

GAMBOA, PANAMA

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SEPTEMBER 2012 FORTY YEARS AGO, ANN AND I STARTING PRAYING AND supporting a Christian radio station in Manila, Philippines. One of the many areas of Asia that the broadcasts covered was the country of Russia and what was known then as the Soviet Union.

Now fast forward to the month of September 2012. Sitting in my office was a Russian pastor who was one of many that chose to leave his country seventeen years ago when the borders opened. He and his wife, six children and other Russian families were sponsored by Mennonite churches in the Lancaster, PA area.

He began to tell me his story for my daily radio program with his son translating from Russian to English. He was one of eleven children. Before his father was married, he spent five years in a Soviet prison camp for being a Christian and his grandfather, a pastor, had spent seven years in prison for his faith.

In order for his family to meet as Christians, his parents would walk with all eleven children several miles to meet in a house church at 6:00 a.m. They would have to meet so early to avoid the police and not to arouse the notice of neighbors. Very few had cars which meant they had to walk the long distance carrying the smaller children even in the snow and rain. They would meet for hours packed into a small room on wooden benches and during the summer months it would be extremely hot.

Suddenly I heard the word "Manila" mentioned. He went on to say that because of no Bible schools, seminaries or teaching material, they had to be taught by means of Christian radio...which was being broadcast from the Philippines.

I got so excited! Wow, what an answer to all those prayers and support over the years to the Far East Broadcasting Company. They broadcast now into many countries, with over 100 stations and into many different languages. And now here was a Russian pastor sitting in the office of an American from N.Y. State making a radio program in Panama. We had a great time of sharing.

Pastor Nikolay said that all of his seven children are Christians and living for the Lord. (He came to the USA with six children and one was born in America.) He said that the sad part is that many of the other Russian Christians that came at the same time attained the "American dream" of a house and car, but the lure of material things has drawn them away from the Lord.

He gave a strong and encouraging word to our congregation at a Sunday service and he and I served the people communion together. This was totally a first for me! We all prayed for his family and ministry and then he raised his hands to say a blessing over the congregation. Later I was to learn that one of our men suddenly "saw" a white covering come over everyone. We interpreted that to mean the "righteousness of Christ" and His protection from the evil that assails us.

Thank you for your prayers and support for what God is doing here...it is so encouraging!

Income tax deductible gifts can be sent to: Mrs. Syd Corbett; 231 SE 45th Terrace; Ocala, FL 34471

May the Lord continue to give you vision to serve Him in these days!!! Bill Wilbur