans in 6:23 summarizes this whole idea: "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Hence, everyone is a sinner, and the penalty for every sin is death alone.

However, no one can be punished twice for the same misdeed. Thus, when one accepts Christ's death on a cross as a substitutionary atonement for his/her sins, one is already redeemed. Being Arminians, Russian Baptists yet claim that one can lose grace or reject it at any time. Hence, as soon as one stops craving for God's will, one no longer accepts Christ's sacrifice, and is thus subject to eternal condemnation.

Role of infrastructure and conditions in Rehabilitation

Although rehab settings are intended to contribute to the process of rehabilitation, the extent of physical and moral challenges the rehabilitants actually face had never been planned. The initial plan of the program had been to have modest housing, simple food, and to predominantly rely on the
manual labor of adaptants. However, as I have mentioned earlier, most of the brothers are poor manual workers because of their bygone lives, the premises are too old to easily maintain, and the resources are too limited to supply the rehab premises with the required materials, firewood, water, electricity, and the rehabilitants with enough food and clothing.

The challenges and embodied experience the rehabilitants thus face include cold or heat in respective seasons, spinal problems caused by hand-made beds and bad pillows, and also bad-quality chairs and arm-chairs used for reading and study time, weakness and respiratory issues due to lack of fresh air, and stomach problems caused by expired food. All these issues are widely discussed, complained upon, and incorporated in the rehab ideology as a means of training humility (*smirenje*).

Once, in the prayer after lunch, Petya, a 24-year old homeless orphan, thanked God for a "not very nutritious meal." Max became furious about it, and when the brothers returned to the dormitory, rebuked Petya: "Why do you think you should be fed at all? How come you deserve your lunch?" Petya was one of the laziest brothers—during his third month of Rehabilitation he did not progress to Adaptation because he had not passed the required seminars. During the study or reading time he often chose to turn his back to Max and take a nap.

"The big minus of this rehab is that we get everything for free here," Max once also expressed. "We all here growl at our meals that we, basically, get at no cost." Max echoed the idea expressed in 2 Thessalonians 3:11: "Anyone unwilling to work should not eat." Max was always annoyed with any complaints about the conditions, for the brothers were not forced or obliged to stay, and, moreover, did not pay or earn their food and bed. Max regarded such complaints as weak, lazy, and arrogant, and on top of that, a clear sign of an addict's bygone nature.
What was initially implied as a part of the rehabilitation process is the idea of strict isolation in a therapeutic community run by former addicts. It is widely acknowledged that before the start of any moral and physical transformation of an addict, he should be pulled out of the *junkie* context: familiar settings, neighborhoods, contacts of the dealers, peers, and so on. All of this context calls for buying and using, creates the associations, constructs typical psychological problems, and emphasizes peer pressure.

The isolation is not merely enforced in putting the addicted people into the locked up setting far from the big city. The rules and regime, incorporated to the infrastructure of the premises, separate men from women, space of Rehabilitation from Adaptation, and people on the program from the ministers. If there are guests, they are fed better and separately, and placed to spend a night in a separate room.

Isolated, segregated, strictly regulated, and poorly maintained and supplied rehabilitation settings were not initially intended. The rules and isolation are a part of the plan, but bad food, cold, heat, and lack of fresh air are not. Yet, in the situation of a free program, surviving on occasional donations, it is inevitable, and all these challenges and hardships are being successfully incorporated into the rehab ideology and dogmatics (cf. Foucault 1975).

The rehab may be seen as a monastery, with all of the asceticism, limitations, and scriptural focus it offers. Sometimes never-addicted brothers, losing faith or experiencing some other sort of relapse, spend a month or two in the rehab to *strengthen their faith*.

Protestant dogmatics reject the idea of monasteries, because such escapism is claimed as being selfish. A good Christian is supposed to actively participate in this world, spreading the Word, creating a family as a small Church, and bearing children, if possible. Monks are regarded as only
caring about their own salvation and piety, while the Word of God should be spread to the Edge of the World (Vallikivi 2014) and those in need or in danger should be saved by hearing the Gospel.

However, isolation and asceticism are considered a good temporary practice, especially for addicted people. Rehabilitation program is a liminal state of bodily and self-transformation. An addict should detoxicate, rethink and revisit his bygone past, make some important decisions in his life, and justify them with Scripture. Breaking with old habits and old way of life and learning from scratch takes time, and the rehabilitation program is at least a good start for such a break.

**Spatial discipline and the notion of Christian family**

The hierarchy of different stages of the program and after the program does not only include limitations on particular behavior (reading the full Bible, playing guitar, working), but also spatial limitations: the premises for Adaptation are often better, wider, with easier access to the outside. The devoted adaptants, however, often complain that they miss the reading time they had before, for now they have to study Scripture after work, already tired and lacking time.

The larger the particular rehab is, the more possibilities there are for construction of the spatial hierarchy. For instance, as I have noted before, the Luga rehab is the largest, and it hosts both genders and also mothers with children. Hence, there are six symbolic zones, separated by walls and locked doors: male Rehabilitation and Adaptation, female Rehabilitation

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16 I have never heard of any cases or even requests to accommodate a father with kid. Firstly, if there are both parents available, both addicted and willing to take the program, they are sent to different rehabs. Secondly, since there are only women with children on the program, a presence of a man would break the segregation rule and hence cause much anxiety. Moreover, I presume that it would also contradict the Russian Baptist understanding of a proper family and proper gender roles.
and Adaptation, minister's premises (where he also accommodates guests),
and children's area.

These six zones are not only symbolically divided by respective rooms
and floors, but the doors separating them are also kept locked. Hence, access
to different zones is limited and regulated. The rehabilitants, for instance,
are kept in their dormitories most of the time. They rarely have any working
assignments apart from cleaning and fixing their own premises; as in each
other zone they also have their own bathroom and dining room. Thus, for
the whole two-month Rehabilitation, a brother or sister goes outside for
fresh air on very few occasions.

The segregation of sexes corresponds to the Russian Baptist
understanding of Christian family and sexual relations. A sexual life is only
allowed between a man and woman (Russian Baptists are strictly opposing
same-sex relations) and only in wedlock (they commonly support this claim
with 1 Corinthians 7:2: "But because of cases of sexual immorality, each
man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband."). A
potential couple should start praying for God's will, then reveal their
intentions to each other (ideally, a man proposes to pray together), then they
consult with the pastor, get parental blessing, announce engagement, and,
finally, arrange a wedding.

The segregation of genders in the rehab does not merely correspond to
abstinence from improper sexual relations. Most importantly, this
segregation is an application of the concept of decency (blagopristoinost').
The idea of decency enforces the biblical regulation of marriage, advising
people to not even approach the opposite sex too closely, apart from close
relatives and spouses.

While decency is a conventional and intuitive moral code, the definite
distinction of gender and family roles is fixed in Scripture (for instance,
Ephesians 6:1–4; Colossians 3:18–21), and thus explicitly expressed in the spatial discipline. The premises are not merely separated in terms of different living zones, labor and gender roles are also separated into male and female parts.

The kitchen and food storage rooms are entitled to women only, for in every mixed rehab, only the women cook. The children’s premises are also for women. The only chance that any male, apart from a minister, enters a kitchen or any other female zone is in case of that male carries heavy weights or fixes something broken. The workshops, large basement with chimney, and roof are the spaces for manly manual work.

This separation does not simply prescribe certain behaviors for each gender, this prescribed behavior and gender roles correspond to a particular understanding of a good Christian family. Men and women do not merely do their appropriate work, they do it for the whole rehab as a family. Sisters cook for everybody and brothers prepare the firewood and heat the whole rehab. The ministers and elders are, respectively, elder brothers and sisters, more experienced and spiritually mature. The head minister is always male, as are his elders—deacons, pastors, and presbyters.

A big common hall for gatherings (if there is one) is a shared space, commonly once a week. Yet, the sitting rows are symbolically divided between males and females (for instance, occupying the left and right half, respectively), and Rehabilitation and Adaptation (front and back), and the ministers sit around the pulpit or supervise their protégés from the back row (see picture 19).
Apart from spatial segregation, there is also symbolic segregation. The brothers and sisters are not allowed to talk or even look at each other at these gatherings. The brothers, though, are still curious and later share their impressions when they back to their dormitory. However, at these gatherings, both brothers and sisters take turns performing a glorification next to the pulpit, so the others can legitimately observe them.

The symbolic segregation of people at different stages and different genders in the rehab is enforced by spatial boundaries—walls, different floors, and locked doors. Such segregation does not merely separate people from each other, together with harsh conditions and strict rules it is used to train humility and obedience, and to implement the idea of a Christian family—a patriarchal group with strictly allocated roles and practices.

**Regime and parallels with prison**

"It was easier in prison," Tolya, a 30-year old IDU with four prison terms, 10 years behind bars, said in my very first day at the rehab. "Why?
There was much more freedom: a cellphone, parcels, drugs. I could drink tea at any time." My first impression was also a prison cell, when I saw two-tiered beds and heard the sound of the doors locking, separating Rehabilitation from the rest of the rehab. Naturally, both may be seen in a Foucauldian way as isolated and regulated "complete and austere institutions" (Foucault 1975).

