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**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIANS OF THE
EVANGELICAL FAITH**

by Alexander E. Shevchenko

PREFACE

We are living in a special historical epoch, in a period of unprecedented apostasy, skepticism, religious polemics and denial of God, in an age of terrible unbelief and theomachy. We are living in a time when faith in God and the fundamental dogmas of genuine Christianity and the practices of the early apostolic church, as never before, are subjected to fierce criticism and intense attack by the champions of ignorant materialism and militant atheism, as well as nominal Christianity. Lacking the rules or the opportunity to become familiar with the facts on which true Christianity rests, and also forgetting the world and thousands of years of history of the real church on earth, people succumb to the clever and cunning propaganda of atheistic ideas and the deception of pseudoscientific arguments, as well as philosophy and all sorts of errors and heresies that have engulfed millions of people not only in past history, but also in our so-called modern twentieth century. One can only pity these innocent people who have become victims of such unprincipled propaganda, which, by the way, has nothing in common with true science, philosophy or theology. I thank my Lord, Who found and saved me 58 years ago. He led me out of the darkness of unbelief, atheism and destruction in the early years of my life and led me on a wondrous path. I can say with the great Old Testament man and sweet singer of Israel: "My lines are passed through pleasant places" (Psalm 16:6). This brief history of Christians of the Evangelical Faith is the fruit of my many years of research and experience, as well as the real experiences of others, true followers of Christ.

In this book the reader will encounter hard-to-understand things that can only be known if they are actually experienced. These facts show that our God is a Living God. He still saves the worst sinner and whitens him with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. He still baptizes the thirsty with the Holy Spirit, following the example of the Apostolic Church. He still heals various diseases, and what modern medicine and science cannot do, He does. God still leads His people and directs His Wonderful Council today, as He once led Israel and the Apostolic Church. Glory to Him forever! For many years I have been collecting the material needed for this book; I am very grateful to the God-fearing historians from whom I borrowed the necessary dates and

information. In publishing this historical book, I have only one desire: to help many people discover the meaning of life and point to the eternal PERSONALITY of JESUS CHRIST, Who said: "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE" (John 14:6). I pray to God that my testimony and experience, as well as the testimonies of others, will serve as a blessing to the reader. A.E.Sh.

CHAPTER 1

Almost the entire Christian world knows that the spiritual movement began on the day of Pentecost, in the 34th year after the birth of Christ, in fulfillment of the prophecy of St. Joel, who said: "And ye children of Zion, rejoice and be glad in the Lord your God: for he will give you rain moderately, and will send you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain, as at other times. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. And also, on the servants and on the handmaidens will I pour out my Spirit in those days. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall there be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and upon the remnant whom the Lord shall call" (Joel 2:23, 28-29, 32). The Lord poured out His early rain on one hundred and twenty souls who were waiting and praying in the upper room in Jerusalem, from where a great movement began, which began through the Apostolic Church and embraced the entire world of that time. It has reached our century. Someone compared this movement to a stone thrown into the water. The stagnant water began to sway, the waves began to spread wider and wider, reaching the shores. The fire of the Holy Spirit fell from God in the first century and reached all the ends of the earth. Truly the Word of the Savior was fulfilled: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The history of the First Apostolic Church is remarkable, deep and extensive, because the Head of the Church is the Incomprehensible Christ. Speaking of her and her great history, the heart is filled with joy and gratitude to the Lord. Indeed, the early Church is a model for all ages. She was built of "living stones": "You also, as

living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5).

"Then Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Then Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven: And I say unto thee, Thou art Peter: and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:16-19). All these living stones were washed and cleansed: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word; that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" (EPH. 5:25-27). Apostle Paul calls her "the Body of Christ": "For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and were all given one Spirit to drink" (1 Cor. 12:12-13). In other letters he calls it the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth: "That if I tarry, you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and you are that temple" (1 Cor. 3:16-17). The members of the Church of Christ were baptized with the Holy Spirit and enriched with the gifts of the Spirit of God: "For John truly baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Therefore, they came together and asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

And you will be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:5-8). "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). Apostle Paul wrote about the manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that this Church possessed: "To one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:8-10). The Gospel of Mark says: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be damned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues" (Mark 16:16-17).

Wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, different tongues, interpretation of tongues - all these gifts of the Holy Spirit accompanied the First Apostolic Church. In the Church of Christ, God placed apostles, prophets, teachers; and to some God gave miracle-working powers, gifts of healing, helps, administration, and different languages. "And some God has set in the church, first apostles, second prophets, and third teachers; then to others He gave miracle-working powers, then gifts of healing, helps, administration, and different languages" (1 Cor. 12:20). All members of the Body of Christ, being filled with the Holy Spirit, stood at the height of their calling as a holy priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, in order to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. The multitude of church members had oneness of heart and soul. In the first century, the Church of Christ, despite terrible persecution and suffering, shone with its moral beauty, which is described in the book of Song of Songs: "Who is this

that shines as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners?" (Song of Songs 6:10).

When one reads the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament and sees the Church of the Lord in its spiritual beauty and power, one cannot help but rejoice in the work of God and thank God for all the great wealth and moral strength, energy with which He has abundantly enriched His followers. But when we look closely at the life of modern Christianity and compare it with the life of the First Apostolic Church, an enormous difference is visible. The life of many Christians is more pagan than Christian; the majority of modern Christians are nominal Christians - only in name, but not at all in life. The spiritual life of the first Christians was in full swing, a wide stream flowing through the streets and squares, but now only the name remains. Some writers of the fourth and fifth centuries already noted in their records this change in Christianity, which had Christian faith, but pagan life. But there is a way out of this sad situation: it is necessary to return to the original apostolic practice and throw overboard, as unnecessary and superfluous ballast, everything that contradicts the Word of God. The Church is a voluntary gathering of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, articulated into His Body, united among themselves by the Word of God, the hierarchy and the sacrament through the action in them of the sanctifying Spirit of God, the Head of which is Jesus Christ Himself.

