

NOVEMBER 2009

VOICE OF GOD RECORDINGS

CATCH  
THE

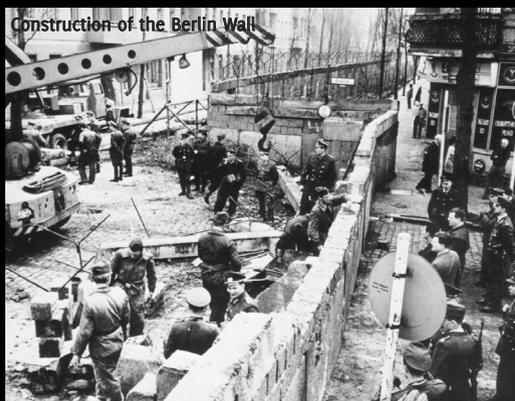
# VISION

WHERE THERE IS NO VISION, THE PEOPLE PERISH. PROVERBS 29:18



THE  
IRON  
CURTAIN

God only needs one man. That's only, He only needs one man completely in His hand. One man, that's all He needs. He can shake Russia to pieces with that one man. 62-0218 PERSEVERANCE



The Berlin wall once separated Communist East Berlin from the free, west side of the city. This icon of totalitarian rule was completed in 1961, and symbolized the impenetrable Iron Curtain, headed by the Soviet Union. While the world watched the Communist machine swallow entire countries, and the arms race was at full speed, two gallant men were smuggling in a Message that was quietly "shaking Russia to pieces."

History records the threats, intimidation, and battles between the Soviet Union and the United States of America during the Cold War, but there is a greater conflict that will probably *never* be

recorded in the world's history books. This is the conflict between God and Satan, and it has been raging since the dawn of time. Our children are taught about Joseph Stalin, Dwight Eisenhower, Nikita Khrushchev, John Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan, but these men fall in the shadow of the men that God truly used to give liberty to His children inside the Iron Curtain. If another Book of Acts would be written, the names of Heino Buitenkamp and Matti Honkanen would surely be included.

Neither of these two brothers are quick to tell their stories. Both are soft-spoken, and would rather talk about the work at hand, than tell of their past adventures in spreading the Message throughout Communist Europe. In reality, these two men risked their lives, and the lives of their families, because they saw the importance of bringing the Message through the Iron Curtain.

Brother Heino came from the west, in Holland. He smuggled Message material in and out of the Eastern Block countries, usually going through West Germany to get behind the Iron Curtain. The translated Message books had plain, white covers, with only a title on the front, so they would not draw too much attention.

The DDR (East Germany) was the most dangerous. From childhood, they were taught that capitalism was evil. Everywhere we went, we were thought of as spies. They hated anything from the West, and every move we made was strictly controlled in typical Soviet fashion.

As we drove up to the border in my old diesel car, the guard towers and barbed wire that separated West Germany from the DDR looked like a giant prison. If the Lord protected us, we would return after ten days. I know that the worrying and wondering was hard on my wife and children, but it was worth every sacrifice we made.

It seemed like anything could happen when we came to a stop at the border checkpoints. On one occasion, the guard ordered us out of the car while pointing his machine gun right at me. They found the box of tapes and asked me what they were. I told them that they were for my personal listening. I was interrogated for the next four hours. They took my tapes away and brought me into a room. They asked question after question, quickly, not giving me a chance to respond. I was careful to not mention anything religious and told them that I was just visiting friends. I am not sure if they listened to the tapes or not, but eventually they gave me my visa and my tapes, and allowed me to go. The transit visa was good for a few hours to get through

the DDR on our way to Poland. If there was a delay, and the transit time did not match, we were questioned at the next checkpoint. You always wanted to avoid being checked by the DDR guards.

Once we got to Poland, things were a little easier. I sometimes left a chocolate bar on the seat when the border guards searched the car. They probably barely had enough bread to feed their families, so the chocolate was good incentive to let us through the border.

Brother Sitek was my contact in Poland. He was a precious brother that had a great burden to see the Message translated into Polish. I would bring the Polish, Czech, and Slovak Message books that were recently printed by Spoken Word Publications, and later, Voice Of God Recordings, to distribute to the believers, along with a few English books for translation. The trip got really dangerous when I picked up the translated manuscripts.