However, even though I have no lockup experience, the brothers convinced me that a prison may not be as tight as the rehab: "This is the first time in my life that I wanna go back to prison," said once Slava, another IDU with lengthy prison experience, whom I met in another rehab that was much less strict. Most former convicts constantly reflect on their stay in the rehab, comparing it with the regimes of the prisons they served their terms in. "When I get out...damn, I mean: when I pass the program," is a typical slip of the tongue, which here belongs to Oleg, 3 terms for armed robberies.

Compared to prison, the regime on Rehabilitation is commonly regarded as much more tight, strict, and limited. On the other hand, the time in the rehab is much shorter than a usual prison term (such short terms as eight months are commonly served in the local jail) and there is always a freedom to leave the rehab, which prisons obviously lack. Some brothers even claimed that the regime is not actually that strict. Andrey, for instance, who started his prison career in maximum security, said: "You think this is regime? You haven't seen the real regime!"

Many brothers with long lockup experiences also indicate the egalitarian nature of Rehabilitation, for its lack of hierarchy. Washing the toilet, for instance, is designated for the lower castes\textsuperscript{17} in prison, while no one in the

\textsuperscript{17} The word *caste* does not reflect the prison hierarchy absolutely accurately. However, I use it here in the absence of a better term, in attempt to emphasize the irreversibility and strict segregation of lower positions in prison. Passive homosexuals, those equated to them due to major misdemeanors, or desecrated ones (*zakontachenye*) obtain such status for the rest of their life. The other strata should absolutely avoid certain forms of physical contact with them and the items they use.
rehab refused to do it for his turn, for as Tolya (4 terms, 10 years behind bars, IDU) explained: "This is now my home, I live here." Some former convicts, including Tolya, occasionally tried to ask the weak-willed brothers to wash their socks, which is an explicit sign of humiliation in prison, but this attempt was always quickly halted by an elder.

The yet existing hierarchy in the rehabs with the elder brothers, and their elder brothers, in turn, has very little to do with prison guards. Although elders and ministers have the authority and responsibility to supervise and give orders, it is emphasized that they are the ones who passed the same program, have the same problems and challenges, both physical and moral, and are just at the next level in their repentant lives. Direct supervisors—the elders—commonly share the dormitory, meals, and, basically, most of their time with their protégés.

Andrey, an elder with extensive prison experience, was always annoyed when perceived as an overseer: "Why are you making me a guard? We're here before God, not before people!" Andrey's reaction was obvious, for inmates have a sort of class hatred towards law enforcement and particularly prison guards. Yet, such a position also contradicted the notion of an elder brother, even though more experienced and with some authority, but just one of them.

The parallels with prison were always obvious, even for the never locked-up brothers, for the strict limitation of space and time, segregation of gender, and typical background of the brothers called for such comparison. However, even those dissatisfied with the rehab and willing to quit admitted the more egalitarian moral system of the rehab and role of elders. The prison system is sometimes claimed to bear the function of rehabilitation of criminals, but the inmates rarely believe in such a role (Oleinik 2003).
Egalitarian and regimented rehabs are deemed much more efficient, at least for detoxication in isolation.

**Summary**

This chapter deals with the complex process of Christian Rehabilitation, echoing the twofold nature of substance dependence. Substance use addiction consists of two major aspects. Chemical dependence is mostly manifested in the abstinence syndrome, and it is caused by PAS in the body. Chemical addiction is relatively easy to deal with by means of modern medicine, and the process of cleaning the blood is called detoxication. Another way to overcome chemical addiction is a simple prolonged abstinence, when the substance leaves the body naturally. This may be very painful, but it is the only legal way to deal with addiction in rehabilitation centers such as Good Samaritan, for they have no medical license.

In Good Samaritan and other therapeutic communities the emphasis is put on the psychological dependence, which is chronic and remains for the rest of the addict's life. The addicts are taught to learn to live with their addiction, but abstain from substances. Religious programs, such as Good Samaritan, suggest a new meaning for the life of addicts, who are commonly lost and depressed. This meaning is Jesus Christ.

The rehabilitation process is totally based on Christian dogmatics in the Russian Baptist interpretation. Among the tenets of Protestant faith, the paramount one is *sola fide*. It states that every man is justified by faith alone and good works cannot earn salvation, but they are the evidence and inevitable cause of repentance. Thus, unlike Orthodox dogmatics based on the idea of Christian morality and *normal life*, the emphasis in Good Samaritan is put on the conversion to the Christian faith, repentance, and a
surrender to Christ, and only after that a brother may expect moral transformation.

There are various rehabilitation programs that could be compared to Good Samaritan. They differ in dogmatics or, more generally, in ideology. Twelve Steps is the most globally widespread, and it was initially a Christian approach. It suggests a total surrender before addiction and learning to live a life in remission. Other programs use labor therapy, moral correction, or charismatic experience.

Conversion in Good Samaritan, and to a great extent in the Russian Baptist Church, is a radical moral transformation. It divides the life of an individual into before and after. The leading force of the life before repentance is self-righteousness, self-reliance, and egoism. All these could not lead one anywhere but to death. At first physical death, and then eternal damnation. The only way to a godly life and making it to the Heavenly Kingdom is a total surrender of self and constant seeking for God's will in every aspect of life.

The infrastructure, conditions, and regime of the rehabs significantly contribute to the overall image of the program: ascetic, challenging both physically and morally, and strict. These hardships force many to leave early, but also train humility and obedience among those who stay. The initial plan of the ministry was to have strict rules and modest conditions, but lack of proper supply and old worn-out premises remarkably enforce the self-denial of urban addicts.

The strict spatial segregation of the living and working space between genders address the concept of decency. Decency mostly involves proper relations between different genders and it contributes to the construction of a proper Christian family. In such a family, there is manly and womanly
labor, concentrated in specifically assigned premises, including also children's space assigned for women.

The secluded space of the rehab calls for parallels with prison, especially for the rehabilitants with such a past. Although some brothers claim that the regime in the rehab is not actually that strict compared to what they experienced, most of them say it was easier in prison, for there were much less limitations. However, rehabs are much more egalitarian, and even the supervisors emphasize their experience, rather than any hierarchy over their protégés. Moreover, there is always an opportunity to leave the rehab, unlike in prison.

Having reviewed most of the narratives complementing or influencing Christian Rehabilitation in Good Samaritan, in the next chapter I turn to the way the narrative of conversion through rehabilitation is constructed. These two narratives do not merely go along and add to each other, they are basically two aspects of the same process of Christian Rehabilitation through biblical conversion.
8. "Indeed, the word of God is living and active"\textsuperscript{18}: The narrative of biblical literalist conversion

**Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the second aspect of the rehabilitation process—conversion to Christianity. In the rehabs, a priority, predominance, and sufficiency of Scripture is perceived as a solution to any problems, answer to any questions, and guidance to the Christian life. I review the specificities and peculiarities of the Russian Baptist, and precisely Good Samaritan's approach to Scripture, its study, interpretation, and application.

Conversion to Evangelicalism is not always permanent (see, for instance, Glazier 2003), however in the case of Good Samaritan and Russian Baptists it generally is. The main reason for that is the radicalism of the transformation of self, required for the act of becoming born-again. Yet, another important reason is the marginal position of Protestantism in Russia, calling for the strict identity and denominational affiliation.

**Specificities of conversion in the post-Soviet space**

Post-Soviet conversion is based upon a unique dogmatic, but also political and sociocultural context. Despite more general anthropological research on conversion to Christianity, conversion in post-Soviet societies stands as something specific, even peculiar. Conversion in post-Socialism has a specific temporal, spatial, and sociocultural setting of the late 80s and early 90s, when religious freedom under Perestroika opened the gates for foreign missions and unchained the already present Christian communities. The rise of interest in religion was tremendous. Every church faced an influx of neophytes, some old communities reappeared in Russia since the

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\textsuperscript{18} Hebrews 4:12.
Revolution, like Mormons or Salvation Army, and many new movements were formed.

"Russia" is a big generic term in my analysis. It is a linguistic or sociocultural concept, rather than political or ethnic. In 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist, and a big number of people in newly established independent states faced the challenge of re-identification, being Russian-speakers but non-Russian citizens. This has become even more complicated, as in the case of alien passports for the Latvian or Estonian residents of Russian origin not speaking the state language, or native Ukrainians, Belorussians, Kyrgyz, or Kazakhs, speaking Russian as their first language.

The overall feeling of a tremendous transformation, combined with great hardships and challenges, currency and trade crisis, constant political reforms, high crime rates, bloody military conflicts, collapse of the state education, health, and pensions, rise of alcoholism and substance abuse made significant addition to the context of conversion. Protestant Christianity, moreover, was and still is associated with the West, and the idea of the West always plays a certain role in the Russian culture, history, and politics (Yurchak 2005: 158-206).

A milestone ethnographic study on conversion in post-Soviet Ukraine was conducted by Catherine Wanner (2007). Even in the Soviet era, Ukraine was the most Christianized region in the country with the biggest Orthodox and Baptist congregations, despite the fact that the Ukrainian population equals only one third of the population of Russia. The tradition of religious pluralism in a border region where different religious cultures meet goes back several centuries, and the collapse of the Soviet Union and rise of nationalist ideas only made the situation more complex.

There are three big Orthodox Churches, all pretending to represent the nation, the Greek Catholic Church officially established in 1595, and several
Protestant denominations with the history of at least 100 years. Since the early 1990s, Ukraine was flown by a variety of Western missionaries. New Charismatic movements also skyrocketed (On religious market in Ukraine, see Naumescu 2007).

