



*The boundary lines have fallen  
for me in pleasant places*

**ANGELINA MALTSEVA**



# «The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places» Psalm 16:6

## Biographical sketch

*This book is dedicated to my husband,  
children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, family and friends*



*The following book has been composed on this computer*

*I express my deepest gratitude to Ernest and Irina Brugger for helping me get this book ready to print in the English and Russian languages.*

*Also, a heartfelt gratitude to all friends who have translated this book.*

*And, a special thanks to Timothy Sentsov for editing and to Lilly Bar for photo design.*



*Live and rejoice!*

## **He Loves You!**

*It's amazing and incredible,  
 But it's as true as it can be,  
 God loves and understands us all  
 And that means YOU and ME –  
 His grace is all sufficient  
 For both the YOUNG and OLD,  
 For the lonely and the timid,  
 For the brash and for the bold –  
 His love knows no exceptions,  
 So never feel excluded  
 No matter WHO or WHAT you are  
 Your name has been included –  
 And no matter what your past has been,  
 Trust God to understand,  
 And no matter what your problem is  
 Just place it in His Hand –  
 For in all our UNLOVELINESS  
 This GREAT GOD LOVES US STILL,  
 He loved us since the world began  
 And what's more, HE ALWAYS WILL!*



# Childhood

I was born on December 14, 1935 in the city of Krasnodar. Together with my brother Benjamin, my parents moved to Krasnodar from Mariinsk, where my father was in prison for 5 years. That is where their wedding took place and where my older brother was born. The birth of a girl after a boy was very desirable. Those were happy years for my parents, since after a long time of separation, they began to live together in freedom. According to my father, I was very pretty, and he gave me a name – ANGEL – Angelina. I was a very calm child, and if I woke up at night, my dad would tell me: “Angel, sleep!” – And I immediately calmed down and fell asleep. I was pleased to hear flattering words saying I was very obedient. Soon our family moved to the city of Alma-Ata, where my mother’s brother, Mitya, lived. Uncle Mitya was married. His wife’s name was Aunt Lida. They had one son, Tolik. He was a little older than my brother Vinya. (At the time, everyone called my brother not Venya, but Vinya). Aunt Lida’s parents lived in their good house, and Aunt Lida, uncle Mitya and their son Tolik lived with them. Her dad was a pastor of one of the Alma-Ata churches.

In the city of Alma-Ata, my father and mother attended the church where all our relatives went. Time became restless again. The brothers started to get taken away. It was 1937. My dad was asked to abstain, temporarily not to attend church meetings, to hide. But he didn’t want to do it. And during one church service, people from the police

came and took my father and some more brothers. Dad was given a sentence of 10 years under Article 58 and sent to Karaganda to serve this long sentence. Mom was left alone again with two small children. Vinya wasn’t even four, and I wasn’t even two. Mom got a job in a sewing workshop, and she would leave Vinya and me alone at home. She’d put a blanket on the floor and leave us on the floor so that I wouldn’t fall. For lunch, she’d run home to see how we were doing and feed us. One time, Vinya cut my hair and threw it out the window. After that, my mother tried to not leave out anything dangerous, so that Vinya wouldn’t do something worse. On Sunday, my mother took us to Aunt Lida’s parents and we played there with Tolik. Uncle Mitya was a photographer and worked in a photo studio, so he often photographed the three of us, sometimes with dogs, sometimes with cats, sometimes in the garden. In the grandmother’s garden, there was a nice gazebo, all overgrown with flowers. There was a hammock, and we rocked in it. There was a big oak tree in front of the house, and I loved picking acorns in the morning. It was a great celebration for us to be at Aunt Lida’s.

