

# GAMBOA UNION CHURCH

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DECEMBER 2008 I WAS SHOT IN THE BACK and paralyzed ....this was part of the amazing testimony given by Jose, a former member of the guerilla force in Nicaragua. He told his story of the ten years he spent in the rebel forces at one of our recent Sunday morning services. He not only was a killer, but trained others to kill....until he was shot in the back.

As he lay in the hospital and the doctors were planning an operation, with no guarantee to make him walk again, a pastor came to visit him. When the pastor prayed for him, the power of God went through his body totally healing him. Two days later the doctors planned to operate. Jose insisted that he was healed and so another x-ray was taken showing that there was no damage to the spine. He left the military and went into the ministry, but not without resistance from other soldiers. This happened ten years ago and he has been serving the Lord as an evangelist travelling around sharing his testimony and the good news of Jesus Christ ever since.

A book story....I got an e-mail the other day that really encouraged me. Apparently, last January a man and his wife were on a cruise ship that landed in Panama and they signed up for a tour which took them by bus from Colon (on the Atlantic side of Panama) to Gamboa. In Gamboa they would board a tour boat which would take them on a partial transit of the canal. I shared with you last year how the Lord opened the opportunity to board the buses in Gamboa and in the few minutes just before the tourists got off the buses and on to the boats, I would hastily present my book.

Well, this couple bought one but misplaced it when they returned home to the states. Just recently they found it, both read it and now they wanted to help support the ministry to the prison. I was just praying a couple days before that about the books....wondering what happens to them and if any lives are touched by them. You can imagine how excited I was to get that e-mail.

Which leads me to this thought...aren't you so glad you have the freedom of religion, to be able to go to church without persecution, to have a Bible, to have Christian TV and radio? During this Christmas season, we need to give thanks to God and support these ministries more than ever while we have the opportunity to do so. At Gamboa Union Church this Christmas, we are not giving gifts to our friends in the church but giving a special offering for the persecuted church.

God has blessed the Wilbur family this past year. Our son, David, continues to improve after a delicate surgery on his neck in May; his wife, Martha is being strong as she still struggles with some after effects of a car accident 18 months ago; and their three boys are handsome and growing strong. Joseph, the oldest is a great student and goes to a wonderful Christian school in Orlando.

Our daughter, Becky, and husband, Matt, have the excitement now (and a brief break each day) as four year old Markie goes off to pre-K at a Christian school here in Panama. He is a quick learner and his 2 ½ year old sister, Elyse, wants to know all about it when he comes home. They live at former Albrook air force base about thirty minutes away from us.

Ann and I celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in August and are basically in good health. We pray God's riches blessings on you for this coming year.