The true Church is His living organism. It has gone through the centuries, conquered all obstacles and difficulties by the power of the one who loved it. Throughout all the centuries, the forces of the devil have risen up against the Church of Christ, inspiring legions of rationalists, cadres of philosophy, currents of all sorts of errors and, in recent times, unions of godless materialism and atheism to fight it. No one can defeat the Church of Christ, for its Leader and Head is the Lord Jesus Christ. We will talk about this a little later and consider what the true followers of Christ have suffered and how they selflessly gave their lives for the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 2

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH OR ITS FOUNDATION

"They are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth into a holiness and temple in the Lord" (EPH. 2:20, 21). When we propose to examine any subject more closely, it naturally becomes necessary to examine the original history and purpose of that subject. In relation to the Church, this history and purpose are most clearly and perfectly communicated. There we find not only the original intentions, but also the plans and precise directions of the Great Builder himself, when they were yet under his own Beginning. They are formed by the words of Acts 2:6: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." This is a historical fact. Foundation 11 Brief History of the Evangelical Faith of the Pentecostals In connection with the Latin states, Catholicism prevailed, while in the North American States Protestantism prevails. In addition to the well-known churches in America, there are many small religious communities. At the turn of the 20th century, a strong spiritual awakening took place in America, which had an impact even on Europe, Soviet Russia and other countries. The movement of Christians of the Evangelical Faith of Pentecostals passed through almost all countries of the world, where millions are still carrying the message of the Full Gospel to people in all corners of the world, teaching about the necessity of baptism in the Holy Spirit in the image of the First Apostolic Church.

CHAPTER 10

In 1920, the Holy Spirit sent missionaries from New York to Europe. Brother Ivan Efimovich Voronaev with his family and Brother Koltovich brought the good news of the Full Gospel to Bulgaria, where the Lord lit the fire of Pentecost and many thousands were converted from darkness to marvelous light, from the power of Satan to God. In 1921, the Lord commanded them to go to Ukraine. It was a year of natural disasters, when a terrible famine struck Ukraine and Russia and many thousands of people died of hunger.

The people had not yet forgotten the horror of the revolution of 1917. And so, in this difficult time, the Lord sent His servants with the message of the Full Gospel to bring heavenly consolation to the people. They began their work in the city of Odessa and the Lord abundantly blessed them. Many communities in the south of Ukraine were organized in 1924, forming the Odessa Regional Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith. A little later, in 1926, the All-Ukrainian Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith was organized at the All-Ukrainian Congress. In five and a half years, 350 communities and groups were organized, with a total of 17,000 members. Eternal glory and thanksgiving to the Lord for such.

Wherever the Gospel was preached, a wave of great awakening swept across Russia, and multitudes of souls were baptized in the Holy Spirit with the signs of speaking in other tongues, just as on the day of Pentecost.

This had a very beneficial effect on those around us, which once again proved the truth of the words of the Apostle Paul: "So then tongues are signs to those who do not believe" (1 Cor. 14:22). In 1926, the Lord called me and my sister Vera to Himself. We found happiness in Him, the gift of eternal life, and experienced Pentecost. Glory to God forever! We are happy that the Lord called us in our youth and led us along His great paths, granted us to see His mighty hand of deliverance from sins. His miracles and great mercies to this day. We cannot remain silent about this. As it is written in Psalm 78:1-7, "Pay attention, O my people, to my law; incline your ear to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable, and utter dark sayings of old. What we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from our children but shew forth to the generation to come the glory of the LORD, and his power, and his wondrous works which he has done. He established a statute in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to make known to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children who should be born, and that they might tell their children in due time, to set their hope in God, and not to forget the works of God, but to keep his commandments."

The Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith of Pentecostals had its own printed organ and in 1928 the first issue of the magazine "Evangelist" was

published, which I have preserved. I have several issues of this magazine to this day. It has come a long way from 1928 to 1983. The publishers of the magazine are I. E. Voronayev and I. N. Podlesny. V. R. Koltovich was also a member of the editorial board. The spiritual and moral magazine "Evangelist" is the official organ of the All-Ukrainian Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith. Brother I. E. Voronayev, being the chairman of the Union, worked especially hard, together with other brothers, in the work of God's spreading the good news of the Gospel. Once, visiting churches in our area, he had a run-in with the famous hypnotist Petukhov, who, having studied "black magic", passed himself off as a great miracle worker. Interested in the Evangelical movement. He really wanted to see Voronaev. The meeting took place in winter, when, heading to visit one of the churches, brother Voronaev and Pavlov were riding in a sleigh and Petukhov joined them. On the way, Petukhov decided to put brother Voronaev to sleep and applied all his skill to this end, but he could not put him to sleep. At that time, the horses bolted, and Petukhov fell in the snow on the move. When they stopped, they lifted him up and began to ask what had happened. Then he confessed that the power that was in brother Voronaev had overcome his power and could not withstand it. Glory to Almighty God!

Later, Petukhov himself turned to the Lord, like Simon the Sorcerer, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 8. In 1929, Brother Voronaev was arrested for his faith and exiled to Siberia, where he died after much suffering. His wife Ekaterina also languished in prison for many years, as a result of which she lost her health. Their children returned to the United States of America. Later, their mother was also released and came to America to her children. But her undermined health was never restored, and she soon departed for eternity. I personally attended her funeral in Los Angeles and, at the request of her children, performed the funeral service. Many other preachers also worked hard, not only in the Soviet Union, but also in Europe, Asia and other parts of the world, where they carried the light of the Gospel, through which a spiritual awakening began, bringing salvation to many thousands and millions of souls. Glory to our Lord! Soon after we turned to the Lord (in 1925-26) in Ukraine, we received a revelation through the gift of prophecy from the Lord that we would have a long journey to China.

