



RIVER OF FAITH

Our Amazing Journey to Freedom

Michael D. Lokteff

Starting his service in the Mission in late 1979 Michael Lokteff made a very wise decision, which was inspired from Above. Having a Sound Recording Studio at his disposal, Michael put his father, Daniel Lokteff, at the microphone and he, on ten cassettes, told the story of the Lokteff's family, beginning from his Russian ancestors to moving to America. This is a large historical layer in history. At the end of the 19th Century, moving from the Tambov Province of Russia to Kazakhstan, then fleeing to China, and then fleeing from China to the Philippines and from there to the United States.

"River of Faith" is a book that will help many people to better understand and feel the history of the country from which the roots of our genealogies come; it will help us to better understand the people who lived there and look at the events that our grandfathers and great-grandfathers went through.

This book is also unique in that it was written by representatives of two generations, Daniel Lokteff and Michael Lokteff. Thanks to radio broadcasts that were broadcast to the Republics of the USSR for several decades; thanks to numerous letters and parcels that were prepared at the Mission office and then sent beyond the "Iron Curtain" - the surname Lokteff became known to hundreds of thousands of people in the Eastern half of the globe as well as the Western.

Thanks to this book, we have the opportunity to get to know the Lokteff family better and understand more deeply where and from what roots Michael drew strength and inspiration. It was his family and relatives, all those with whom

Michael lived and worked, and why serving with Word to Russia Ministry (WTR) continues. In 2022 WTR reached its "Golden Jubilee." Inscrutable are the ways of the Lord," we read in Scripture. Often this is incomprehensible at the beginning of the path, but at the end, we repeat with King David *"My lines have passed through beautiful places."* We find the same in the book *"River of Faith,"* going through experiences, doubts, difficult decisions, ups and downs, together with the author, but in the finale we see a beautiful mosaic composed of the Providence of God, which led the entire Lokteff family through beautiful places.

Executive Director of the "Word to Russia" Mission, Vladimir Mysin



River of Faith: Our Amazing Journey to Freedom

Hardcover – August 17, 2022

by [Michael Lokteff](#) (Author), [Daniel Lokteff](#) (Author)

Starting his service in the Mission in late 1979, Michael Lokteff made, a very wise decision, which was inspired from Above. Having a Sound Recording Studio at his disposal, Michael put his father Daniel Lokteff at the microphone and he, on ten cassettes, told the story of the Lokteff's family, beginning from his Russian ancestors to moving to America. This is a large historical layer in history. At the end of the 19th Century, moving from the Tambov Province of Russia to Kazakhstan, then fleeing to China, and then fleeing from China to the Philippines and from there to the United States.

"The River of Faith" is a book that will help many people to better understand and feel the history of the country from which the roots of our genealogies come; it will help us to better understand the people who lived there and look at the events that our grandfathers and great-grandfathers went through. This book is also unique in that it was written by representatives of two generations, Daniel Lokteff and Michael Lokteff. Thanks to radio broadcasts that were broadcast to the Republics of the USSR for several decades; thanks to numerous letters and parcels that were prepared at the Mission office and then sent beyond the "Iron Curtain". Thanks to this book, we have the opportunity to get to know his family and relatives, all those with whom Michael lived and worked, and why serving with Word to Russia Ministry (WTR) continues.

In 2022 WTR reached its "Golden Jubilee." "Inscrutable are the ways of the Lord," we read in Scripture. Often this is incomprehensible at the beginning of the path, but at the end, we repeat with King David: "My lines have passed through beautiful places." We find the same in the book "The River of Faith," going through experiences, doubts, difficult decisions, ups and downs, together with the author, but in the finale we see a beautiful mosaic composed of the Providence of God, which led the entire Lokteff family through beautiful places. Executive Director of the "Word to Russia" Mission, Vladimir Mysin