In 1939, my mother’s brother, Uncle Gosha, moved to live in Uzbekistan, in the city of Fergana. There he bought a house and invited my mother to move in with him. He got a job as an accountant at Zagotzerno. He was not yet married at the time. So, in



*The photo my father recieved in prison*





*Lina, Vena and Tolik with relatives*

sang well, he knew the Word of God well, he was cheerful, joyful and sociable – such brothers are always liked by sisters. Aunt Vera was also beautiful. Wavy dark hair, beautiful eyes, pink cheeks, a slender figure, and most importantly, she was a sincere Christian, simple and modest. And so Uncle Gosha went to Tashkent, immediately proposed to Aunt Vera, and he got a “yes” right away. The wedding was celebrated in Tashkent. Then he took Aunt Vera to Fergana.

Our grandmother also lived with us – my mother’s mother. She cleaned the house, cooked food and looked after me and Vinya.

The New Year of 1941 had come... All people were living well. Mom took us to the Christmas tree in Zagotzerno, where Uncle Gosha worked. The tree was very large and beautiful. Children recited poems, they were given toys... Everything was very interesting. Suddenly a fire broke out! People rushed about and rushed to the exit. A traffic jam formed, people were crushing each other... Our mother also tried to get us out as soon as possible. The tree was already on fire... Fire trucks arrived and quickly extinguished the fire. No one was majorly hurt, but our mother’s hair was burnt. And we remembered this New Year for the rest of our lives.

Soon after that, in the summer of 1941, the war broke out. We were in the rear. We didn’t have any shooting or killing going on, but everyone here worked for the front. All healthy men were taken to the war. They took Uncle Gosha too. Aunt Vera worked as a midwife in a maternity hospital: she loved newborn children and looked after them. One time, she took me to work with her and showed me all the kids who were in the children’s department. One boy sucked a pacifier, some cried, others slept peacefully. They were all so interesting, red, plump... (Later, when I was already married, many of my children were born in this maternity hospital).

1939 we moved to live in Fergana. Soon, Uncle Gosha decided to marry, and God showed him a bride in Tashkent – Aunt Vera. He started to like her after one of the services in the city of Tashkent. Uncle Gosha asked her for her address and said that he wanted to send her a letter. Even when I was a girl and lived in Tashkent with Uncle Gosha and Aunt Vera, we often stayed up late in the evenings, drank tea, and Aunt Vera told us about her youth, how they were dispossessed and taken away to where trees were cut down and prepared. The work was very hard. Young girls had to work from morning to evening. Once, she and a friend decided to run away – and ran away. People were sent in pursuit of them, but the Lord miraculously protected them. And that is how they arrived in Tashkent. When Uncle Gosha took her address, Aunt Vera began to wait for the letter, but it still wasn’t coming... Her heart was languishing in anticipation, but the groom was hesitating... Uncle Gosha was a tall, slender young man; he



Mom made a living by sewing. She sewed at home. People brought clothes to alter, to alter coats and jackets. I remember that she took 100 rubles to sew a coat. It was a little bit of money, but it was enough for us to live on.

In 1942, my grandmother died. We buried her in the old cemetery on Lenin Street. Due to the fact that there was no space at the cemetery, people were getting buried in a vacant lot behind a fence, and graves were dug right up to the road. Only the sidewalk was left. At first, my mother and I often visited my grandmother's grave, but then we lost it, and could not find it – the wreaths were stolen, there were no landmarks, there were no numbers on the boards, no columns placed. And these remain nameless graves.

Then the news came that Uncle Gosha was wounded. He was treated in a hospital, and after the treatment he was sent home, as his knee joint was injured and his leg did not bend at the knee. As he walked, he lifted his leg along with his body, but Aunt Vera was glad that he returned alive. He began to work again in the old place. A year later, they had a boy - Zhorik, a sweet, calm, curly haired baby. It was difficult to live during the war. Mom began to sew black plush coats, and then with Uncle Gosha they traveled by bus to neighboring towns and villages to exchange the coats for grain. Sacks of grain were also brought by buses or trucks. The delivered grain was then transported on carts to the mill. The mill was far away in Kosh-Karchakh on the Sayu. Although it was very far away, there was no other choice. So they went there and often waited in line for a long time. But they brought home flour. I sifted this flour. It was my job. I learned how to use a sieve, and I enjoyed this job. Flour pours through a sieve like snow. Yes, and I was white, powdered. Besides that, I had a lot of other jobs. We soaked the plate cake in large cast irons. It would become soft on the top, and we scraped off the softened layer with a knife. Sometimes the knife would come off and I would cut my knee. The cake was added to the husk and fed to the livestock.