It was hard to imagine. After all, Ukraine was so far from China! Many thousands of kilometers lay between us and China. Besides, we knew very little about China.

The prophecy said: "I am sending you to work." The Holy Spirit also revealed that Ukraine and Russia would be hit by great disasters, bloodshed and destruction, and that millions of people would die. But whoever trusts in the Lord will be delivered. And now that time has come. In the spring of 1928, we, the peasants, went out into the fields to plow and sow. But the Holy Spirit told us: "Children, you sow, but you will not reap." Just before the harvest, the Lord said: "The hour has come, my people, go out! I Myself will accompany you and protect you on your long journey." The brothers and sisters began selling their property. Of course, it was not easy to part with that Holy Spirit, as in the days of the Apostles. Blessed be the name of our Lord! I remember one case. One man became seriously ill and was in this condition for three months. He had 5 children. He had become so thin and weak from his illness that he looked like a skeleton. The elders of the church, having received a revelation from the Lord, called 15 people from the large congregation and we all came to the sick man's house. As soon as we knelt down, directing our hearts' gaze to the Lord, He did not delay in answering. The command was given: "In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk." The sick man immediately stood up and began to walk, praising the Lord. Together we thanked the Lord – the Heavenly Physician, Who performs operations without a knife and does what is impossible even for modern medicine. Nothing is impossible for Him. Eternal glory to Him!

In the city of Alma-Ata, we lived at the end of Alma-Ata Street, entrenched in the mountains. There we had God-blessed services in a temporary tent made of reed mats. The choir sang beautifully, praising the Lord. Almost every morning at dawn we gathered for prayer. And God worked. Once during the meeting, it rained, and water poured down on us through the reed mats. At that time one of the preachers in the pulpit was preaching a word on the subject: "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." - How many beautiful and magnificent buildings there are in this world, - he said, - and the children of God are in such deplorable conditions this day. But in spite of everything, the

presence of the Lord was so real that many wept, touched by the preaching of the Word of God. There were about 300 souls in the meeting, and the Lord blessed the heart of everyone. At that time, there were many exiled clergymen in Kazakhstan. We tried to give them some food from our meager rations, sending parcels to prisons through our priest, who was also an exile, or we handed them over personally. The Lord God always sees and takes into account the work of each of us. May His name be glorified!

CHAPTER 11

The Holy Spirit was pleased to direct us from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan. A large group of people were sent to the cities of T, Fergana, N, and Jal. Others were sent to the city of Jarkent, now Pamfilov, which is located near the Chinese border. Upon arrival in the city of Fergana, most of the middle-aged people found work in a cotton factory, which was still under construction. The older people did the heavy work, and the young people were sent to work in a nursery where all kinds of vegetables were grown. The field work was not hard, but the climate was hot. The nursery was located 12 kilometers from the city. Our group consisted of 20 people. We worked together and diligently, and this earned the attention of the administration. Sometimes on Saturdays and Sundays we would come to the city to visit our parents. Almost every day after work we went to pray to a mountain river that flowed nearby, and there, to the sound of water, among the bushes and shady trees, we sang, prayed, and enjoyed fellowship with the Lord, who often visited us and consoled us with the Holy Spirit. One evening we received a revelation from the Lord: "Children, go immediately, tomorrow, to your parents in the city. You have a long journey ahead of you."

In the morning, we announced to the administration our intention to leave our work and go to our parents. At first we encountered opposition from the administration, which did not want to let us go because we were a large group and the fieldwork could suffer. But they still let us go and paid us our wages that same day. When we arrived at our parents', they greeted us joyfully and said that it had been revealed to them that we would be coming today. It seems that all these are small details in life, but how important they

are, and how it strengthens the spirit and supports faith when you know that our God is alive and answers our needs. He knows the past, present and future! It is worth serving such a God! We read in the Bible: "Taste and see that the Lord is good." In every place and at every time we tried to testify about the Lord and His wonderful works. But we encountered resistance everywhere in the Soviet Union. The time had come for us to move on. Our parents had to leave their work and prepare for the journey. But the work manager objected and said that he would not let us go. He said that he would go to the railway station and tell the station master not to give us tickets. We got ready and went to the station anyway. When we approached the ticket office, we were told that there were no tickets for us. What could we do next? We gathered for prayer and began to ask the Lord. We were told: "You will leave today." All we had to do was stand courageously in faith. And indeed, by the end of the day we received tickets and set off on our journey. Praise the Lord!

Sometimes God tests us, as He tested Moses and Aaron by sending them to Pharaoh. They said to him, "Let My people go." But God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people go until the last plague. Many people think that if God blesses, then the believer's entire path will be strewn with roses. But in practice, this is not the case. We look at Abraham, the hero of faith, how God Himself blessed him and sent him to Canaan. But there was a famine there and he had to go to Egypt to find food there. But there another test awaited him. Pharaoh took his beautiful wife Sarah, and he had to endure a lot until the misunderstanding was cleared up and Pharaoh let his wife go. Abraham hurried to Canaan, immediately built an altar to the Lord and offered sacrifices of thanksgiving to the Lord God. Sometimes we are like the prophet Jonah, whom God sent to Nineveh with a specific mission, but he decided the matter in his own way and fled to Tarshish. It happens that we, as people, have our own views, desires, feelings and motives that we want to impose on God. But God values OBEDIENCE - unconditional obedience.

