

GAMBOA UNION CHURCH

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NOVEMBER 2012 THE BUSES ARE BACK! These buses mean tourists and tourists mean opportunities to share the Lord with people from many different countries.

What a way to be involved in missions.... I just walk out my office door and there are people from many lands. It is to this mission field that I present my book and now there is at least one copy of FINDING FREEDOM IN PANAMA in nearly thirty different countries (including Iran in Farsi).

How did all of this start? About eight years ago I began to notice tour buses going past the church to take their passengers to a pier here in Gamboa. They had come from the Atlantic ship terminal about 90 minutes away. They would board the tour boats in Gamboa and transit half of the canal, the locks and on out to the Pacific Ocean. They would be met by the buses again and taken back to the Atlantic Ocean docks. It is while they are waiting to board the tour boats in Gamboa that I have the opportunity to greet the tourists. When there is a delay, I have the opportunity to present my book.

One day, about eight years ago, I saw about ten buses in the parking area just down from the church and there were hundreds of delayed tourists just walking around. I suddenly had an idea to rush down there and try to sell my book. (I am always glad to sell a book but I am more anxious to get the message to another family). When I got to a group of tourists, I raised my voice and told them who I was and a little about the book. Then I passed them out for all to see. It turned out that they were all British! But they had a great interest in the Panama prisons and in Gen. Noriega. I sold 6 books!

This began a whole new ministry ...and outlet to market the book. I began to look for the tourists on a regular basis and figure out their schedule. I gave free copies in Spanish to the tour guides and drivers. I developed a 15 second presentation of who I was and the contents of the book. We also put a special notice on our church signboard: GOD LOVES TOURISTS.

Then one day, there was a long delay for several buses. The people needed bathrooms. So, I opened the church and the lines began to appear. Last Christmas time, a bus stopped in the middle of our Sunday service. So they stood in line for the bathrooms and listened to our Christmas music.

Then a problem happened. A tourist complained to the tour leader and wrote to the owner that they didn't go on a tour "for religion." So the tour leader told me that I had no more access to the buses. I found out the name of the owner and went to speak with him.

Guess what? He had gone to high school with our twins and son-in-law. He gladly listened to my story and how we gave the tourists access to the church bathrooms. He was happy to receive my book and wrote a personal card for me to have as an I.D. card around my neck. I was legal!

One day I met a couple who had just gotten married. They stepped off the bus, took me aside and asked me to pray a "blessing on their marriage." Another lady wrote and said that the book gave her courage to go on a summer mission trip. Others have written to be added to our newsletter list.

So many wonderful testimonies, and many I will know nothing about until I get to glory. Thanks for your part in supporting the mission here to make this possible. Jesus is Lord of Lords! Bill