

RUSSIA

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"God worked in a marvelous way," said Stone, who also witnessed in Hungary and Rumania before returning home.

Glass, who speaks Russian and translated and interpreted the language during his military career, was called on often when the teams visited prayer houses, churches and schools, working 18 hours a day and traveling in government vehicles operated by Soviet drivers and accompanied by Russian interpreters.

Standing in Red Square on snow-covered cobblestone streets was awesome, they said. With The Kremlin and Lenin's tomb in the background and a huge cathedral with a cross in the center, the Americans distributed Russian tracts on "How to be saved."

"One man told me he couldn't read Russian. It's a small world. The fella was from Oklahoma and owned a textile mill in Spartanburg, SC and had traveled I-85 to Kings Mountain," said Philbeck.

Stone told the story of how he met an American from Belmont in Rumania.

"Spaseebo," Russian for thank you, was often used by the American visitors who soon became fast friends with church leaders, young translators, and new converts to Christianity.

Macedonia Church has already invited a Russian pastor to come to Kings Mountain and Stone hopes

to sponsor a translator.

Fyodor, their Russian host, was locked up by Russian dictators in 1961 and imprisoned three years for preaching the Book of John. Philbeck was in his pulpit with three other preachers in a service that lasted three hours.

"Those people are hungry for the Word of God," said Glass.

All three men said they are ready to return to Russia and are sharing slides and pictures from the trip with local congregations.

Natasha Starostina, a young Russian mother, served as a translator for Glass and Philbeck and before they left the Kings Mountain men gave Christmas gifts to her family.

Stone also gave warm winter clothes he had packed for the week's trip to new friends in Russia and all three men also gave money to needy families.

Stone said that 95 percent of the people he met love Americans. And, he said they are eager to know about Jesus Christ and the message of salvation.

"Growing up in a communist environment and taught by atheists they told us they didn't know about God," said Glass. People stretched out their arms to the visitors as they handed out Bibles on the street corners.

Philbeck said the Russian Bibles were printed in Moscow by a Protestant printer on government presses, something that would not have been allowed until democracy entered the Soviet Union.

A highlight of their trip was a visit to the military bases where

they passed out Bibles and 70 percent of the ranks accepted God, said Glass. "It was just amazing," said Glass, of the outpouring of The Holy Spirit. Never before, he said, had American missionaries been allowed on the military bases but the Assistant Minister of Defense from Russia worked out the details and was supportive of the evangelistic effort.

The local delegation landed in Russia in a snow storm and departed in a snow storm but they said the weather didn't turn bitter cold until after they returned home.

They found the food good in the churches they visited but learned to like hard rolls and butter after they were offered raw fish and caviar three meals a day at the hotel where they stayed. "We thought McDonald's was the promised land," said Philbeck, who also learned to love warm Pepsi Cola.

Russian people are poor. There were no long lines at the grocery stores. The Russian working people buy staple potatoes, cabbage and beets. Inflation is up. Local people told the visitors that the quality of life was better under the communist regime because the government gave them just enough money to survive. The average pay is 1500 rubles a month or about 40 American dollars. Comparing the costs, Glass explained that an American dollar would buy a cheeseburger, fries, drink, and dessert at McDonald's but it would cost 500 rubles. "Not many people we met could afford to eat at McDonald's. A nuclear physicist would make about \$14 a month in

American money," said Glass.

Moscow, inhabited by 10 million people who buy permits to live there, has 100,000 apartment buildings, according to Philbeck, who said his team lived on the 21st floor of Cosmos Hotel and couldn't see the outer edge of the city from the tall building.

Before they left for home, the Kings Mountain men gave money for Christmas trees and presents and they were treated to a Russian ballet.

Communism has a different mask now in the Soviet Union, according to Philbeck. He said their new friends described communists as vultures and say it will probably be many years before real democracy comes to the country. Hard-lined communism still survives in the area, they were told, but Christians are not discouraged.

"They told us that it took 200 years to reach this point and they won't give up," said Glass.

Philbeck was campaign chairman for the Rick Gage Evangelistic Crusade in Kings Mountain last year and signed on early with the team to go to Russia. Glass and Stone were also anxious to go.