On the way following God's instructions the whole group arrived at the last station Iliysk. There was no train further. Steamboats did not go on the Ili River then, and we faced a difficult task: how to move on? But here too the

good Lord helped us with His good advice. Following His instructions, we soon acquired transport - horses and carts - and with God's help set out on a long journey, through mountains and valleys, in the direction of the city of Jarkent. We had 11 carts. People we met confused us, saying: - Where are you going? After all, Jarkent is a border town and to get there you need special permits or recruitment for work. You will all be arrested and it will cost you dearly. This is a great risk! Better go back! But we, trusting in the Lord, moved forward. Every day we turned to God and the Holy Spirit led and controlled. We were clearly told: "I Myself will close the eyes of the guards and lead you. Do not be afraid!" Having moved forward for almost two weeks, we began to approach the main checkpoint. The thought involuntarily crept into the minds of the unbelievers: "What if they really arrest us all and then exile us? The separation will be terrible!" When we approached the main checkpoint, the armed guards shouted: "Stop, comrades! Your documents!" Suddenly, one young man, F. Doom, jumps out of our group and says: - Comrades, these are my people recruited to work in the city of Jarkent. They asked him for his documents. He boldly takes out a document that he had only for his family. The authorities looked, turned to the other side, and handed the document back. One of them said: - Everything is in order. They even showed us the way - Here, go here, and then to the bridge and straight to the city. We drove some distance, knelt down and sincerely thanked the Lord for all His miracles, which He clearly showed. Glory to Him!

By evening we arrived in the city of Zharkent, which was 40 kilometers from the Chinese border. Now God's plan for our resettlement to China became clearer to us, which was even predicted back in 1926: We arrived in the city of Jarkent in 1931 and lived there for three years. Here we had great difficulties due to hunger. It was a terrible time. But the Lord did not abandon us. Somehow we earned our living, although hunger made itself felt. It is difficult for those who have not experienced hunger to imagine such a picture - especially here in the West, in America and Canada. And God grant that no one will have to experience such a crisis. We had our services every Sunday, having rented a house almost in the center of the city. Once during the service, the police surrounded the house and closed the shutters from the outside. It became dark inside. What were we to do? Most of us fell on our

knees and began to pray to God. And some ran away out of fear, hiding their Bibles. The police fired a few shots. Then the chief of the detachment came in and asked if there was such and such a person among us (he gave us our first and last names). We said: - No, you can check our documents. Then they "went on" and we continued our service to the Lord. How ashamed those who ran away were! It is not for nothing that they say that "fear has big eyes."

Such experiences teach us to look to the Lord in difficult moments of our lives and not to despair. When we celebrated Easter, not only did we not have any Easter cakes on the table, but we did not even have a piece of bread. We were forced to work on Sundays; we tried to observe the Lord's holidays and refused to work on such days. Because of this, we were often deprived of even a modest ration of bread. But here, in free countries, many believers do not attach any importance to this. The hunger grew worse, and we gathered more often for prayers, asking the Lord for help. Finally, my father could not stand it and said: - How long can we wait? He decided to go to China himself first and then take us. But his plan was not according to the will of God, for the hour had not yet come. He hired a guide, took his carpenter's tools and in the winter they went on a sleigh ... straight to the G.P.U. For this, my father had to sit in prison for 8 months. After his release, he often repeated the saying: "Whoever was in prison will not forget, and whoever was not will stay." This is what disobedience and impatience do. He was clearly told from above: "Do not go." But he did not listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and was punished.

The year 1933 came. Some families and groups left for China. My sister Vera and I and a few others worked 70 kilometers from the city of Zharkent. One day we received a letter from our mother asking us to come immediately, for the Lord had appointed us to set out on a journey. But it was not so easy to leave. The work supervisor categorically said that he would not let us go. What should we do? We went to inquire of the Lord, and we were told: "I will arrange the authorities, and you will go today." After lunch, we went again to the work supervisor, and he was in a completely different spirit. He let us go and gave us the money we had earned. Praise the Lord! We walked 70 kilometers and the next day we arrived in Jarkent. After a short rest, we were

on our way again towards the border. Crossing the border was not easy, since the border was patrolled, and even leaving the border town was difficult. But God had plans for us, and on the appointed day our group, 46 souls in number, gathered quietly in the house of prayer.

By evening everyone was there. Each had a battle bag on their shoulders and a staff in their hands. Many were with small children. We were all in a prayerful state, under the protection of the Lord, just as Israel on that great night of deliverance was under the protection of the Blood of the Lamb (Isaiah 12). Fear crept into some hearts, especially the parents: "What if we are discovered here?" Prison, exile and separation awaited them in case of failure. But God's protection was faithful and His defense unchanging. Glory to the Lord! In prayerful anticipation, people counted the minutes and hours: "It's already 10 o'clock... It's already 12 o'clock at night..." And suddenly, in the middle of the night silence, a strong wind arose. The poplars growing on both sides of the street rustled. At that time, the Lord commanded us: "Come out, My people! March boldly! I guard you from behind and before!"

Having opened the doors of the prayer house, we went out one by one, family by family, stretching out for a couple of blocks. I was the last to go out and closed the doors of the prayer house. It seemed that it was necessary to speak in a whisper and move quietly, but at that time several girls, filled with the Holy Spirit, began to prophesy with joy: "ORDERLY, MY PEOPLE! I GUARD BOTH THE GOING OUT AND THE ENTERING. HALLELUJAH! I MYSELF ACCOMPANISE YOU, DO NOT BE AFRAID!" As we went out of town, the city tower struck one o'clock in the morning. We checked our group and discovered that two were missing - Brother Shevchuk and his wife Anna. The Lord had appointed a more direct route to China for them. They arrived there four days earlier, and there was a legitimate reason for this. The Holy Spirit appointed Brother Verkhovod as the leader of our group. He had never been to China and none of us had ever walked that route. We relied entirely on the direction and guidance of the Lord. So we set out on an unfamiliar journey, walking through the desert. We walked at night, and during the day we mostly rested under the bushes. The Holy Spirit revealed to us where to stop, where there would be water. As long as we were obedient, everything

was fine, but as soon as we deviated, we encountered difficulties. Walking at night, we were very tired. Especially the little children.