Wanner scrutinizes Evangelicalism in Ukraine, stressing the political and sociocultural context of this country through the historical outline of the Soviet Evangelicalism. She reviews its struggles, oppressions, neglect, and challenges of the relative religious freedom, in the context of intense competition of various churches and denominations and Ukrainian social, cultural, and political context. It is important to note that the book was published in 2007, after the Orange Revolution of 2004, but long before the tragic events of 2014 and 2015.

Wanner elaborates on several interconnected topics, some of which I discuss here. Following the emphasis put by Joel Robbins (2004) on the Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, Wanner neatly unfolds the Ukrainian case, using Pentecostal Assembly of God as an example. Soviet Ukrainian Evangelicalism, mostly represented by the Baptists, Pentecostals, and Seventh-Day Adventists, as elsewhere in the country, was developing in isolation and under great pressure. Moreover, the Baptist delegates from Ukraine in the central all-Soviet Union were underrepresented, despite a substantially larger number of registered communities (Wanner 2007: 58).

After the immense religious uprising of the early 90s, new Pentecostal ideas began winning the hearts of Ukrainian God-seekers, for they stressed the unmediated lively communication with God and authority to preach and evangelize, based on a personal religious experience, rather than formal education, training, and recognition. Most of all, a new form of serving God
implies the construction of very dense communities, on the basis of brotherly love and mutual support.

Wanner calls such new forms *moral communities*, for the membership in them is explicitly characterized by a significant change of behavior (Cf. Robbins 2004a). Born-again people strive to live according to their new moral standards, often facing misunderstanding and non-acceptance among peers. The moral transformation and moral statement is specifically vocal in the rise of instability, crime, and corruption. The point Evangelicals attempt to make is that living godly is not merely right, it is actually more profitable and comfortable.

The act of being born-again, as a radical break with the past, implies the Soviet period of history as the most remarkable sign of that past. Communities of born-again people reconstruct their country as born-again. Ukrainian Evangelicals tried to reconstruct their own lives, their country, and the whole post-Soviet world, sending missionaries to the Far North and Central Asia.

Wanner's book was published long before the recent events in Ukraine, as I said before. Given that Evangelicals are vocal and active on both sides, the anthropological contribution is very much needed in scrutinizing Evangelical responses to the events of 2014-2015. As I may judge from the online activity of the Russian Baptists, the Baptist community, divided in 1961 under the issue of state registration and more general obedience to the state policy on religions, apparently has divided again under the same issue.

The registered Russian-based council of ECB calls for unconditional peace and prays for the wisdom and support of Vladimir Putin, while the unregistered groups take more active position, blaming the Maidan movement for revolting against the authorities and, consequently, the Ukrainian army as illegitimate militants fighting with the people of Eastern
Ukraine. I fear that along with the narrative of martyrdom of unregistered Baptists throughout the 20th century, this military conflict will only add to the mutual hatred, neglect, and separation.

Ethnographic work on conversion in post-Soviet societies deals with the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union in the religious sphere. After atheism became obsolete as a state ideology in the late 80s, religious life in ex-USSR changed, significantly at least publicly. Evangelicals started actively evangelizing in previously inaccessible regions, especially the Far North (Leete and Koosa 2012; Vallikivi 2014) and Muslim Middle Asia (Pelkmans 2009).

Besides the idolatry of the people and very limited access to the Gospel, the Far North also symbolized "the ends of the earth," (Acts 13:47) and by sending missions there, Evangelicals, therefore, fulfill the Biblical prophecy (Vallikivi 2014). Moreover, in some cases, conversion to Evangelical Christianity did not merely transform the individual lives of the neophytes, but also had a positive impact on their social position by raising their educational level and treating alcoholism (Vallikivi 2009).

In the post-Soviet space, Evangelicals occupy a very important social niche. The major way to spread the Gospel, besides missions, is by providing social support (Caldwell 2004; Koosa and Leete 2014). In post-Soviet societies, the consequences of a great transformation affected large groups of people, and Evangelical ministries were focused on the most miserable and neglected. Thus, ministries work with the poor, homeless, hungry, sick, incarcerated or just released, and this thesis is focused on the ministry for the addicted.

The major message of the social support ministries can be summarized in the assumption that all of these sorrowful situations are caused by sin. When one lives in sin, neglects or denies God's will, one ends up totally broken
and destroyed. Providing help and social support, therefore, is giving them a chance, most probably the last one in their life, to hear a Gospel message and get saved before it is too late. Social workers and missionaries commonly reinforce the aid they provide with a powerful message of testimony, a narrative of their own salvation in similar situations.

**Biblical literalism as a tenet of Evangelicalism**

Russian Baptist conversion, especially in the rehabilitation ministry, is a radical transformation of self. What is the basis of the narrative of conversion? How does one identify and distinguish one's own will from God's, guiding the life of a repentant believer? The only way to learn the will of God for Russian Baptists, rejecting direct charismatic experiences of God, is through Scripture.

There are few ways of direct interaction between God and humans. The Baptists acknowledge the authenticity of miracles and frequently interpret some consequences of events in their lives as miracles. Another interaction is through prayers, but they are directed towards God. As a widespread saying puts it: "There are three ways God may respond: yes, no, and wait." If God wills to respond directly, he may perform a miracle. Yet, most of the answers are to be found in the Bible. One may pray for a better understanding of God's will or for the solution of some situation, but in most cases one should simply refer to Scripture.

Conversion refocuses the life of a believer from his/her own wisdom and experience towards the will of God. Consequently, the transformation implies learning God's will and the ways to understand it better. Basically, it implies learning Scripture and an interpretation of Scripture. Conversion is based on particular hermeneutics. These hermeneutics are expressed in the *sola scriptura* principle. As I has mentioned before, *Sola scriptura* means
that the Bible is the only sufficient and inerrant authority for faith and practice. Thus, Russian Baptist conversion is based on Biblical literalism, but since each denomination, church, and even congregation differs in the "literal" interpretation of the Bible, there are multiple Evangelical literalisms, and the Russian Baptist is just one of them.

Vincent Crapanzano's study (2000) regards literalism as a part of American literary culture. Taking the examples of Fundamentalist Biblicism and legal literalism, Crapanzano compares adherence to Scripture by Evangelicals with an equivalent attitude towards American constitution in courtrooms.

Crapanzano understands literalism as a phenomenon deeply rooted in American history and culture. He gives a broad definition, emphasizing 10 main features, among which I would specifically stress the priority of word over rhetoric and written text over spoken word, stress on original intention of the author, and separation of interpretation and application of the text (Crapanzano 2000: 2-3).

Crapanzano does not merely describe the use and variety of literalisms in American culture, he also criticizes Evangelical anti-intellectualism and anti-modernism, justification of the biblical authority by Scripture itself, male-dominated theology, and more. (See also Bielo 2015: 22) Having studied South African Evangelical uprising (Crapanzano 1985), for some reason Crapanzano attach literalism to Fundamentalists, rather than more generally to Evangelicals (the political aspect of Fundamentalism clearly implies its US-centered ideology). He also links it to Calvinism, which is a dominant doctrine in the Fundamentalist movement, though not necessarily a prerequisite for the Biblicist dogma.

The most prominent research on biblical literalism was conducted by James Bielo (2009). Bielo regards Bible study as a paramount activity and
social institution for Evangelicals in the US. For the American Evangelicals, Bible study, as the most widespread and important kind of "small groups", is the crucial source of inspiration, spiritual communication with fellow believers, and exercise of growing and strengthening their faith.

Bielo raises awareness regarding Bible study for the major reason of defining the style of reading and applying Scripture to a believer's own life. Different versions of these definitions and applications are what I have earlier called *literalisms*, in plural. Every Evangelical group claims literal reading of the Bible, basically because this is one of the distinct features of Evangelical Christianity. Paradoxically enough, every group reads and applies Scripture differently, sometimes radically.

Bielo points out the ways different narratives are constructed. Every group shares some background and context, commonly based on denominational affiliation and respective dogmatic foundations. There are certain cornerstones, defining directions the biblical narrative develops to in a particular group. Among these are: soteriology (doctrine of salvation, reduced to the dichotomy of God's sovereign Grace *versus* human free will, roughly defined as Calvinism and Arminianism), biblical authority, Christ's headship in church and life, and the role of faith and good works in salvation.

Evangelicals, either implicitly or explicitly adhering to *five solae*, claim this adherence to be biblical. On the other hand, they usually base their Biblicism on the Bible itself. They often involve scientific or pragmatic explanations of authenticity of the Bible, claiming that the Bible was proven true and consistent by historians, archaeologists, philosophers, and, most importantly, by their own spiritual experience, expressed in testimonies (cf Crapanzano 2000: 78-80). However, the main argument for biblical authenticity comes from the Bible itself, for instance, 2 Timothy 3:16: "All
scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

**Forms of studying Scripture on the program**

Good Samaritan is a bright example of the application of Evangelical biblical literalism to real-life problems. The ministry rehabilitates addicts through conversion and converts them through rehabilitation. What is the mechanism of rehabilitation? How is the narrative of conversion constructed? Is such a conversion based on convincing? Can one convince a drug addict to stop using?

The answers to these questions can be found in taking a close look at the daily routine of the rehabilitation center, which I described earlier. Besides sleep, meals, some rare manual labor, and also religious activities, such as glorification and numerous prayers, most of the time in Rehabilitation is dedicated to the study of Scripture. Brothers learn to read and memorize the New Testament, find particular verses and apply them to their own life, and, eventually, learn the will of God concerning humans, fully and sufficiently expressed in Scripture.