*"People who do not
know their past have
no future"*

Mikhail Lomonosov

"One cool evening in the fall of 1980, when my wife Alexandra and I were making dinner and discussing the latest news, somebody knocked on our door. It was our middle son, Mike, who came to visit us. We invited him to the table, and he told me, looking a little pensive: "Dad, I've been thinking a lot, and realized that I know very little about my family—neither do my brothers and sisters. You and Mom often told us stories about life in China, about your parents and the difficulties that our family overcame on the way to America; notwithstanding, all these story fragments don't add up to a complete picture." Mike's words made me wonder, and then, after a short pause, he suggested that I record an interview with him, telling the whole story of our family from Chilik to San Francisco. The idea inspired me a lot and while recording our 10-hour interview piece by piece, I tried to tell everything in as much detail as possible. I understood that someday a book about our journey, based on my stories, would be published . . . my wish was that our children, and later grandchildren, would continue writing this book, completing it with their own stories.

With love, Daniel Lokteff

Copyrighted Material



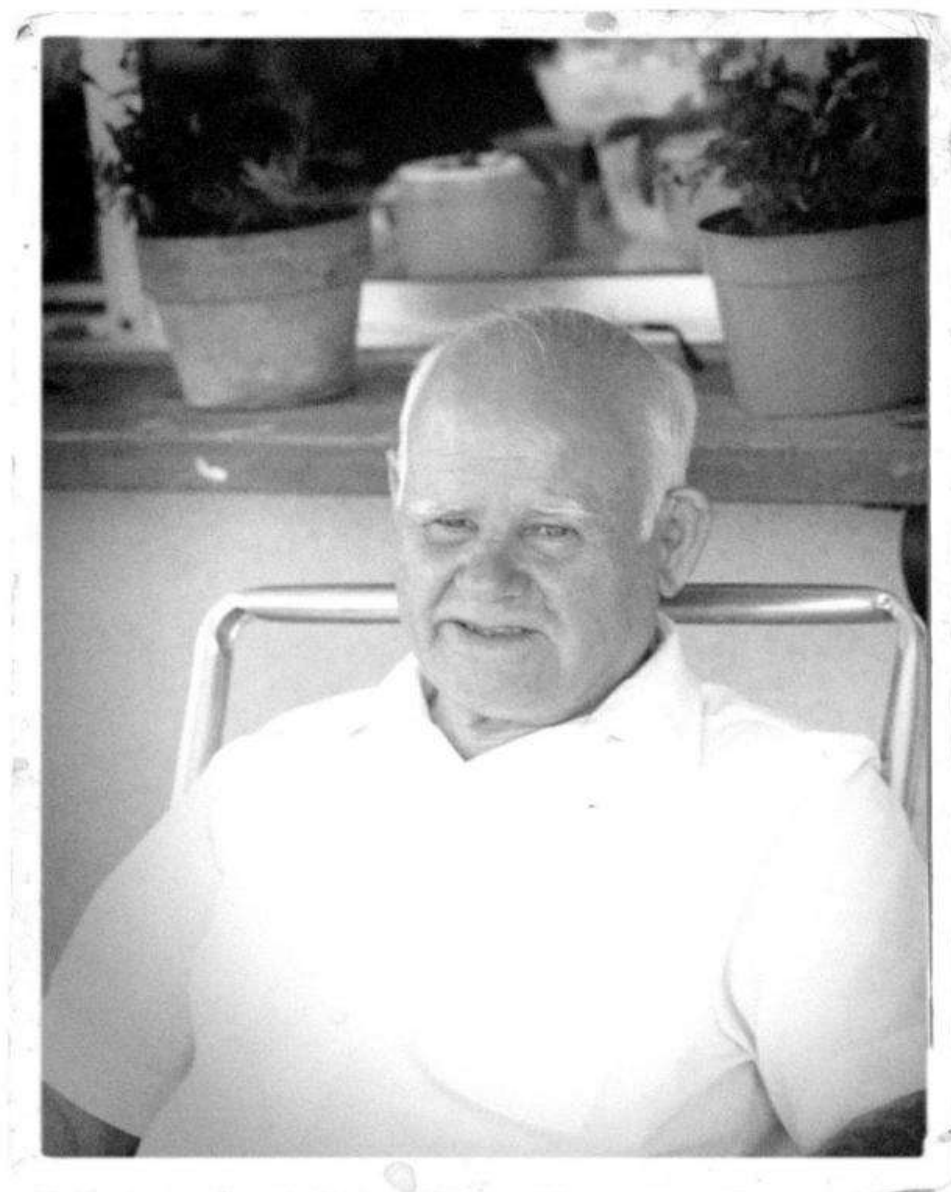
Copyrighted Material

Copyrighted Material



Copyrighted Material

Copyrighted Material



Daniel Lokteff in America

Copyrighted Material

Copyrighted Material

RIVER OF FAITH . . . Our Amazing Journey to Freedom

By Daniel Lokteff and Michael Lokteff

Copyright © 2022 by Michael Lokteff
West Sacramento (Bryte), California USA

All rights reserved. This book or parts thereof may not be reproduced in any form, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the author and/or the author's family designees, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review or scholarly journey or as provided by United States of America copyright law. For permission requests, write to the WORD TO RUSSIA Ministry @ P.O. BOX 1521 West Sacramento, CA 95691-1521, USA or www.riveroffaithministry.org and www.wordtorussia.org

ISBN: 9798838658753

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations in this book are taken from the "SINODAL BIBLE TRANSLATION"

All images from Wikipedia Commons, Public Domain—Unless Otherwise Noted and/or are the personal photographs of Michael Lokteff or other family members under use consent.

Printed in the United States of America
TRIBNET PUBLICATIONS – SACRAMENTO, CA
www.tribnet.org

Editorial Team: Michael Lokteff, Vladimir Mysin, both of RIVER OF FAITH MINISTRY, dba Word to Russia; and Douglas W. Krieger – Tribnet Publications and Member BoD, Word to Russia.