Then we turned to the Lord and He immediately answered: "Look, go a little further and there will be trees and water. My camp is there." This strengthened our faith. Who could know at night and in an unfamiliar place what would lie ahead? Only the Lord. Praise be to Him! A few days later we approached the border. There was no water. We spent the whole day in the hot, sandy desert. Night fell and we slowly moved on again. We walked all night, but there was no water. The alarm was raised. The children cried: "Papa, Mama, give us water!" It was a tragedy that cannot be forgotten. At dawn, being on top of a sand dune, we fell to our knees and, raising our hands and eyes to the sky, cried out to God. It was a great cry with tears. Not only the adults cried out, but the children as well. Raising their little hands to the sky, they cried out to the Lord: - Heavenly Father, give us water! The Lord did not delay in answering. We were told: "Children, turn to the left. Go a little further, and I will give you water." And indeed, after going a little, we went down into the valley. Reeds appeared. The brothers began to dig the earth with their hands. Water appeared. Good water. They dug more in the sandy soil and the water increased. Then everyone, as best they could and with what they could, drew water and quenched their thirst. We spent almost the entire day near the water, resting and lightening our loads. Some were carrying quilts (with cotton wool). They threw out the cotton wool from them, leaving only the material. The bread and all the food came to an end. Our physical strength was weakening, but spiritually we were cheerful and joyful. We rejoiced for the miracles that God showed in the desert, like Israel. Glory to Him!

Hallelujah, let it ring forever! There we knelt down more than once and offered thanks and praise to Almighty God. There was preparation for crossing the border that night. Before evening fell, I went out onto a high dune, looked into the distance and said: - There, China is not far away - on the other side of the river, which we must ford. As soon as it was getting dark, we moved forward. Approaching the river, the front ones crossed, and suddenly our chain stopped. I threw down my bag, ran ahead and quietly said to Brother Verkhovod: - What's the matter? Why did you stop? He

answered: - Look! Rice fields. If you step straight ahead, there is water and mud; if you step to the right, the same. What are we going to do? Then his wife, filled with the Spirit, took him by the hand and said: - Follow me! - and led us straight to the Chinese outpost. Then she turned left, and we all safely crossed overland - more than forty souls. Neither the soldiers nor the dogs heard us, for the Lord Himself led us. Praise be to His name!

Having gone some distance from the border, we, tired and hungry, fell into a small valley and fell fast asleep. Waking up in the morning, we all felt only one thing: we were very hungry. But there was nothing to eat. Not far away we could see a small village and farms. But it was not safe to go there, because there were cases when the residents handed over refugees to the authorities, and they were sent back. And again, we turned to the Lord, like little children to their father. The Holy Spirit appointed three to go, and the rest remained in prayerful expectation. A few hours later we saw our three messengers, and several people ran to meet them. They were carrying bread, milk, lard, fried flour - talkan. Having divided all these supplies among ourselves, we fortified ourselves and went on - already on Chinese soil. There were still difficulties ahead, since it was necessary to move through deserted places, as we were instructed from above. But the Lord consoled us: "Behold, they will meet you and give you." After walking some distance, we were told to go to the right along the sand dunes, and on the left a valley called enticingly, along which it would be easier to walk.

Here some began to grumble against Brother Ivan, who had been entrusted with leading us. Their persistence prevailed, and we turned left. As soon as we entered this valley, we saw a shepherd riding a horse straight at us. He was armed. "Give us clothes!" he shouted and raised his whip at us. I was wearing a good suit. I took it off and gave it to him, and some of the others did the same. "Give us money!" he shouted. We chipped in and gave him about thirty rubles or more. He looked at the money with joy, turned his horse, and galloped off to invite others to join in the robbery. Seeing this situation, we quickly turned right, as the Lord had previously shown us, and hurried under the cover of the sand dunes. Thus, we were punished for our disobedience and willfulness. The grumblers became quiet. Grumblers always cause a lot of trouble. We see this in the example of the people of

Israel. We walked slowly and carefully. On one of these nights on the road we were told: "Turn to the right." And then the grumblers rose up again: - Where is he leading us, this Ivan? Look at the stars: we are moving incorrectly. They confused everyone again, changed the route, and we entered the rice fields. We had to walk knee-deep in mud and water, and in places waist deep.

It was a difficult night, especially for the children. Our chain was broken: those in front had gone far ahead, and we were moving more slowly. Brother Yakov Ilyin had become completely weak and was moving with difficulty. I took him by the arm, helping him, but after a while he became so weak that he could no longer walk at all. Then I took him on my shoulders, and we went faster, trying to catch up with those who had left. The children were walking behind and crying loudly. Our situation was tragic. Although I was young, I was also tired. Then Brother Dumanovsky helped me carry Yakov. Finally, we came out of the rice fields onto dry soil and caught up with the others. It was getting light. We laid Brother Yakov more comfortably on a thick low bush. He had already lost the power of speech. Near him, his four small children were crying, whose mother had gone with the others to the village to get food and had gotten lost. We also cried with them. Then kind people brought her straight to Kuldja. The names of these children were: Marusya, Misha, Lena and little Vanya, who was 5 years old at the time. Brother Yakov died, and we began to discuss where and how to bury him. My brother Ivan and I went to the owner of the farm - the farmstead, to ask for permission and tools for the burial. They allowed us and showed us the place. My brother and I dug a hole and prepared for the burial.