The trip was a blessing for all three men, they said, as they got together recently to share some of their experiences and slides and pictures. Philbeck will take the message of the Russian people to Atlanta and other churches and Glass and Stone are also available

to give programs.

"We saw a quite different Russia than what we had heard about and we want to go back," said Philbeck, reminding of God's call,

"who shall I send and who will go for us?"

"Here we are, send us," was the overwhelming, enthusiastic response from the local volunteers.

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MIRACLE

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As Scottie Yarbro sat with her daughter in the labor room she kept reminding that God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

Shannon said that her young daughter would be shown pictures some day of her entry into the world and how caring friends helped them through the bad times. Eric, injured on his job October 5, 1991, was in the hospital for back surgery on November 22, 1991 and was back in the hospital on March 19, 1992, the day Shannon went into labor. But he made it to the hospital to be with her in the difficult delivery March 23, 1992.

When Shannon couldn't get to Lamaze classes, the instructor came to her home. She took Betamethosone for 20 weeks to help the baby's lungs develop. Close friends stayed with her while her husband was hospitalized. Friends from Bethlehem Baptist Church provided meals for the family when she was unable to cook.

Brooke was lifeless when her mother first saw her. After the baby received blood the color returned to her body. "Thank God for those donors," said Shannon.

Shannon continues the story of how she knew in her heart that the baby would survive.

Lying in bed for weeks at a time, she said she became depressed and one day asked her husband for a devotional book that had been given to them by the church. The book had been put up in the closet. She turned to devotionals for the birth dates of her boys and was astounded by the words on the pages.

"It was as if God was speaking to me directly and I read from 'Streams in the Desert' that God has provided some better thing for us." Fear left her.

She also read in one devotional reading from one of her boy's birth dates that "Our heavenly father never takes any earthly thing from His children unless He means to give them something better."

From the March 18 devotional page she read "God has chosen you" from John 15:16.

At Carolinas Medical Center an unusual visitor reemphasized God's plan for her, said Shannon, and became her guardian angel. She said a young girl wandered into her room from the waiting area. The child said she was visiting her sister who had given birth that day.

Her name was Candace. At her birth the girl said she weighed 2 pounds 1/2 ounce and she was 13 1/4 inches long. "It was eerie," said Shannon. Brooke weighed 2 pounds 1 1/2 ounces and was 13 3/4 inches long.

"It was almost like a sign from God that everything was all right," said the young mother who never learned the last name of her new friend.

Brooke Olivia's blood type is RH negative. She is now producing her own red blood cells, loves the bath tub and is a happy toddler, drinks five ounces of milk each day and eats food from the table.

Her infant clothes have been packed away to show her when she grows up. The home is filled with pictures of the baby and the parents plan to take her to family Christmas get-togethers with proud grandparents, Scottie and Ned Yarbro and Gene and Thelma Sellers and great-grandparents, Mary Wilson, Ethel Yarbro and Aileen Sellers, all of Kings Mountain.

Until she's a year old, the family doesn't plan to take Brooke to public occasions. They want to be very careful with this delightful gift God has given them.

Dressed in her Christmas red and white pinafore with a red bow in her hair, pearl earrings in her pierced ears, black patent shoes and white panty hose, Brooke

Olivia knows she is a special child.

"We're really blessed," says her father, who is home with her full time recuperating from surgery. Mrs. Sellers is also home full time, since she operates a beauty shop in her home.

Shannon said she has so many people to thank who stood by them. Close friends such as Lynn Rowland who made the baby's first Christmas dress and taught the Lamaze class; Kelli Grant, Tammy Scism, Julie McDaniel, Cynthia Ivester, Neal Scism and Julie McDaniel and other friends from the Bethlehem Baptist congregation and doctors and staff from Shelby Women's Clinic and attending physicians at Carolinas Medical Center who get regular updates on the baby's progress.

Shannon and Eric said the happiest moment of their lives was on May 31, 1992 when the doctor gave them the good news that then 4 pound 10 ounce Brooke could come home. Eric drove from Charlotte to Kings Mountain to pick up an infant seat and clothes for the new baby.

The parents may take their young child to the Red Cross bloodmobile visit December 18 at First Baptist Church for a brief outing. They have much to be thankful for and they want the unnamed donors who gave blood for their baby to know how much they appreciate that precious gift of life.

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SWIMMING

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