Copyrighted Material

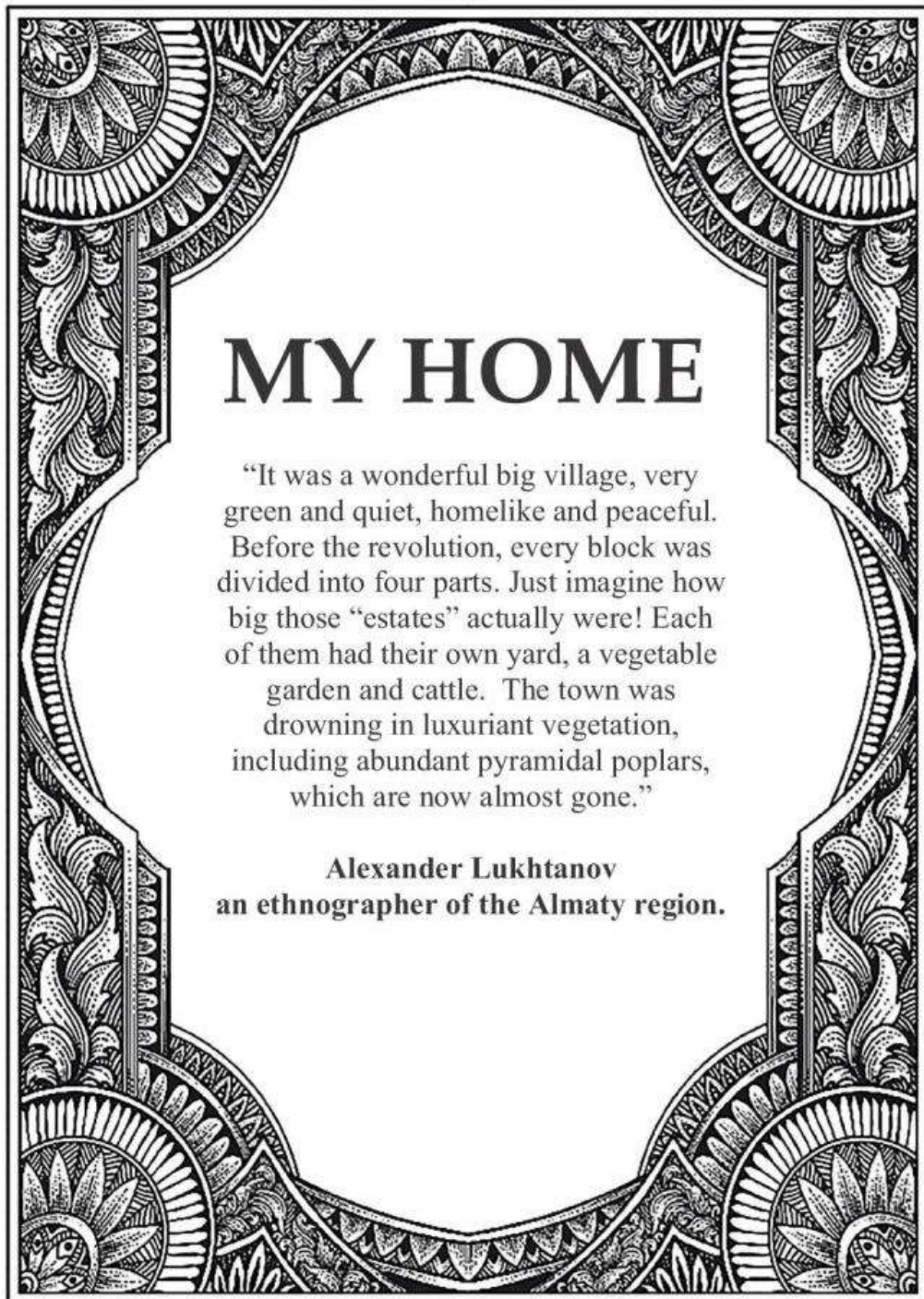
TABLE OF CONTENTS

MY HOME.....	10
My Chilik.....	11
Kulikovka	14
1921	16
The Cheka.....	18
The Confiscation	20
The Cheka's Horrors.....	21
The Coachman	23
The NEP.....	24
The Blessed Meeting	26
Our Congregation.....	28
A New Blow	30
Soviet Justice	31
Our Church	32
The Lapshins	34
The Lokteff Family.....	35
The Second Wave Of Repressions	36
The Exile Lists	38
The Solution	39
OUR JOURNEY BEGINS.....	42
Our Journey Begins	43
Alma-Ata.....	44
An Area Untouched by the Soviet Regime	45
The Prisoners.....	46
Alma-Ata – Ili	49
An Unexpected Encounter	50
The Malovodnoye Village	51
Krugloye Village	58
Ushtobe.....	60
LIFE IN CHINA	64

Taldy-Kurgan	65
Dzharkent	65
Departure.....	66
The Crossing.....	67
The Border	68
The First Stop in China	70
Good Advice.....	72
Encounter With Robbers	73
Officer Golikov's Home.....	74
Russians In China	75
Kulja	76
Work In China.....	77
Life In Kulja.....	79
Religion In China.....	81
The Beginning of the Chinese Revolution	83
The Uprising Of The 1930s	84
Road To Urumqi.....	86
Meeting The Consul.....	88
Chinese Christian Ministry	89
The Persecution of Believers in Urumqi.....	91
Life In Urumqi	92
Our Journey Resumed	93
The Road To Lanzhou.....	94
Return To Xinjiang	95
Mr. Scherner's Help	96
Life In Lanzhou.....	97
One-Engine Flight	98
HELLO AMERICA	99
Shanghai	100
Life In Shanghai.....	101
An Uncertain Situation	103
Flight To The Philippines	104
William Knowland	105
Life In The Philippines	106