It was absolutely illegal to bring any written material out of the communist countries. It is ironic that we smuggled hundreds of books and tapes into the Iron Curtain, but the most dangerous part was smuggling a few typed manuscripts out. I kept the manuscripts in my briefcase and left it on my seat, in full view, at every checkpoint. In all the years I traveled into the Eastern Block countries, that briefcase was never checked. Truly, the Lord was always with us.

I often look back on those days, and wonder what has happened. There was once such a hunger to hear the prophet, and now it seems that the hunger has left many believers around the world. I sometimes wish that I could go back to those days. They cherished every Message book or tape that we brought them. Yes, it was dangerous, but there was such love and unity among the people.

While Brother Heino was going back and forth across the Iron Curtain in the western Communist countries, Brother Matti came in through the north and went right to the heart of the regime, in Russia.

The KGB was an ever-present danger, but he fearlessly infiltrated the country to find God's predestinated Seed. He was not always sure of what he would find around the next corner. He might meet armed soldiers or he might find a wayward sheep, looking for the great Shepherd.

I was traveling quite often during the 1980's to Leningrad, which today is called St. Petersburg. During one of those trips, I met a man, who traveled about 800 kilometers to Leningrad with just one desire in his mind: He wanted to meet somebody from Finland that could possibly give him maybe one Message book or tape of Brother Branham. I don't know how, but some Russian believers had knowledge of Brother Branham's visit to Finland, and this is the reason for his desire to meet somebody from Finland. Of course the chances of this happening were almost nothing, but with God all things are possible. He didn't know anything about me or my travel schedules. He was just walking by faith, trusting that the Lord will lead him and give him the desire of his heart.

At that time we had an opening to visit a Oneness Pentecostal group. The man was in attendance at the same meeting. At the end of the meeting he got a sister to interpret for him and asked the congregation if there would be anybody present that knows about Brother Branham.





Brother Matti Honkanen

I was the only one, and through the interpreter, he asked to get some books. I was able to give him a few Message books that I, and some other Finnish brothers, had been able to get through the Soviet customs as our personal reading.

We agreed that I would come again and meet him after a month. After that, for about three years, I traveled nearly monthly to the Soviet Union and brought with me nearly all the Messages that were in print form during that time.

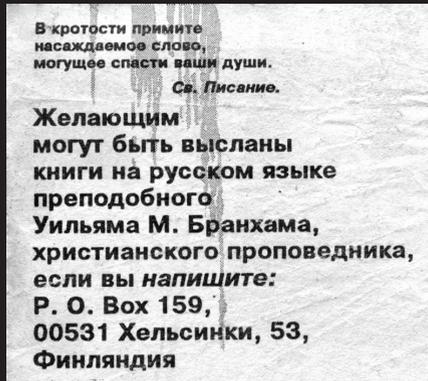
Most of the translations were then done by hand and also hand-copied by the believers. Owning foreign religious literature could lead to criminal charges, and distributing and manufacturing it was even more dangerous. It was absolutely counted political propaganda and the punishment usually was two to five years in prison or in labor camps.

In the late 1980's, the brother and I agreed to meet along the main street, Nevskij Prospekt. When we arrived, I could see the brother nervously walking on the other side of the street and then quickly motioning us to go to a certain direction, where he then met us. He could only tell us "KGB," or at least that was the only thing we understood. He started running along the street and pulling us with him. We ran down to the underground station, and there I quickly transferred a bag full of Message books from my shoulder over to his shoulder. We both ran away in our different directions. It took three years before we met again, and that is when I learned the rest of his story.

He had returned home and buried the books in his garden, safely wrapped in plastic. In a short time, the KGB made a home search and found his typewriter, which they confiscated along with some of his translation work. They prosecuted him as "an enemy of the people," which was a common Soviet term at that time for political crimes, but the Soviet Union collapsed just two weeks before the final trial date, and he could stay a free man.

Through this underground work, many people received the Message. They were the first ones to distribute them to their fellow citizens when we could start freely mailing the books to the Soviet Union. In a period of a year, the first 21,000 books were mailed out to the Soviet Union, and the work has been going on ever since. The handwritten, and many times poor, translations have been replaced with quality translation work and efficient printing that the Lord Jesus Christ has allowed us at VGR to do.

