



Denise Ouellette, a licensed Potomac Ministry Network minister of the Assembly of God, is a frequent contributor to The ELEMENT Connection (formerly WIM Connection.) She and her husband of over 28 years have 5 daughters and 8 grandchildren. She serves as Missions director for her church, Lighthouse Worship Center in Gloucester, Virginia. She runs her own bookkeeping business and writes plays and skits most of which are produced at her church. She is on the Board of Directors of two non-profit African mission organizations: Africa Harvest Mission and Friends of TOUCH.

Troubles in Siberia

Denise Ouellette

Our team checked into the hotel, exhausted. Sitting on luggage or on the floor, we waited while our leader and the interpreter argued with the hotel personnel over our room fees. One by one we were handed our room keys. We dragged our bags up several flights of stairs to our rooms.

The first thing I noticed was a large vat of water next to the shower in the bathroom. I discovered the city only turned on the water once a day for one hour. We would have to scoop out water from the vat to bathe and flush the toilet. But that was only the beginning of the story of my 1989 mission trip to Siberia.

Just as I was trying to fathom having no running water, someone banged on the door. It was our leader in a panic. It seems that after we got our keys, we all left and no one was watching his bag. It was stolen - all his clothes, his Bible, everything gone, but his passport and money which, thankfully, he carried with him.

But there was little time to rest. For the next several days we ministered to hundreds of prisoners in several locations and saw much fruit. We pressed on from early morning to late evening because no one knew if the iron curtain would stay open and for how long. At the end of those days, we headed for the train station at 1:00 a.m. and waited for a train that arrived late and then wouldn't open the doors to let us on. After much arguing, we were allowed on and then I faced my worst fear – separation. Each compartment had two bunk beds and only one space was available in each. I had no choice but to crawl into a bunk in a room with three other total strangers I couldn't even see. I clutched my bag tight, curled up in a ball, and cried.

But I made it.

From there God had blessing upon blessing for us. In the next city we got our own room, - we didn't have to share - a hot shower, and a day of rest. Having been through the worst, we continued our mission with boldness and confidence.

Our leader used hand-me-down clothes we bought on the street. He looked so much like the native people they readily accepted him and listened to what we had to say about Jesus. Many hearts were won for Christ and many people heard the Gospel for the first time. The Word

sums it up like this: *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.* 2 Corinthians 4:17