As I argued earlier, substance use dependence is twofold: biochemical and psychological. The biochemical aspect is only treated in Good Samaritan by means of prolonged abstinence, including the first three idle days. Emphasis is obviously put on the psychological aspect. Roughly put, the rehabilitant is taught to live without drugs or alcohol, and it is a complex problem, including the significance of various precursors—smoking, telling lies, swearing, sexual promiscuity, and so on.

The system of required self-control is perfectly organized and legitimized in the concept of sin. Sinful behavior leads to more sins, and eventually to destruction and separation from God. Sin is separation from God, because it
is disobedience to God expressed in acting against his will. And the will of God is to be found in Scripture.

In Rehabilitation, the first two-month stage of the whole program, only the New Testament is available to brothers, besides the elder, who is commonly an adaptant and the eldership is his ministry. Rehabilitants are given the New Testament, usually a free Gideons' edition with the book of Psalms, which they are also allowed to use. In the stricter rehabs, the New Testament given to a newcomer must be clean of any marks or notes, but the smaller ones can be short of books and use whatever is available. Brothers in Rehabilitation are considered not spiritually mature enough to read the Old Testament, and the elders are also discouraged from citing and referencing it in their presence.

There are three main ways to study Scripture in Rehabilitation. The first one is called free reading, but its main goal is to find an excerpt to share in the morning or evening gathering. In the afternoon, there are also long periods of free reading, but they are often used for preparation of the seminar, rewriting song lyrics from someone else's copybook, or, when the elder is out of the room or not paying enough attention, for chatting, resting, or even napping.

These free readings are long and monotonous, the only legitimate way to take a small break is going to the toilet (with an elder's permission), and that is why rehabilitants complain about this activity the most. They grumble about spinal ache caused by continuous sitting on uncomfortable chairs, boredom and head swells (golova puhnet—too much information to comprehend).

The second form of study is called [sharing] the Word or Revelation (otkrovenie). During the morning or evening gathering, each of the brothers shares what has revealed (chto otkrylos') to him recently in Scripture or
what he would like to share. He shares some excerpts, sometimes even verses from different parts of the book, gives his interpretation, and shows parallels with his life, thoughts, feelings, or relations with others in the rehab. The elder acts as a moderator, and, if there is enough time, also shares something.

Some brothers are reserved and timid to share or even interpret Scripture. Some, however, provoke a huge argument, either over their interpretation or concerning the interrelations. The brothers live together 24/7 and often quarrel about mutual respect, responsibilities, or their views on proper brotherhood.

The third form of study is called a class (urok) or study (razbor) and represents a typical Evangelical Bible study in small groups (See Bielo 2009). One or two chapters, depending on time and size, are read in turns, two or three verses each. Then again, the same chapter is read, but each one also explains the meaning of his verses. Besides the interpretation, which is not an easy task for everyone, an application to the brother's own life is also encouraged. The elder also takes turns reading and interpreting, but also helps others and explains problematic verses.

Such moderation along with more general supervision are the main responsibilities of an elder, and that is why the most versed in scripture and with strong leadership skills are commonly chosen to be elders in Rehabilitation. Naturally, in the smaller centers, this could be a problem, and sometimes an elder does not have either of these qualities. In such cases, the least skilled brother from adaptation is chosen, for there is commonly plenty of work to do and not enough workers. However, such rehabs are usually small, and the minister of the whole rehab is in instant contact with everyone.
One more indirect Scripture study is a part of so-called *seminars*. There are fifteen seminars, distributed in every center on paper, each of which consists of a theoretical part on a specific topic plus two or three verses from Scripture to memorize. Most of these seminars are dedicated to various aspects of Christian life based on instructions from Scripture, and two concern the Bible directly (see table 1): its history, meaning, role, and structure.

Two times a week, the elder dictates the *material* of the seminar and gives addresses of the verses to learn. Before that, each of the brothers should demonstrate the learned material and verses from the previous class learned by heart. Every rehabilitant is formally obliged to pass all fifteen seminars and three exams—on seminars from 1 to 5, 1 to 10, and 1 to 15. In the strict centers, this is a prerequisite to pass Rehabilitation and make it to Adaptation. In the more relaxed ones, one becomes an adaptant simply after two months of his program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Book of Life</td>
<td>Wholeness, uniqueness, reliability, structure of the Bible and its inspiredness by God (<em>Bogoslovnovennost</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Why study the Bible?</td>
<td>4 reasons: to grow spiritually, to resist sin, to learn God's will, to witness fruitfully; 6 ways: listen, read, study, learn, reflect, and apply.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 1: Two seminars on the Bible
The phenomenon of lay hermeneutics

The mechanism of Christian Rehabilitation is fully based on Scripture, as it is interpreted by brothers, both elders and rehabilitants. It is crucial to note that the elders and ministers have the last word about the interpretation of a certain verse or excerpt. However, these people are themselves former addicts. Most of the elders on Rehabilitation are on the program themselves, and the majority of the ministers converted no more than a year or two ago.

Despite the whole array of dogmatic and hermeneutic context, transmitted by the head ministers in St. Petersburg, pastors, seminary and literary traditions, supplementary literature, even the most experienced ministers have started reading the Bible for the first time in their life just recently. Hence, they implicitly combine all theological and historical context with their own street-life experience, *junkie* and prison culture. This constructs a specific context and a specific way of interpreting and applying Scripture, which I call *lay hermeneutics*, following Bielo's concept of "lay theology" and "spirituality in action," observed at the Bible study (Bielo 2009: 6).

The watershed between worldly and spiritual experience is generally expressed in the idea that the life experience of an addict is basically what brought him to the rehab, hence it is evident that this experience is hardly reliable. Besides Max's call to "deny oneself totally", cited in chapter 7, many brothers at different stages acknowledged that self-reliance and self-esteem without following God's will only leads to failure and death. Sergey, a 29-year old IDU of 15 years, who had already passed several different rehabilitation programs, hepatitis and HIV-positive (on the stage of AIDS), put it simply and bitterly: "So, where did this 'I-can-do-it-myself' bring us?" (*Nu i kuda éto nashe 'ja sam' nas privelo?*).
Armen, a minister of the big rehab next to the Finnish border, an IDU of 15 years, who himself passed a program twice (after the first attempt he relapsed), once told me about his relationships to the local pastor, an elder minister and communications representative of Good Samaritan, Valery Tolkachev. Valery had never been addicted, nor had he been co-dependent. He was converted in 1990, being a college student of Physics and Mathematics. Nowadays, he is a pastor of the Second Church of Vyborg. Armen learned how to rule a rehab from Valery, despite the fact that it is him who has an addicted experience. Armen explains: "In the work that I do one can't rely on his experience. One should act according to Scripture." It is Valery who is an expert in Scripture.

The justification of such an approach is often found in the Scripture itself. A local pastor once explained during the sermon in my first rehab: "It's an Evangelical principle: the Bible should be interpreted by the Bible itself." The most cited verse thus is Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight." (In the Synodal version "wisdom"—mudrost'—is used instead of "insight")

Lay hermeneutics are profane, but this practice of biblical interpretation constructs the narrative of rehabilitation through conversion and conversion through rehabilitation in Good Samaritan. Hence, this kind of hermeneutics is deserving of scrutiny. In order to grasp the idea of lay hermeneutics, I will provide two examples. The first one is from the parables of Jesus, explaining the whole mechanism of Christian Rehabilitation in a nutshell. The second example is a set of responses, provided to the doubtful, but already repentant brothers, considering whether the program can help them and whether they have any chance at all.

A key parable explaining the mechanism of Christian Rehabilitation can be found in Luke 11:24-26 (and, slightly rephrased, in Matthew 12:43-45):
When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' When it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first.

The elders often use this excerpt to explain that it is not enough to just throw evil spirits away or get rid of some sinful habits to reach the Heavenly Kingdom. If one does not fill the emptiness caused by this disposal, then this vice will come back, and bring along "seven other spirits more evil than itself," which means that there will eventually be more vices attracted.

When a new rehabilitant starts the program, he is commonly asked to pass detoxication in advance. Yet, a new brother is often picked up straight from the street, because he is homeless, or he is actively using drugs on his way to rehabilitation, expecting the long period of abstinence. Consequently, many come to the rehab under the influence of psychoactive substances and they are allowed a three-day rest.

Those who remain in the rehab even after these three days, eventually become detoxicated. The substances naturally leave their bodies, relieving them from chemical dependence. However, psychological dependence causes weakness, depression, and losing a sense in life. The most widespread characteristics of such a state are: "emptiness inside," "empty soul," "nothing to live for," and so on. Christian Rehabilitation suggests filling this emptiness with meaning, which may only come from Jesus. Even when one passes the whole program without repentance or with insincere repentance, and especially when one quits the program without changing his life, one inevitably collapses again, claim ministers.

Why does it happen? Christian rehabilitation takes all biochemical explanations into account (though, as biblical literalists, Russian Baptists are mostly young-Earth creationists), but interpret them peculiarly. Addiction is
a slavery of sin, because an "unclean spirit" possesses the body and soul of an addict. When one cures his chemical addiction, detoxicates, gets rid of the evil spirit, his mind, previously owned by Satan, cannot function properly. One does not know what to do, where to go, and how to live further. The easy way is to start listening to Satan's orders again.