The Shores Of America.....	109
LIFE IN AMERICA.....	111
OUR CHILDHOOD.....	115
Journey to America	116
The Amegin's House	118
School.....	119
Church Life in America	120
Our First Year in America	122
Leida and Valentine.....	122
Vasily and Valentina	124
Our Church	125
The Blessed Idea.....	126
The Lord is Calling.....	127
A Memorable Year.....	128
School Friends.....	129
A Gift for Mom	130
A Walk to the River.....	132
My Brother Vasily	133
The Best Friends	134
Slippery Gentlemen	137
LIFE IN THE USA.....	140
The Russian Baptist Church of Evangelical Christians	141
Father.....	141
Family Holidays	142
Dad's Favorite China Stories.....	144
Uncle Joseph	146
MyNida	148
Ben and Ardyth	149
Katya and Pavil.....	151
A Serious Step	152
Conversation by the River	153
The Path to The Lord.....	154
Pastor Daniel Lokteff.....	156
Changes in Russian Baptist Church of Evangelical Christians....	158

Youth Ministry	159
Davis Girls	159
Yuri and Eileen	161
Dad's Work	162
Nick	163
Tragedy	164
Pastor Lokteff's Ordination	166
How I Grew a Beard	167
SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES	170
Word to Russia: The Journey Begins	171
First Challenges on Path of Missionary Service	172
The First Trip to the Soviet Union	173
Ben's Mission	177
My Missionary Work	179
Last Trip Around Republics of the Soviet Union	183
Work in "Word to Russia"	185
Helping Immigrants	185
EPILOGUE	189



MY HOME

"It was a wonderful big village, very green and quiet, homelike and peaceful. Before the revolution, every block was divided into four parts. Just imagine how big those "estates" actually were! Each of them had their own yard, a vegetable garden and cattle. The town was drowning in luxuriant vegetation, including abundant pyramidal poplars, which are now almost gone."

Alexander Lukhtanov
an ethnographer of the Almaty region.

My Chilik

In 1871 an amazing place in the Ili Valley, rich in fertile soil and enjoying warm climate and large expanses of land, became home to a small settlement of 702 families assigned to a military parish. The families that moved there from the Voronezh and Tambov Governorates were rather wealthy and had extensive experience in cattle breeding and trade. Back then, only the most enterprising people, successful in their craft, were selected to develop new fertile lands. My grandfather's family was among those peasants chosen from the Tambov Governorate.



Tzarist Russia – Cir. 1871

The settlement location wasn't chosen randomly—it was built almost in the middle of the post road connecting the city of Verny (which was later renamed Alma-Ata) and the border crossing point Narynkol. East of the village was the large city of Zharkent bordering China; to the west was the Kyrgyz city of Karakol.

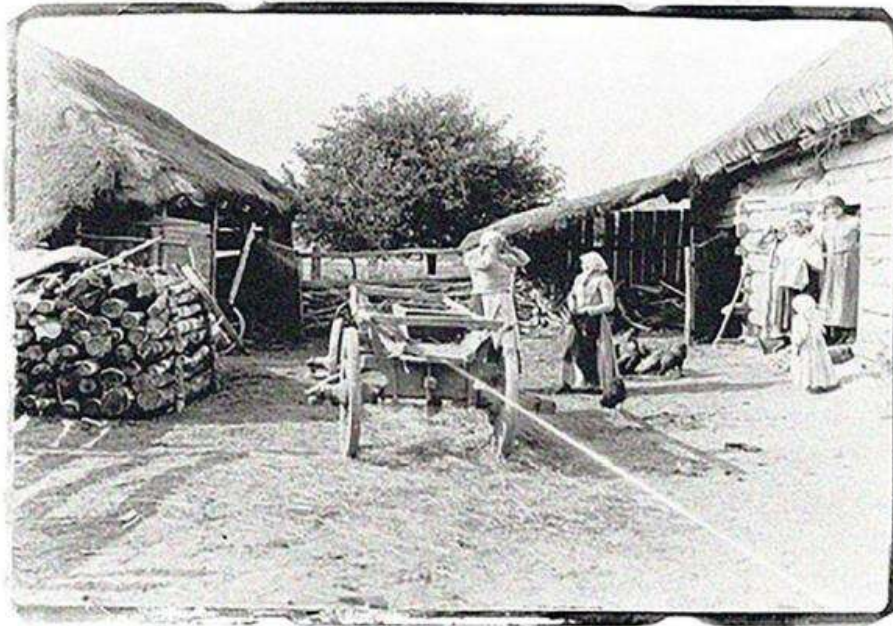
This settlement was named Chilik (or Shelek in Kazakh) after a small river flowing nearby. It was a multicultural village: the Russians, Kazakhs, Ukrainians, Tatars, and Uyghurs living there maintained good neighborly relations. By 1900, the population of Chilik had already increased to almost 5,000 people.



