

GAMBOA UNION CHURCH

GAMBOA, PANAMA PASTOR BILL WILBUR

PTY 2299 BOX O25207 MIAMI, FL 33102 www.gamboaunion.com

OCTOBER 2009 Eric came for the first time to our prison meeting about five weeks ago. He seemed really intense as he listened...and even had his Bible with him. He had a different story than most of the men. First of all he was locked up because he was a businessman and the legal representative of his business. Second, he knew how long he was going to be there... just sixty days. Eric is bi-lingual and was able to tell me a lot about his life.

He is originally from Costa Rica and has lived in Panama for the past 13 years. During his teenage years he lived in Guatemala and it was there that he gave his life to Christ at age 14. He used his musical talents of singing, playing guitar and keyboard for the Lord. Two significant words were given to him during this time that the Lord had saved him and equipped him to touch many lives thru this ministry.

But like many young people, once his family moved again, he began drifting from the Lord. It wasn't a big step at first, just compromising on the little things. Soon he began drinking and using cocaine by the age of 21. Then at age 23, the "worst experience of my life" happened when his father committed suicide. He felt destroyed losing his best friend and mentor.

He got a good job, married a lovely wife and had a daughter and a set of twins. But his rebellious life style caused him to lose it all. The reality of the meaninglessness of life hit him.

Now he was in jail. God got his attention, slowed him down to call him back to his teenage calling to serve the Lord. He has rapidly read at least three Christian books a week plus his Bible. God showed him favor and he was actually able to stay in a little room connected to the chapel.

Eric leads worship and plays keyboard for the daily services. Besides reading, he is using his time to teach Spanish to an American prisoner and giving music lessons.

On Nov. 9 he will be set free and plans to be with us for church the following Sunday. With his fresh commitment to the Lord, he desires to serve Him in anyway, and especially with his musical talents.

He helped me put together this testimony as a way of giving thanks to God for His mercy on his life and asking that we would pray that God would keep him on track after his release.

Books 'n buses. – In a previous newsletter I mentioned that the tour buses would be coming soon and like last year I was praying for opportunities to sell books to the tourists. Well, the first cruise ship arrived weeks ago and the buses left the pier to take tourists throughout the area. But this year they changed the route and they will not be stopping in Gamboa loaded with tourists! I felt disappointed.

I was quickly reminded of the words of Paul to redeem the time. In other words, do what you can do while you can do it...the opportunities will not always be there. So join with me to pray for a new outlet, a new way to reach the tourists... there are thousands that come from around the world.

A few days after I prayed that, I got an order for a case of 100 books to go to the jails in Houston, Tx. How encouraging is that! Two weeks later I presented the ministry and my book to 30 Canadian travel agents. Another day I had a divine contact with a British tourist walking past our house who later bought the book at the hotel gift store. He stopped me the next day to tell me about it.

Thank you all for praying and supporting the mission here. God is good! Bill