Suddenly a horseman galloped up and said that the district administration did not allow burials there, but that the body had to be carried to a small cemetery. It had to be carried about a kilometer. My brother Ivan and I made a stretcher, took the tools and carried it, while the rest of the people hid between two dunes among the bushes. We were very tired, carrying the body in the scorching sun. My mother came out from under the shelter and helped us carry it to the designated place. There we dug a hole again and performed the burial. We brought the tools to the owners and returned to our people. They had already warmed up and even lit fires to make tea. The owners of

a large farm noticed the smoke and came to look. Seeing a large group of people with small children, they graciously invited us to their place. There was a large barn with a canopy, where there was a lot of straw. There we settled down comfortably; and the people from the village, having learned that we were refugees, came to look at us and brought us a lot of food. Then we remembered the word from above: "They will meet you and give you." We ate well, spent the night and, having rested, moved on in the morning. This was the 13th day of our journey.

Here we fearlessly went out onto the main road leading to the city of Kuldja. The merciful Lord sent us help here too. Three carts carrying Russian fishermen from a fishing trip drew level with us. They offered to give us a ride to the city. We sat the old people and children down, and we, the young people, walked behind the carts and arrived in Kuldja by sunset. There we were warmly greeted by our old friends who had come to China before us. They fed us and gave us a place to stay for the night. The first steps in a new country, especially without any reserve funds, were not easy. I remember one of the brothers gave us young people money and told us to go to a restaurant and have a good meal. We did so. Such favors are never forgotten. Later, we all managed to settle in the new country. China greeted us hospitably. We had complete freedom to do what we wanted and arrange our lives. Many bought beautiful houses and everything necessary for life. But the main thing is that we had religious freedom. We opened a meeting, held services, preaching the Gospel and inviting our Slavic people to Christ, as well as the Chinese. The Lord abundantly blessed our work; He saved hundreds of souls from our people and several souls from the Chinese during our stay in Western China.

Soon after our arrival in Ghulja, the Lord gave us a revelation from above that there would be great bloodshed and confusion here, but "I will preserve My people to the last man." After Christmas 1934, there was a revolution there, a time of looting and terrible confusion. Many were killed. At the end of this unrest, all of our people remained alive and unharmed. Glory to our Almighty God! We all fell to our knees and thanked the Lord with tears, Who is true to His Word. Some time after arriving in China, the mother of the four Ilyin children died. The children were left orphans. My mother and other

women took care of them. They found them jobs and helped them financially. The poor orphans suffered a lot during that time, but the Lord took care of them, for He is the Father of orphans and widows. Now they live in America and Canada, have their own families, children and grandchildren. Everyone is well off. One of them, Marusya, has already passed away.

Chapter 12

After the turmoil of the first revolution in Xinjiang Province, we received a second revelation from the Lord that there would be even greater turmoil and bloodshed and that some of "My people" would suffer; but after this event, "the way to the East will be opened to you all for a little while. Watch unto prayer." When that time came in 1946, we indeed experienced even greater turmoil. We were under fire for three months and saw death reaping its harvest at every step. There were many casualties in that cold winter. The cold made the situation even worse. All the stores were closed; traffic was stopped due to the widespread military action. There was great difficulty in obtaining food and heating. We were saved only by the autumn supplies. Some of the brothers who had previously settled near the military barracks were warned from above to leave that "Baikul" area. Those who obeyed God's warning and left their homes did not suffer as much as those who stayed there. Some had to flee from the shelling, while others were killed and all their property was destroyed. This is what disobedience means. They trusted in the protection of the Chinese army and thought that they would be safe in this place. But the opposite happened.

One day there was a great panic, and many people from the city began to flee to the Russian border - some in cars, some in carts, taking with them what they managed to grab in a hurry. The picture was terrible: the houses were empty, and fear involuntarily crept up. We turned to the Lord: "What should we do?" We were told: "Stay where you are. My great protection is over you." A few days later, all those who fled returned, since nothing happened, and their fear turned out to be in vain. We thanked the Lord with all our hearts for His wise advice and great mercy to us. Before this event, there was a passportization in China and in connection with this there was a

lot of unrest. The fact is that many of those living in China had Russian passports. There were many different conversations and assumptions on this topic. We, being in this difficulty, decided to ask the Lord, and we were told: "Children, this is not for you, for you will go through all of China on a long journey." We realized that God's plan was already outlined. After all these events and experiences, the Lord blessed us for a long journey with the words: "My people will go to the East. I bless you. The hour has come. A difficult path awaits you ahead, but I will give you help along the way. You will be sent by cars and given everything you need for the journey, for My treasury is great." Then the Holy Spirit revealed to us everything about the further journey from China: "A great voyage awaits you, and on the great waters you will sing to Me." We could not comprehend with our human minds how all this would be, but we trusted the Lord and His command.

We sold our belongings and, taking only the bare necessities, set out on our journey. Some of the believers doubted and stayed behind, not trusting God and afraid of the severe frosts. On December 19, 1946, we hired carts to the city of Urumqi (the capital of Xinjiang) and set out on an unknown, long journey with small children. There was severe frost and a lot of snow. We had to get to the city of Urumqi, a distance of 650 kilometers. There were many difficulties along the way. At one point we were detained by the authorities. They held us there for 18 days. We were offered to go back, promising transportation and work upon our return. But we did not agree to go back. There were few apartments in Shiho, since many houses had been destroyed by military action. Some managed to find modest apartments, but we had to rent a large barn, which accommodated four families. Having small iron stoves, we could heat ourselves some hot water and warm our hands a little, but it was impossible to heat such a barn. Our children fell ill with measles. They were red, burning with fever, and it was hard for us to watch. It was especially hard for the mothers to endure this grief. Every day we went to the authorities to ask for a pass, but they did not give us a pass. Then we turned to the Lord and received the answer: "You will go forward. Only have faith." Still, doubt crept into some hearts. And they continued to grumble and ask: "What will happen next?" But God's Word was fulfilled. On the

eighteenth day, we were all given passes. But then a new test awaited us: the drivers we had hired left; they could not wait eighteen days.