My Village of Chilik - "Home"

Historical note: As of January 1, 1900, the village consisted of 573 households, that is 4,763 people (2,324 men, 2,439 women). The village was assigned 10,000, dessiatinas of land (about 27,000 acres), including 6,850 dessiatinas (about 18,500 acres) suitable for farming. The villagers' main occupations were animal husbandry (3,695 horses, 2,105 cows, and 9,650 heads of small livestock were registered in 1900) and irrigated agriculture. In 1891, the village became the center of the Zaitsevsky section of the Vernensky district and the residence of the district police officer. There was a functioning post office, bazaar, church, and medical and veterinary aid stations in the village. The first parish school in Chilik opened in 1882 with funding provided by the merchant N.I. Ivanov. The village had 3 tanneries, 22 mills, 198 trading establishments with a total revenue of 150 thousand rubles.

I was born in this village in 1911. In my childhood, my friends and I loved to swim in the warm and shallow Chilik river, which in some spots, was only chest high for an adult. We also enjoyed fishing in our stream. Sometimes the adults took us with them to the Ili River, which flowed nearly 19 miles away from our home. It was a full day trip that became a real holiday for us. Most commonly, I went fishing in the Big River with my uncle, where we caught a lot of fish, packed them in fresh grass, and brought them home. It was osmans (small fish from the carp family, reaching a length of 20 inches) that especially often bit our bait.



Classical Russian Farm

All houses in Chilik were surrounded by well-groomed gardens with large trees bearing delicious fruit. For example, we had several varieties of apples, pears, cherries and sweet cherries in our garden, but an object of particular pride was an apricot tree. In my childhood the fruit in our gardens seemed so appetizing that we would sometimes eat them unripened.

Apart from fruit trees, we grew melons, watermelons, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, carrots, potatoes, and cabbage—we grew all these for our own consumption. We had a cellar in the garden, under the barn.

It remained cool in the summer, while in the winter nothing froze there, so potatoes, sauerkraut, pickled cucumbers and tomatoes and even pickled watermelons could be stored there for a very long time.

We always had a good harvest. On weekends my mother loved to go to the bazaar, chat with other women, and sell watermelons, apples, cucumbers as well as everything we had in excess. Coming back from the market, Mother brought meat and other food we didn't produce at home.

Life in Chilik was quiet and serene. There were only two police officers assigned to our fairly large and populous village, and most of the time they had nothing to do, since occasional fights were the only incidents that ever really occurred in Chilik.

Kulikovka

Not far, about seven miles away from our village, was a small village called Kulikovka (later it was renamed Sarybulak). It was also a very peaceful and well-to-do village, like ours, consisting mainly of settlers. Since childhood we were close friends with the children from Kulikovka while the adults maintained friendly relations with the older inhabitants of the village. Our family was no exception. My father's most frequent guest from Kulikovka were the brothers, Zinovy and Kozma Shcherbakovs, who had come to



Russian Windmill

develop lands in the Ili Valley from the Voronezh Governorate. They were very enterprising, hard-working and wise people. During their visits father could talk to them for hours.



Russian Bibles

The soil in Kulikovka was not fertile, so the farmers had to go to the mountains to rent and plow land there—reaping a good harvest afterwards. Kozma and Zinovy's main occupation was crop cultivation. They planted several acres of land with wheat, and when it was ready, the brothers harvested it and brought it to my father's mill. Dad was always happy to see them. He would take his large print Bible from the house, then he would go to the mill and discuss the Word of God with the Shcherbakov brothers for a long time over a cup of tea.