However, when an addict "sweeps his house" of alcohol and drugs "and puts it in order", the unclean spirit returns with others, "more evil than itself." These other spirits are: pride ("I can abstain. I can control myself."), blasphemy ("I got rid of my addiction myself. God has nothing to do with it."), envy to non-dependent, low spirits, and so on. "And the last state of that person is worse than the first."

When one accepts Jesus into his heart, one does not simply start following him. One lets Jesus into his "house," which is not yet "swept clean and put in order," but dirty and broken, since one cannot repair and clean it on his own. Andrey, an elder on Rehabilitation in the big rehab next to Vyborg, explains:

One's major mistake is an attempt to achieve something with his own wisdom. Like, 'I'm gonna decide everything now, and repent later.' But who can ever trust himself? I don't trust myself at all. I gave up long ago, and now I fully rely on God.

My second example reveals the rather typical doubts of the brothers, unsure about the success of their rehabilitation, but already repentant believers. Both, believers and non-believers take the program, and most believers believe "in my own way" (po-svojemu), "somewhere deep in my heart" (gde-to v dushe), or have their own personal relations with God. Yet, those who remain in the program after the first three days—when one may not participate in program—are mostly those who accept at least some of the main tenets of Christian faith, roughly reduced to the elders' simplistic
explanations of the existence of God and substitutionary atonement of Christ.

Dima, a 26-year old IDU, wants to quit the program, for he cannot stand the regime and does not believe in its success. Max compares Dima to the seed that fell on the path from the Parable of the Sower: "The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved." (Luke 8:12) "This concerns your situation today," explains Max. "We all—and you in the first place—realize where you're gonna go." There is a common notion among the elders and ministers that those who leave the rehab early are inevitably heading towards perdition.

The brothers in Rehabilitation are often compared to children, for they are spiritually immature and just beginning their journey:

For everyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is unskilled in the word of righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:13-14)

Sergey Ivanych, a 54-year old alcoholic, commented on this excerpt: "We are all infants here, and we are fed with milk. After the program we'll be able, well, to not really eat solid food, but most likely just cookies moisten with milk." Such a comparison is summarized in 1 Peter 2:2: "Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation."

Nevertheless, the fall in the depths of sin is real. One should seriously keep it in mind, not simply because it attracts Satan and "seven other spirits more evil than itself." When the Day of Judgement comes, the brother, aware of the Truth and familiar with the Word, will be inquired much more strictly.
Peter the Apostle warns: "For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment that was passed on to them." (2 Peter 2:2) Luke echoes him: "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." (Luke 12:48) Max explained this idea in his characteristic manner: "If you got hit by a brick on your head before coming here, you would be less responsible. But since you're here, you've learned about all that, about God, you are much more responsible."

This approach to Christian teachings may be interpreted in Arminian terms. At first sight, Arminianism looks much more optimistic, especially to those who doubt that he/she is one of the elect, according to Calvinist soteriology, and thus does not have any hope. However, the warnings of Peter and Luke clearly disclose the responsibility of man to choose either God or perdition. When I asked Max about predestination, he cited Matthew 22:14: "For many are called, but few are chosen." "We are all called here," explained Max. "But not everyone passes the program and not everyone is with God."

So, how can one keep away from collapse? Addiction is such an evil force, and when one collapses, he faces Satan with evil spirits and God's strict judgement after death. Christ himself answers this question in Mark 9:23: "If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." In the following verse, a dying boy's father trusted Christ, but realized how weak his faith was: "I believe; help my unbelief!" This is precisely what is expected of a believer. "I fear that [Holy] Spirit inside me can fade away, that's why I keep begging God to give me faith, to help my unbelief," said Gosha, a former convict and IDU. He almost lost his voice and walking
abilities because of desomorphine (widely known under the street name of krokodil).

The brothers fearing of collapse are comforted by Christ, who teaches them that Satan is much more terrifying than even the worst substances, for they just cripple the body:

I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! (Luke 12:4-5)

"Here I am, ailing and my liver (pechen'uga) comes out. But I'm with God and will never retreat from him," said Slava, a 37-year-old IDU, just recently released from prison where he served a long term for aggravated assault causing death.

"How can God ever forgive me, such a horrible sinner, and so deeply fallen?" a brother commonly doubts. Christ comforts again: one just has to repent and believe. "[A]nyone who comes to me I will never drive away." (John 6:37) The most horrible sins will be forgiven: "I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:7) After watching a Christian movie about criminals, Oleg, an alcoholic with four prison terms, astonishingly asked: "That guy over there, the one who iced (zamochil) five. Will he also be forgiven when repents?" Yes, he will be forgiven.

Here comes another question of a repentant sinner: "Why on earth a good and loving God let me hit rock bottom and get addicted to drugs?" Christ explains that this may be the way to serve God, but one should repent in time and start living a Christian life: "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Slava reflected: "Everyone I started shooting (kolot'sya) with are already
dead. I kept thinking: when am I gonna croak? This is the way God works: apparently he needs me for some reason."

Russian Baptists, even those *immature in faith*, do not welcome an arbitrary interpretation of Scripture and pulling verses out of context. Every verse, they argue, was not put randomly in its place. It is a part of a bigger story. Moreover, the proper application of Scripture to a brother's life implies the primacy of a biblical text. The analysis of a certain *revealed* piece is ought to be conducted in parallels and possibilities of practical application in one's own life. But the other way around, searching for the citations that fit the current situation, is wrong. Yet, such an attitude to Scripture is mostly seen as an ideal. However, lay hermeneutics practiced in reality imply only superficial knowledge of the context.

**Testimony as a narrative of salvation**

Every researcher of Evangelicalism sooner or later encounters a paramount narrative of conversion known as testimony (Harding 1987). Generally, testimony is a convert's life-story, emphasizing his way to Christ. Besides citations from Scripture, testimonies are the most widespread mechanism of Evangelism. Most of the time, the self-introduction of any evangelist or missionary worker quickly turns into a testimony. Providing the listeners or readers with their own testimonies, ministers explicitly emphasize the simple fact that they themselves are not special, just sinners, and maybe even worse sinners than the listeners themselves, and they were only saved by the grace and mercy of God.

The structure of a testimony typically represents a short autobiography, starting from the family background and ending with the present state of the convert. Russian Baptist converts commonly mention if their parents were believers, whether they themselves believed in God, and how serious this
belief was: "I knew [God] existed, but I didn't believe in him." (Testimony of Gennadiy, recently rehabilitated alcoholic)

There is also the widespread idea of being angry or hating God for the troubles and sufferings in a sinner's life before conversion. Zhenya, a 25-year old former DJ and amphetamine user: "I used to be a harsh atheist. The Bible made me shudder."

The adult life is commonly described as a pathway to destruction, trouble, and often death. The sinners either enjoyed a careless life, or acted out of anger at bad luck, in both cases making life harder, losing friends, family, freedom, and health. In the rehabilitation ministry, the testimonies are colorful. They include long prison terms, severe chronicle deceases, violence, and sense of ubiquitous death of mates, family members, and, potentially, of oneself:

I didn't drink at all after the army, nor after prison. It's when my brother choked [of exhaust gases in his garage,] then I started. And fucked up (prosral) everything. (Misha, homeless alcoholic, 8 years in prison for murder)

Eventually, the sinners get to a point of total moral failure. Usually, it is represented by the threat of deep trouble, imprisonment, or even death. At that point, sinners realize that they have lost all hope and as the last chance they cry out for Christ. This may not be their first appeal to Christ, and, moreover, this decision may be suggested by the Christians who happen to be around. But this time, yet, a convert comprehends that there will not be any more chances and it is the saturation point to choose between Christ and death. Gosha, a former convict crippled by using desomorphine (krokodil), shared:

When the [Holy] Spirit inside me faded, I saw a rig (bayan—a street name for syringe, I. M.) before my eyes. I worshipped it. I even asked God: help me, Lord, to get some (namutit') today. Now I've got a sort of sense. I do wanna live. I asked God so he would bring me to the rehab. I was on [bath] salts then, when a brain shouldn't function at all. That was the Spirit talking in me.
Russian Baptist converts commonly confess their sinful nature and helplessness to struggle against it. They totally surrender to Christ, acknowledging that it is only God who is able to fix their life and solve their problems. Sergey, a former IDU and former minister, said in his testimony:

When my brother learned about my deliverance from drugs, he said: 'Oh, you've got such a strong will!' What will? I could never do it alone! I am actually very weak. All I had tried to do with my life on my own led me here [to the rehab]. Without Jesus you simply can't do anything.

Although Russian Baptists reject the idea of material success and good health as a result and evidence of salvation known as Prosperity Gospel, they still notice some significant improvements of both states, claiming that God gives them enough, but no more than they really need. Yet, although all sins are forgiven with repentance, there will still be consequences of sin in this life.

Evangelicals use testimony as an evidence of God's power and glory. The testimonies of converted addicts, convicts, or homeless witness about changes in the converts' lives. "I use every opportunity to witness that I'm a former addict," said Ivan, now a minister and acting pastor, with an IDU past of 15 years. "I do it not to show off, but to testify a miracle that happened to me." The common biblical reference used as testimony of a converted cripple is John 11:4: "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

The most remarkable feature of a testimony is a contrast between a sinful life leading to destruction and a Christian pious and meaningful life. God gives converts a second chance: new families, a cure, and a community of brothers and sisters in Christ. The converts describe their bygone lives with such epithets as "anger," "hate," "destruction," "perishing," and "nothing to live for". On the contrary, their new life is characterized with "love," "peace," "joy," "serving God," "living with God." Testimonies are given
mostly to witness (hence the etymology) God's might and will to change lives of sinners and to save them from death, both physical and eternal damnation.