We had to hire Muslim carts with high wheels. We covered them with felt booths and set off. There were still seven days of travel ahead, stopping at caravanserais where there were no amenities. They were swarming with lice and all sorts of vermin that got into our clothes, and therefore there was no way to undress at night. Nevertheless, the Lord preserved us. None of our children died, and we successfully completed the journey, arriving in the city of Urumqi. Several families and groups had left earlier and were already in Shanghai. Our group lived in the city of Urumqi for four months. There we had services and a choir, together glorifying the great Name of our Redeemer. The American consul and his wife sometimes attended our services. They were very interested in the singing of the choir and once invited the choir to sing several psalms, recording our singing on a tape. Then he invited us to listen to this tape. For many of us, it was very interesting. For the first time in our lives, we listened to ourselves through this apparatus and were even able to notice some shortcomings in the singing. The consul was delighted with this singing. - Today, this singing will be heard on the radio throughout China and even in America, - he said. We again praised the Lord for this opportunity to be His witnesses through singing His praises.

Four months later, we set off in separate groups through desert areas to the city of Hami. We traveled in large trucks, in which the Chinese transported 8-12 tons of cargo and took passengers upstairs. In such conditions, sitting at a height, huddled like "sardines in a barrel", we traveled 700 kilometers. In the city of Hami, we were detained for three months. One brother and I were representatives of a group that numbered 153 people. There were several Baptist and Orthodox families in our group. Our passes were taken away by the governor. Several families that went further without passes were returned to Hami. Those who arrived later were also detained. We had to endure a difficult time: a meager financial situation and threats from the authorities that there was no way forward for us. The governor told us that passes would not be issued for an indefinite period. We did not know how long we would have to wait. Our situation was hopeless, and we again turned

to the Rock of our life. The Lord consoled us and strengthened us. We were told from above: "You will soon go forward. The cash register is prepared and money will be given to you in your hands. My granaries are rich. You will be provided with free transportation and there will be a great escort." Then we remembered the words of the Lord spoken in the city of Ghulja, and with faith in the future we glorified the Lord.

Still many were uneasy at the long wait, and some doubted. Several Baptist brethren came and asked that we should consult the Lord to know what the Holy Spirit would say. Others proposed that we send representatives to the city of Urumchi and petition the government for permission to proceed. We prayed, but there was no command for such a step. However, some went. But they had no success. At the end of the third month, Almighty God moved the hearts of the government officials. A general from the foreign department came to us with several officers, also eleven trucks, one of which was filled with soldiers for protection. That same day we were packed up and given money for the further journey, according to the number of souls in each family. The general said that the next morning at 5 o'clock there would be loading. The soldiers helped us load, and when our train left the city of Hami, then even the doubters were convinced that we were really going further. Everyone began to loudly praise the God of Miracles and sing hymns to His name. The General was ordered to deliver us through the Gensuy Desert to the city of Lanzhou in six days. Therefore, we were given an order in advance to make food supplies for this time. But our Heavenly General told us to stock up for 8 days.

On the way through the desert, God sent an unprecedented rain for that area, as a result of which the road was spoiled. We moved slowly. Sometimes we had to fix the road ourselves. In the evening, having stopped for the night in the desert, we gathered and began to glorify the Lord. The general and the soldiers listened to us with great delight and asked us to sing again and again. The general himself was a believer. We glorify the Lord among any nationality, for He died for all. He loves everyone and wants to save everyone. He opens the door of His heart to everyone who hears His Voice. He Himself will come to them and make His abode with them. Glory to Him forever! We were very tired. We all had small children. All our possessions

were in small bundles. Difficulties awaited us ahead. But we knew that God was with us. He inspired us and gave us strength to sing to Him and glorify His Holy Name.

We tried not to worry about the future, relying entirely on God, Who Himself took care of us. Glory to Him! In 8 days, we covered a long distance, and finally all 153 people arrived in the city of Lanzhou. Here, as refugees, we were given free apartments in a large courtyard - one room per family. It served as a bedroom, a dining room, and a kitchen. But we thanked God heartily for everything. This is how the Lord tested us, for under such conditions our Christianity and brotherly love are revealed. When two families have to squeeze into one room, eat from one bowl, share the last piece of bread - then the true face of a Christian is revealed. Oh, how different all this is from American life and from today's Christianity!

In order to get drinking water, we had to go to the Hong He River and carry a yoke with buckets on our shoulders. The older children still remember this. In addition to the cramped conditions, bugs fell on us from the ceiling, and rats crawled up from below. Remembering all this, it seems that such a life is unbearable; but we endured it with God's help. Glory to Him for both "the sweet and the bitter" in our lives! In the city of Lanzhou, we had services in one Chinese church of the Baptist brothers. Many foreign missionaries visited us: Brother Scratch, Brother Knight, Brother Smith with his wife, Brother Boberg from Sweden and many others. Our choir sang at every service. During Brother Smith's visit, we had a meeting blessed by God. God baptized Natasha Prasolova with the Holy Spirit and the meeting was again ablaze with the fire of Pentecost. The visiting missionaries and we all praised the Lord loudly, shouting "Hallelujah!"