Like many of our fellow villagers, my father was a believer and went to our Orthodox church, built by the merchant Ivanov. The Shcherbakovs didn't go to church, but attended Baptist meetings in Kulikovka. However, despite adherence to different denominations, Zinovy and Kozma managed to sow the seed of sincere and deep faith in my father's heart. A little later, father began to travel to Kulikovka quite often.

English Version:

https://www.amazon.com/River-Faith-Amazing-Journey-Freedom/dp/B0B9QS2D6Y/ref=sr_1_1?crid=BMXD2AC4QL7P&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.GtYXyygAObVdDpYFOBK_htrWROWlvoVWpQ1w4OxeAozGjHj071QN20LucGBJIEps.zd3OGTH9r8e7aKk6LduX6rI3C9N-A7gn2blsTUddt1Q&dib_tag=se&keywords=Michael+Lokteff&qid=1755837266&s=books&s_prefix=michael+lokteff%2Cstripbooks%2C121&sr=1-1&asin=B0B9QS2D6Y&revisionId=&format=4&depth=1

Russian Version:

https://www.amazon.com/River-Faith-Russian-Michael-Lokteff/dp/1737586584/ref=sr_1_2?crid=BMXD2AC4QL7P&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.GtYXyygAObVdDpYFOBK_htrWROWlvoVWpQ1w4OxeAozGjHj071QN20LucGBJIEps.zd3OGTH9r8e7aKk6LduX6rI3C9N-A7gn2blsTUddt1Q&dib_tag=se&keywords=Michael+Lokteff&qid=1755837266&s=books&s_prefix=michael+lokteff%2Cstripbooks%2C121&sr=1-2

РЕКА ВЕРЫ

Паше удивительнос путешествие к свободе

Михаил Д. Доктев

Начав служение в Миссии в конце 1979 года, Михаил Локтев принял очень мудрое решение, вдохновенное Свыше. Имея в своем распоряжении звукозаписывающую студию, Михаил попросил своего отца Даниила под запись рассказать историю семьи Локтевых, начиная от жизни в царской России до переезда в Америку. Это большой исторический слой в истории. В конце XIX века прапрадед Михаила Локтева переехал из Тамбовской губернии на освоение казахской целины, затем семья Локтевых была вынуждена бежать в Китай, а затем из Китая на Филиппины и оттуда в Соединенные Штаты.

Книга "Река веры" — это книга, которая поможет многим людям лучше понять и прочувствовать историю страны, из которой происходят корни наших родословных; поможет нам лучше понять людей, которые жили там, и посмотреть на события, через которые прошли наши деды и прадеды. Эта книга также уникальна тем, что она была написана представителями двух поколений, Даниилом Локтевым и его сыном Майклом. Благодаря радиопередачам, которые транслировались республикам СССР на протяжении нескольких десятилетий; благодаря многочисленным письмам и посылкам, которые были подготовлены в представительстве, а затем отправлены за "железный занавес" фамилия Локтев стала известна сотням тысяч людей в восточной половине мира, а также на Западе.

Благодаря этой книге, у нас есть возможность лучше узнать семью Локтевых и глубже понять, где Михаил черпал силу и вдохновение служить и узнать почему служение "Слово к России" продолжалось и в 2022 году достигло своего "Золотого юбилея". Непостижимы пути Господни", мы читаем в Писании. Часто это непонятно в начале пути, но в конце мы повторяем с царем Давидом: "Межи мои прошли по прекрасным местам, и наследие моё приятно для меня." Мы находим то же самое в книге "Река веры", читая как семья Локтевых проходила через переживания, сомнения, сложные решения, взлеты и падения, но в финале мы видим красивую мозаику, составленную из Провидения Бога, который провел всю семью Локтевых "по прекрасным местам".

Исполнительный директор Миссии «Word to Russia» Владимир Мысин







🏛️ 1996 Arco Arena United Slavic Churches service Sacramento-California

Michael Lokteff (2nd from left) sitting next to Paul Demetrus (2nd from right)