**Prayer as a narrative of faith**

The most important and remarkable narrative and expression of faith, especially for brothers learning to formulate their testimonies, is prayer. Prayer is regarded as an act of direct communication with God and it is addressed to God. Prayer is a conscious act. No learned narratives are commonly used, besides the Lord's Prayer, which has a specific role discussed later. Prayer is the first and most frequent activity a newcomer witnesses and soon becomes involved in, for learning the basics of the prayer narrative is generally easy.

Prayer was introduced to anthropology by Marcel Mauss ([1909] 2003) who, as a Durkheimian, regarded it as a social act. Mauss focused on so-called "primitive religions" in his quest for its essential features. Much more influential was Malinowski’s functionalist approach to sacred words as suited to situations of existential uncertainty (Malinowski 1935). Further on, the anthropological study of prayer has developed in three main directions: prayer as a performatif act (Dein and Littlewood 2008; Ghassem-Fachand 2007; Csordas 1997b; Luhrmann 2004; Salazar 2008), prayer as a consolidator for a community (Garrity 2000; Henkel 2005), and prayer as coping, including healing (Dein 2002; Giordan and Swatos 2011; Luhrmann 2012; Csordas 1997a).

Tanya Luhrmann's study of Evangelical prayer emphasizes its _kataphatic_ nature, i.e. orientation on the inner thoughts, sensations, and perceptions of believer. The opposite of kataphatic is _apophatic_ prayer, basing on denial of the world and ability to comprehend God. (Luhrmann 2012: 161-62)
Evangelical prayer, thus, shares two general characteristics. Firstly, an immediate presence of God in a believer's life. God responds to prayers and needs of a believer with his voice or his actions. Secondly, the free form of conducting a prayer. The narrative of prayer mostly concerns current needs and problems, both the praying person's and those of significant others. (Luhrmann 2012)

Prayers are everywhere in rehab. Every brother is encouraged to pray for his personal reasons even outside the schedule, for instance, before getting up or going to bed, but there are plenty of scheduled prayers throughout the day. In the morning, the first prayer is said for the coming glorification, right after free reading. Next, the morning gathering after glorification and sharing the Word is concluded by the whole group kneeling in circle and taking turns in prayer. The elder concludes with his prayer, commonly longer, including his personal concerns and those of Rehabilitation. After that he says: "And accept our common prayer," and the Lord's Prayer is said in chorus. After that, the brothers hug each other with: "Praise God!" or "Be blessed!"

Every meal starts and ends with a prayer by one of the brothers (the elder picks one, or they simply take turns). After the closing prayer the brothers often chorus: "Sincerely grateful!" (Serdechno blagodarim!) Other events in schedule, every kind of study, seminar, or video screening is also preceded and concluded with a prayer by either an elder or one of the brothers. During the prayer everybody should stand, apart from the disabled ones, and during the common prayer the brothers kneel.

Every particular need or concern is supposed to be first addressed in prayer. Following God's word in 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing," elders encourage the brothers to seek resolve in prayer, not in their worldly wisdom and logic. Sergey Ivanych, a 54-year old alcoholic,
complained: "I need to have my earwax cleaned out. I told Vasya [the minister], he said: 'Pray for that.' What's the point of praying? I need my earwax cleaned out." Failure to resolve any problem, thus, may be attributed to a lack of praying or to God's negative response.

The turning point of a convert's life—repentance—also occurs in prayer. Since repentance is a direct address to God, prayer is the only form it can take, for there is no other channel of communication from the human side. Most of the sinner's prayers I witnessed started and ended as any other prayer, but the main part contained words like: "I want to repent to you," or "I want to confess my sins."

Dogmatically, the narrative of repentance is well articulated and includes the acceptance of Christ's substitutionary atonement sacrifice, total surrender to Jesus in every aspect of one's life, and a promise to seek God's will from now on. However, most of the repentant converts are inexperienced, agitated, and apprehensive in that moment, so they can only articulate some key words coming to their minds in that emotional moment.

If not kneeling, during the typical prayer everyone present stands, some hold their hands together or cover their face with one, most of the people close their eyes. There is no prescribed posture, but the liturgically conservative Russian Baptists do not approve of overly emotional prayers (even the repentant should try their best to control themselves), thus no one commonly raises hands or cries. I have heard of cases when some old ladies were reprimanded at the members' meeting in the Church for the tearful way of praying on Sunday services.

Unlike Pentecostals, Russian Baptists always pray one at a time, while others stand in silence (with eyes also closed) or whispering some brief approving remarks, like: "Yes, Lord!" or "Please, God." The Lord's Prayer, used as a conclusion for every major gathering or Sunday service, is always
said in chorus. There is a common practice of the elder or a leading speaker saying the concluding prayer.

The typical prayer starts with addressing God. Mostly it is either simple "Lord," "God," or "Dear God," or any reference to him as a heavenly father. During the prayer, though, the address may shift to Jesus or swing from God the Father to Jesus and back, as they are the same person. The Holy Spirit is never addressed. The prayer may be grateful for salvation or just a new day, as well as for the precise issues.

The central part of the prayer is dedicated to requests. A believer asks for more general things, like health, wisdom, family situation, or particular needs, which may be numerous. An elder—responsible for his protégés—also often prays for them, their understanding of God's work in their life or for the "repentance of unrepentant." Max sometimes prayed for me, so I would "open [my] heart to Christ." The prayer ends with mentioning either Christ or, most commonly, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Every prayer ends with "amen," which everyone present echoes.

The narrative of prayer is constructed upon biblical language. God and Christ are always addressed directly, using the second person singular (ты). Lots of direct quotations along with their interpretations are used. Besides those, there are also conventional phrases, like "consider this situation" (Усмотри эту ситуацию). Humility and obedience are often shown in supplements, like: "if this is your will."

This latter issue is often raised when a prayer is discussed and taught. A local pastor, preaching during a common gathering in rehab, explained:

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19 There was one rehabilitant who in his prayers addressed God with the second person plural—a respectful form of ви in Russian, but he was considered a freak and his prayers sounded weird and unconventional anyway. He had been using bath salts for a long time, and had apparently had severe mental problems even before that. Later on, I learned that he had raped his aunt before coming to the rehab (the sentence was suspended on the aunt's request) and as of spring 2015, he is wanted for the alleged stabbing of his own parents to death.
We often tell God what to do in our prayers. Like, if we pray for heating the rehab with firewood, we start giving God instructions about the way we want to get this firewood, how we ride a truck there, how much firewood we expect to get. But be conscious of what you are asking God and how you are asking him. Maybe he is planning another way of bringing us firewood, or a warmer weather, after all. Or maybe he wants us to stay cold to practice humility. Don't tell God what to do. Just tell him about your concerns and ask for his will.

The ways and styles of prayer differ for each brother. Besides the general trends, each one has his own emphasis, mood, and rhetorical skills. Some treat it as a formal obligation, saying some learned text almost automatically. Many newcomers are concerned about saying the right things in their prayers, mostly copying others in the beginning. Some agitated neophytes are eager to cover multiple topics in their prayer and pray continuously. The shy brothers, in turn, try to be quick and precise.

The length of prayer is not commonly regulated. On the one hand, the experienced and strong in faith brothers often pray continuously, creating a meaningful and consistent narrative, trying not to miss a thing. On the other hand, keeping in mind Jesus' words in Matthew 6:7: "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words," the others try to cover only the most important topics in very general terms, and referring to the priority of God's will. After all, "your Father knows what you need before you ask him." (Matthew 6:8)

The Lord's Prayer is a major narrative of praying. As it is said in Matthew 6:9: "Pray then in this way," the Lord's Prayer is a model for any other prayer. In the verses 5-9, Jesus explains the purpose and structure of prayer, and in the verses 9-13, he provides an example, taken as the perfect one by the Russian Baptists. They do not perceive Jesus' words as a command to only pray with the Lord's Prayer, for his explanations call for case-specific narratives. Yet, they cannot ignore the perfect example of
Christ and use it to express general concerns of any good Christian, concluding the gatherings, meetings, and Sunday services with it. For the very last conclusion, 2 Corinthians 13:13 (13:14 in Russian Synodal Bible) is sometimes also used: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." ("Amen" is also added in the Russian Synodal translation)

Prayer is not simply a self-centered act of communication with God. Prayer is an important element of care and a sincere concern about other people. Promise to pray for someone is regarded as a real deal, as not merely moral, but also functional support (cf. O'Neill 2009). Those who prepare for a new important and substantial endeavor commonly ask for such support and value it no less than helping hands or money.

Many Evangelical churches run prayer ministries, and the Church Miloserdie is no exception: they operate a hotline for prayer requests and post them online, so everyone can contribute with his/her prayers. As of June 2015, more than 8000 people from different denominations and Churches are subscribed to the online community (Prayer n. d., online source).

The role of prayer in the Russian Baptist Christianity is paramount. If a testimony is the narrative of conversion with emphasis on a bygone life, then prayer is the current narrative of faith and a believer's spiritual state. In Rehabilitation, prayer plays the same role. It echoes all concerns and doubts a brother can have. The depth of his faith, his spiritual experience, and, to some extent, his sincerity may be determined by the way he prays: whether he uses learned phrases every time, copies the elders, or tries his best to use the right words.