When the doors to the Soviet Union opened, VGR was quick to respond. Brother Matti immediately mailed the Russian tract *What Think Ye Of Christ?* in bulk to recipients in Western Russia. The first mailing list consisted of 50 addresses, which were gathered from believers in Finland who had contact with believers in Leningrad (St. Petersburg). VGR then quickly printed more Russian translations. Each recipient was mailed three copies of each Message book with the hopes that they would keep one copy and give the other two away. This was a resounding success. Less than two weeks later, we received letters from 150 new addresses. It was clear that the Holy Spirit was leading us to rapidly get as much material into the country as possible. We again mailed three copies of each Message book to each address. We received over



В кротости примите  
насаждаемое слово,  
могущее спасти ваши души.  
Св. Писание.

Желающим  
могут быть высланы  
книги на русском языке  
преподобного  
Уильяма М. Бранхама,  
христианского проповедника,  
если вы напишите:  
Р. О. Вох 159,  
00531 Хельсинки, 53,  
Финляндия

500 new addresses within a few more weeks. Needless to say, the Russian work was well underway. Interestingly, someone anonymously posted a simple ad in several Russian newspapers that read, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. Those who desire can receive Christian booklets of Rev. William Branham translated into Russian if you write to (Voice Of God Recordings Finland address)."

The Russian work continues to increase since Brother Matti first risked his life to deliver his precious cargo in the 1980's. Today, all Russian Message material is printed or duplicated inside that country. VGR has duplicated 138,000 Russian sermons in MP3 format. We have 138 MP3 sermons translated into Russian and 30 more in the checking process right now. To go along with the CDs, we have printed over 7.5 million Russian Message books in 158 different sermon titles. And there is more: The former Soviet countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan are also receiving Message material that is printed or duplicated inside Russia and Ukraine.

Brother Heino's work has seen equal success. The European office in Holland stocks a larger variety of languages (23) than any other foreign VGR office and serves 25 different countries. Many of these countries are former Eastern Block nations that Brother Heino used to visit. His son, Gerald, now travels freely through Eastern Europe spreading the Gospel with his sons, the third generation of Buitenkamp missionaries.

Brother Heino and Brother Matti are still doing the Lord's work in Eastern Europe. Brother Matti is the VGR Office Manager in Finland, and still regularly travels to Russia. He works closely with the VGR office in St Petersburg, coordinating translations, printing Message books, and duplicating MP3 CDs. Brother Heino is the VGR Office Manager in Holland. He routinely visits believers in the former Eastern Block, and is a mentor to his grandchildren, Timothy, Matthew, and Benjamin as they go out onto the missionary field to spread the Gospel.



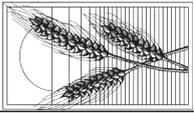
Brothers Heino, Gerald, Timothy, Matthew, and Benjamin Buitenkamp

As we think about the testimonies of these two gallant men, it is easy to imagine that these stories came from a time long ago, when the world was a much different place. In reality, this month marks only twenty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and even less time since the collapse

of the Soviet Union. Most of the guards that pointed automatic weapons in these brothers' faces, and searched their cars for religious propaganda, are probably now only in their forties. Yes, the communist machine is still very much alive.

We are storing up the Food while the Russian giant is sleeping. The presses in Russia are still unhindered, printing an average of fifty-thousand Message books every month. On top of that, thousands of Russian-translated MP3 CDs are duplicated each year. New translations are continually going through the rigorous checking process to make sure the Bride can believe every Word they read or hear. The window into the Iron Curtain may close today, or in ten years from now, so we want to make sure that the granaries inside are full and ready to feed the Bride of Christ until the Bridegroom returns.

*That's what each individual of the church ought to purpose in their heart, to do their very best for the Kingdom of God. And how do you serve God? When you're serving one another. When you're taking the little end of the horn, as it was to say. And men who has ever amounted to very much in the world, has been men who's come down, and become not great men; they made themselves small in order to accomplish a purpose.*



CATCH THE VISION IS PUBLISHED BY VOICE OF GOD RECORDINGS, INC.

Dedicated to the ministry of God's prophet, William Marrion Branham.

*"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."* REVELATION 10:7

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