It was very noisy. The pastor of the church went out into the yard, then came back into the church, not knowing what to do, how to stop this noise and the fire that God Himself had lit. He was very excited about such an unusual phenomenon in his church. When we finished the meeting and went home, the fire of God was still burning in our hearts. Children and youth kept turning to the Lord in prayer, and He baptized several souls with the Holy Spirit. The leading brother G. I. and some other brothers tried to stop these children, but

it was impossible, such a fire of zeal and spiritual thirst God had lit in our hearts. One day, Brother Wood, a Canadian missionary, visited our apartments. Some took him for a Saturday worker. The leading brother G. I. especially thought so. Others asked the Lord about him and received the answer: "Do not be afraid, this is My child. He will help you." And so, it was. Seeing our plight, he then sent us all possible help in the form of money and clothing. This is how we humans can be mistaken if we judge a person by his outward appearance. And it is not surprising: once the prophet Samuel, having come to the house of Jesse to anoint one of his sons as king, saw his tall eldest son and thought that God had chosen him. But he was told: "God does not look as man does; for man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart."

It is very important to inquire of the Lord when we have doubts about people. After living in Lanzhou for a year, we went to the city of Shanghai. All those who did not have funds were sent to the state account. We arrived in Shanghai in 1948 and stayed there for 8 months. But due to the events of those days, we were hastily evacuated along with others to the Philippines. We were transported by ships and airplanes. In the Philippines there was a large camp of 6,000 people. Most of the refugees were Slavs. American army rations were issued to us regularly. We lived in Army wards. The climate there is tropical, and the four seasons of the year are almost the same, except for the hot summer. During our stay there, we often swam in the ocean. Here we had a joint meeting with the Baptist brothers and Evangelical Christians. The joint choir sang every Sunday. Many people came to listen to the choir singing and the Word of God.

Then a special commission from South America came to the Philippines to recruit farmers, peasants for free lands in Paraguay. A large group registered as farmers. The mission promised to provide houses, agricultural equipment, machines for cultivating the land, etc. Having lived in the Philippine Republic for 8 months, we, by the will of Almighty God, were sent to Paraguay. We left the Philippines on September 23, 1949. Along the way, we had to visit many countries: Australia, the island of Ceylon, India. Having crossed the Indian Ocean in 14 days, we entered the Red Sea (now the Red Sea). On the right was Arabia, and on the left Africa, then Egypt. Through the Suez Canal we

entered the Mediterranean Sea, passed the island of Crete, Sicily, Italy; in France - the city of Marseille (port), sailed past Spain. We passed Gibraltar and entered the Atlantic Ocean, which we crossed straight to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Then we went by train to Santos and San Pablo and from there we flew by plane to Paraguay.

Three months of travel, during which we mostly sailed on the oceans, heard a lot of different dialects, saw many interesting and historical things. It should be noted that we sailed to Italy on the American military transport - "Marin jumper". With the permission of the ship's captain, we had prayer meetings, where we sang and glorified the One Who had previously foretold us of the "Great Voyage" and that "on the great waters you will sing to Me." All this literally came true! Glory to our Almighty God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! We arrived in Paraguay before the holiday of the Nativity of Christ during the heat, since there is a tropical climate and the seasons are the opposite: in December - heat, and in May - winter. During the eight years of our stay there, we could not get used to this climate. We were all brought to the center of the Fram colony, placed in a hostel. We lived there for almost two weeks waiting for the fulfillment of those promises that were given to us in the Philippines. But these promises were never fulfilled. Some fell into despair, cried and asked: "What are we going to do next?" Then we turned to the Lord, and we were told: "My people, the land is before you. Settle down for a short time, and then there will be resettlement." Then we went to the bank, took out a loan, bought plots of land, horses and cows, and began to farm and get used to farming life. We met local believers.

We had a small but well-organized choir. We were invited everywhere, especially to weddings. We served everyone, trying to maintain fellowship. I organized 2 local youth choirs there. The Lord blessed our fellowship and sent us everything we needed for life. Praise Him! One day, when we were praying, we received a revelation that we were going to America, to California, and that many of the local residents would follow us - those who had never even thought about leaving. After an 8-year stay in Paraguay, in September 1957 we moved to America and settled in the city of San Francisco. Over the next few years, many families also moved here from South America, and everyone gradually settled in. America received us very

hospitably; it sheltered us poor wanderers, like a mother would her children. In America, there are great opportunities for those who are hard-working and sober and know how to use their hard-earned money wisely. Now it is even difficult to recognize the once poor emigrants. They have beautiful houses, cars, decent clothes and even savings in banks! And most importantly, there is wide freedom of religion here. Glory to our Lord!

In 1951, a group of 135 souls of Russian Xinjiang Pentecostals from the Philippines, Tu-babao on the island of Samar, arrived in America. A representative of the General Council of the Assemblies of God Churches in the USA, G. Kinderman, as well as A. A. Gurov, Zabronsky and others came to meet this group. They all settled in well. Many are now pensioners, and some have departed to eternity. Time flies quickly. No one can stop Divine History, as Apostle Peter writes: "The end of all things is near. Be sober and watchful in prayer." Upon arrival in San Francisco, the Lord God helped us build a beautiful Prayer House on 17th Street, which was called "THE TEMPLE OF THE GOOD NEWS ("Gospel Temple")." The Prayer House number is 2233. Generous, feasible collections of funds were made for the construction of the Prayer House. In 1961 we bought an old former school building with a large adjacent territory and began construction. As a pastor of the church, I was anxious about starting this project, afraid to start construction without the necessary financial resources. To start and not finish the construction would be a big problem.

I turned to the Lord in prayer, and He did not delay in answering. It was said to me through the lips of my mother, who had the gift of prophecy: "I bless you. Begin and finish. I am with you." Then we began construction, trusting in the Lord with faith. The church committee was friendly, and although we had some difficulties, the work moved forward. We put a lot of our own labor into this construction, but we worked together. Thanks to this and the help of the Lord, we finished the construction in 1962 and dedicated it to the Lord. Glory and thanksgiving to the great God! Glory to Him for His help and assistance in everything! By Presbyterian A. E. Shevchenko
(Historical data and dates are taken from the "World Christian History").

[Note: Google translate was used to translate from the original Russian.]