There were several people, most of them homeless or with criminal problems, whom I suspected of pretending to remain in the program. They
did everything with others, prayed when it was their turn, studied Scripture, and even repented. However, in their natural conversation they rarely talked about God or faith at all, or made claims like: "Faith is something very personal, even if you pass a hundred seminars. Everything we do here is bullshit (balda)." (Misha) Moreover, they prayed with the same learned wording every time, like performing a duty.

Prayer is a major narrative of faith and conversion. It obviously deserves an independent study in various Evangelical contexts. Russian Baptist prayer echoes the textuality of conversion, its focus on a particular narrative, combining Scripture and everyday discourse. The wording of prayers is exactly the same combination of senses, created by Russian Synodal Bible and sociocultural reality of contemporary Russia and rehabilitation discourse. Prayers are lively, archetypal, and adopting indicators of the moral transformation a brother experiences.

**Glorification as a narrative of Christian community**

Another remarkable narrative of Russian Baptism is glorification. Glorification is basically singing in chorus, often with guitar accompaniment but also without. In a Church setting, it can also be a piano. The hymns used in the rehabs and churches are numerous. The biggest hymnal contains more than two thousand songs, both translations of old Protestant hymns and those composed by Russian authors, many of them by Ivan Prokhanov, a prominent preacher of the early 20th century.

The hymns are divided by topics, for instance, on Holy Communion, baptism, wedding, funeral, call to repentance, Christian joy, Christ's passions, songs for the youth, and so on. Most of the hymnals used in rehabs, paradoxically, are editions of non-registered reformed Baptists,
called "Song of Revival" (Peson' 2000). Most of the hymns are based on simple melodies, and are easy to sing for big congregations.

The Protestant Reformation brought the Bible to the masses, providing translations into popular languages. It also brought worship music to wider congregations, using popular languages and simple melodies. The best geniuses in musical history, like Bach or Händel, were involved in composing worship music. They appealed to the emotions of their listeners, introducing them to passions of Christ, Christian joy, or awesomeness of God.

In Rehabilitation, the selection of hymns depends on the elder. In some rehabs, an elder has a list of songs recommended by the minister, sometimes he picks one by one from the ones he and the rest of the group knows better, and sometimes the brothers suggest what to sing next (this may even provoke clashes, as I witnessed in the Luga rehab). A guitar helps significantly, for in its absence—when an elder cannot play and the rehabilitants are not allowed to—the choir may sound cacophonous, for many of rehabilitants have a bad ear for melody.

Besides the hymnals, in most rehabs there are copybooks with more recent songs, some from Christian pop-bands and some from amateur writers, and the brothers spend lots of time copying the lyrics. Some of the songs are dedicated to the same general Christian subjects: repentance, life beyond the grave, or God's Grace, and some concern drug addiction precisely, like the impressive "My Friend" by Evgenii Gudukhin: "Be damned you, needle! Couldn't he live much longer! Why should he die at twenty-five, at twenty-five?" (Gudukhin 1995, media source)

Many rehabilitants, even those doubtful in faith and resistant to repent, enjoyed singing. They had their favorite songs and hymnals, and even tried to copy them down to keep after their rehabilitation. Even though most of
the ministers emphasize that "it's not just singing, it's glorifying God," glorification does not affect conversion as much as prayer or Scripture. Singing is often seen as an obligatory, routine, and complimentary activity, although some talented brothers may be especially good at it.

Glorification is another example of the narrative of Baptist faith. Unlike prayer as a narrative of a believer's current state or testimony as a life-story, glorification is a conventional narrative, shared among the members of the community, congregation, or rehabilitation, performing at the same time. Prayer and testimony are individual narratives, each one representing a person's own relations with God and his own life. Glorification, in turn, is a consolidator for the community of brothers and sisters in Christ, singing in chorus for the God's glory.

**Summary**

This chapter focuses on a literal interpretation of Scripture as the main mechanism for constructing the narrative of conversion in Good Samaritan. Rehabilitation and conversion are inseparable, as they are two sides of the same process in the rehabs. Biblical conversion provides a powerful narrative for the radical moral transformation, interpreting a bygone life, moral collapse, and reasons and motives to break. Rehabilitation, in turn, is a substantial evidence and consequence of this break, providing addicts with a new meaning and purpose in life.

Conversion in the context of contemporary Russia is a very specific process, hence the study of conversion in post-Socialism is a distinct field of anthropological research. Always significantly impacted by the history of oppression, isolation, and neglect, Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet Evangelicalism occupies a specific niche. Major Evangelical denominations—such as Pentecostals and Baptists, each represented by at least two major
institutional bodies—are numerous, but marginalized in the media and public discourse. However, nowadays, they have opportunities to evangelize unthinkable earlier. However, they predominantly remain in the context of marginal people: addicts, convicts, disabled, homeless, orphans, elderly; and marginal peoples: Far North, Middle Asia, and other distant and inaccessible regions.

The only sufficient and reliable way of learning the will of God is learning his Word—the Bible. One of the distinctive features of Evangelicalism is biblical literalism. It has been studied before as an element of American Evangelical culture (Crapanzano 2000; Bielo 2009). Despite the common Evangelical adherence to the *sola Scriptura* principle, there are numerous interpretations and applications of Scripture, so it is fair to argue for multiple *literalisms*. All other tenets and beliefs are deductible from Scripture, yet different hermeneutics allow a wide range of different political, dogmatic, and moral standpoints.

A study of Scripture is the major and predominant activity in Good Samaritan. Studying, learning, and internalizing Scripture as the language of worship, interpersonal communication, and even thought and reasoning is the principle and mechanism of Russian Baptist conversion, at least in a rehabilitation context. The more one is versed in Scripture and applies it in every aspect of his life and thought, the more one is considered to be *spiritually mature*.

The interpretation of the Bible in Good Samaritan is a specific case of *lay hermeneutics*. The brothers, even the ministers most versed in Scripture, are all recent addicts, with very few exception. Apart from all of the dogmatic and exegetic context they are getting from head ministers, pastors, and supplementary literature, their interpretation is substantially influenced by their own rich, though very much precise life-experience. There is
always a huge degree of contemporary Russian sociocultural context, prison, and junkie culture involved in the interpretation of the biblical text. However, precisely this kind of hermeneutics constructs the narrative of Russian Baptist Biblicism, conversion to Christianity, and, consequently, Christian Rehabilitation.

The key mechanism and technique of evangelism is a specific narrative, called testimony. A testimony is a life-story, an autobiography, stressing total moral failure and physical destruction caused by sin, and a miraculous salvation by Christ at the moment of repentance. The main message of an Evangelical testimony is that all men are sinners and deserve perdition, unless and until they totally surrender their whole life to Christ. God is the giver of life, a strict judge, and he is the only one capable of changing lives.

The paramount narrative of faith and Christian life of the Russian Baptists is manifested in prayer. Prayer is an actual representation of the current psychological, moral, and spiritual state of a believer. Prayer is the only way to directly address God and the Russian Baptists encourage doing it as often as possible, using every cause and occasion to thank God or ask for his will in any important decision or life-choice.

Glorification serves as a consolidator for the community of brothers and sisters in Christ, unlike the individual narratives of conversion and faith—testimony and prayer. It refers to the historical tradition of the Reformation, global Evangelicalism, from which a significant part of the hymnals is borrowed, and specificity of the Russian Evangelical interpretation of Christianity, inspiring both, translation of the old hymns and composing the new ones.
9. Coda

Review of research questions and theoretical contribution

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 address my research questions formulated in the introduction and chapters 2 through 5 provide my analysis with necessary context. The questions are as follows:

- What is global and what is specific in Russian Evangelicalism and Baptism in particular?
- How are the narratives of conversion and rehabilitation constructed?
- What is the relation between the processes of rehabilitation from substance use dependence and conversion to Christianity?

Chapter 6 deals with the first research question and reflects on the features of Russian Evangelicalism and Baptism in particular. There are dogmatic, liturgical, and other cultural issues shared with global Evangelicalism, as well as those unique and local in the Russian social, political, and linguistic context. Good Samaritan provides substantial evidence and examples of such features, including, most remarkably, biblical literalism.

Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the narratives of rehabilitation and conversion. These narratives are entangled, basically representing two aspects of the same two-dimensional process of Christian Rehabilitation. These two aspects constitute one process and they are inseparable. One does not work without another, conversion works through rehabilitation and rehabilitation through conversion.

The construction of both narratives addresses the psychological and moral transformation of an addicted sinner. Substance use dependence is twofold: it is bodily, treated by prolonged abstinence and isolation, and psychological, treated by constructing a new meaning of life. At the same
time, addiction is a slavery of sin, hence an addict him/herself is claimed not capable of treating it. The only capable one is Christ, and the only way to Christ is through a total surrender—radical conversion.

The bygone sinful life, a new Christian life, and conversion as transition from one to another are represented in three major narratives. Testimony reflects on the sinful life and total moral failure leading to repentance, prayer expresses a current spiritual state of a believer, and glorification is a shared narrative of a Christian congregation. All three are based on the language of the Russian Synodal Bible, read and interpreted in a particular historical, political, and sociocultural discourse.

These three narratives compose the whole spiritual life of a convert, also providing him/her with an indissoluble explanation of his/her earthly bodily life. Every aspect of life, every good or bad thing, every crisis is explained in testimony; every concern, need, or gratitude to God (for anything good or just for the life that goes on) is articulated in prayer; and the desired state of brotherhood and brotherly love in the Christian community is expressed in singing together.

Addressing every aspect of a believer's life, these narratives become a part of everyday conversation, thought, and eventually motivation and reasoning. Step-by-step, conversion goes further and faith grows stronger with adopting and internalizing this biblical narrative—the language of Russian Synodal Bible, influenced by particular dogmatics and sociocultural context.

My work contributes to the anthropological study of Christianity by addressing the social and cultural role of the Bible in the precise discourse of Russian Synodal Translation, Russian Evangelicalism, and street and junkie context of the rehabilitation program. The biblical text does not
merely construct the narrative of faith, but also of everyday life, thought, and reasoning.

Secondly, I emphasize the role of dogmatics in the radical moral transformation of converts and their further Christian life. Commonly, dogmatics are regarded as a formal institution, thus having little importance in real life. In Russian Evangelicalism they, however, define the way the Bible should be read and interpreted, thus implicitly, but strongly affecting everyday Christian reality.

Another important topic I reintroduce to the anthropology of Christianity is the study of Russian Evangelical Christianity. Commonly disregarded as a self-subsistent field of research, with exceptions of historical studies (Nikolskaia 2009; Sawatsky 1981; Panchenko 2013) or rare ethnographic contributions (for instance, Wanner 2007; Kormina 2013; Shtyrkov 2013), Russian Evangelicalism is seen as either a marginal and/or rather recent phenomenon. My work is based on the 150-year history of Russian Baptist Christians and claims that it has developed in a very specific way.

Lastly, my contribution to the ethnographic understanding of materiality, and particularly the dichotomy of biological body versus social body, is represented by the analysis of the twofold nature of substance use dependence and its respective treatment with twofold rehabilitation. The moral and bodily transformations are so tightly connected and mutually dependent that they are better to be regarded as one two-dimensional process.

**Suggestions for further study**

The rehabilitation ministry, as well as the Russian Baptist community in general, is a rich and complex field of study. The fieldwork research that I conducted, not to mention countless other possible modes of participant
observation, calls for a huge variety of diverse research topics, corresponding to the actual social, cultural, political, economic, and historic problems of contemporary Russia. I, however, emphasize five of the most relevant and logically subsequent directions of further ethnographic interest.

Focusing on the discourse of stigmatization of addicts, their radical exclusion from the society in the rehabs, partial return as the members of not very much isolated, though self-focused and self-sufficient Baptist community, I suggest scrutinizing the reintegration and mild inclusion of converts back to the society. Focusing on a more general subject—Evangelical converts in Russian context, rather than just former addicts in Good Samaritan—the phenomenon of reintegration raises a question of interrelations of dense Evangelical congregations with the wider society in the context of the doctrinal dichotomy of godly and worldly.

A specific niche of social support, occupied by Evangelicals in Russia and a post-Soviet space, has been thoroughly studied ethnographically (e.g., Caldwell 2004; Koosa and Leete 2014). However, not only tensions with authorities and bureaucratic apparatus lack substantial study, but also competition over religious monopoly of ROC and its anti-ecumenical policy towards Evangelicals, predominantly perceived and referred to as the Western sects. A comparative analysis of an Evangelical marginal position with the vocal and explicit exoticism of Charismatic movements would significantly add to the holistic argument.

Bible study was also examined as a mechanism of construction of Evangelical literalist narrative (e.g., Bielo 2009). Yet analogous to the study of conversion in a post-Soviet space as a distinct field of ethnographic research, autonomous from the Anthropology of conversion to Christianity in general, Bible study in the post-Soviet context should also be scrutinized separately. Continuing the research direction I have suggested in chapter 8
for the study of Scripture in the rehabs, a focus on home Bible study in small groups in the Russian context should also take into account the specificity of the Russian Synodal Bible, the history of Russian Evangelicalism, and all social, cultural, political, and economic context.

The intersection of Anthropology of gender, sexuality, and Evangelical Christianity would give promising research perspectives on gender roles in the Baptist community. I have discussed my limited access to women in Good Samaritan, but from the glimpses of my communication with female ministers and conversations on the family topics elsewhere I got the impression that there is a complex hierarchical system of gender and family roles, much deeper than the exegetics of, for instance, Paul's Epistle to Ephesians. I touched upon them in chapter 7, but they are definitely worthy of an independent study.

Lastly, in sight of the tragic events of 2014-2015 in Ukraine, Evangelical communities often divide over the issue of supporting the conflicting sides. There is also a third option: strict neutrality and prayers for unconditional peace. Besides rare analytical attempts of certain aspects (e. g., Cherenkov 2015), the role of Evangelicals and their perception of the Ukrainian crisis call for in-depth analysis by Anthropology, as well as other social sciences.

**Conclusion**

This thesis is a study of the Russian Baptist rehabilitation ministry for the addicted people called Good Samaritan. I scrutinize a phenomenon of rehabilitation through conversion to Christianity and, vice versa, conversion through rehabilitation, by also addressing the discourse of substance abuse in contemporary Russia and Russian Evangelical Christianity as both a global and local phenomenon.
I argue that Christian Rehabilitation is a twofold process of bodily detoxication through prolonged isolation and a radical moral transformation through conversion to Christianity. This twofold process reflects on the twofold nature of substance use dependence: biochemical and psychological. The narrative of conversion is constructed upon the literalist reading of the particular translation of Scripture—Russian Synodal Bible—impacted by the 16th (Martin Luther) and 17th century (Jacobus Arminius and the Remonstrants) Protestant dogmatics, and Russian historical and sociocultural context. The narrative of rehabilitation is also influenced by the street, junkie, and prison experience of the elders, who hold the authority to interpret Scripture.

I have introduced the phenomenon and discourse of substance abuse in contemporary Russia. The overall ignorance and lack of education on substance dependence, consequent stigmatization of addicts, and state anti-narcotic policy, based on this stigmatization, construct the narrative of the rational choice and immorality of addicts.

This narrative significantly aggravates the addiction situation in Russia, adds to the introduction of new unpredictable substances, and further criminalization of addicts and narco-propaganda. However, it also substantially contributes to the perception of addiction as a slavery of sin, and Christian rehabilitation, thus, addresses both rational choice and morality.

Biblical rehabilitation in Good Samaritan is based upon the narrative of a radical break with the past. The bygone sinful life is associated with total moral and physical failure. Rehabilitants are proven totally incapable of managing their own lives, their life-experience is compromised, and their wisdom and education are devalued, for basically all of these have brought them to the rehab and many of their peers to prisons or graveyards. A past
such as this—with all its wisdom, values, logic, and experience—should be rejected, deemed useless, harmful, misleading, and sinful.

The alternative to a bygone life is a Christian life. When one repents, one rejects the bygone life, admits helplessness, and gives total control over his/her life to Jesus. Accepting Christ's atonement sacrifice on the cross, a repentant convert is thus justified, forgiven, and redeemed. But faith should bear consequences in this life. Real actions and changes should follow. The only way to live a Christian life and not lose salvation is following God's will, an account of which is exhaustively given in Scripture. Hence studying, learning, and applying Scripture in everyday life, everyday communication, thought, and reasoning is what a Russian Baptist conversion really means.

The Russian Baptist Church is the brightest example of a *local* Evangelical community. Russian Evangelicals share all foundational principles with their brothers and sisters in faith worldwide. However, the local context is too strong and explicit, making Russian Evangelical communities specific and, most significantly, very much *Russian*. Common Protestant dogmatics, initially formulated as a response to Catholicism, inevitably reflect on and argue with Orthodoxy in a Russian context. The post-Soviet context, in turn, adds sociocultural issues to the discussion. The modern interpretation of classical Protestant tenets, formulated in the 16th and 17th centuries, also address the economic and political issues of contemporary Russia, alcoholism, drug abuse, crime and prisons, and foreign relations.

Tough and often tragic 150 years of Russian Evangelical history, seen through the prism of glocalization, reveal the remarkable influence of the old-Russian religious movements, later incorporated into the Baptist community, God-seeking ideas in Russian literature and philosophy, and
also seven decades of oppressions, isolation, and neglect. All of these had a major impact on the dogmatics, theology, hermeneutics, and life-style of Russian Evangelicals.

The ministry of Good Samaritan is the brightest example of the three main phenomena I address in this thesis: cultural codes of Russian drug addicts and alcoholics, biblical conversion and Christian rehabilitation, and glocalization of Russian Evangelicalism. Yet, as I have argued earlier, ethnographic study of both, Evangelical Christianity and substance abusers, is always personal. My work with the people in rehabs and their elder brothers and sisters thus has not just given me new friends or new food for thought, but significantly reshaped my attitude to Russian Baptists and Evangelical Christians in general.

Even though the ministry may not be the most effective rehabilitation program in the region, I witnessed this radical break with the past, transformation from despised, neglected, and criminalized self to something new. This new self, though based on a worldview and morality that is alien to me, belongs to sympathetic, honest, sincere, caring, and loving people. They have a purpose in their lives, they are happy about every new day they live, and they are satisfied with few material things, few clothes to wear, few meals to eat, and the simplest premises to reside in. All these changes sharply contrast with the common image of ordinary Russian people, not to mention drug addicts and alcoholics.
10. References

Bibles
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