There were no churches at that time. Believers gathered in their homes and didn't take their children with them. They often returned from the services very late. There was no electric light at that time, and the rooms were lit with kerosene lamps. But even kerosene lamps could not always be lit – it was a luxury. We burned braziers – we'd pour oil into small bottles, cut out a round piece of iron from a tin can, make a hole in the middle, insert a wick, and light it – and that was our lighting.

When I was seven and a half years old, I started going to school. We all studied at school number 5 on Dzerzhinsky Street. Vinya started school two years before me. Even before that, I often came to Vinya's class, and for some reason everyone loved me. His classmates would ask: "Can you write?" "Yes" I'd say. "Well, write something!" And I'd write "8" – eight. They asked: "How much is this?" I said, "Seven." And everyone would start laughing, and I laughed with them, not realizing that I was wrong.

My first teacher, Tatyana Georgievna, was young, about twenty-seven years old, very beautiful and slender. She dressed well. We all loved her very much. But she was strict. Once we wrote a dictation. The teacher wrote the



*Tolik, Lina and Vena with dogs*





*Uzbekistan*

sentence on the chalkboard. We had to read the sentence, take a good look, how it is written. Then the teacher erased it and said: “Write!” Only.

After that we could write. I wrote well with no mistakes. I’d take a look and know how to write it. I didn’t look at the board anymore and wrote on the test paper. Tatyana Georgievna thought that I was copying from the blackboard and gave me a huge red 1 (F) in red pencil on the whole page. I got offended, burst into tears and went home. Mom could not console me, I cried that the teacher gave me a 1 (F). After all, I only got 5’s (A’s), I was an excellent student.

Of course, we learned the letters first. I really liked the primer. I knew the letters, but I could not read. The teacher would read to us what she assigned for homework. I memorized everything in order. At home I read to my mother boldly. And once she asked me randomly, out of order – and I could not read. And then my mother realized how I read “well”. I remember reading about the moon. After that I learned to read first by syllables, and then the whole word at once.

Vinya loved to read books. He borrowed them from the library. He mostly read at night in the light of a brazier. One day he was reading and fell asleep. He read in the corner where the chest of drawers stood. The chest of drawers then was made up of three suitcases full of clothes, stacked on top of each other. They were covered with a white sheet and a white knitted tablecloth was on top. In the evening, Aunt Vera put her clothes on the dresser, among which was a beautiful gray downy sweater. That was what flared up from the fire of the brazier. The fire began to flare up, the smell of burnt things appeared, and everyone woke up. The adults quickly threw blankets over the fire and put out the fire. Vinya, of course, was punished after that. I was also very sorry for Aunt Vera’s sweater, because I really liked her in it.

Our childhood, albeit a military one, was very interesting and fun. In the evenings, all the girls and boys from the street played games until it got dark: “Fight for the Banner”, hide and seek, tag, breaking chains... The girls and the boys also played some more games. Central Asia was in the rear, and Polish people were evacuated to our city. First, in the summer they were settled in schools. We often heard them singing from the classrooms.



What melodious voices they had! The singing was very beautiful. The melodies were folk. Closer to the beginning of the school year, they were resettled into homes. One family moved into the house across from ours. They also had children who quickly became friends with us. They often treated us to sweets – colorful pillows, very fragrant and sweet. Their parents made candy themselves. They were very good-natured, invited us to their house and even allowed us to see how they made candy. A thick multicolored mass fell from top to bottom in a continuous strip and filled the molds, dividing into small candies, which quickly solidified, were sprinkled with sugar and became ready for sale.

In the second grade we were met by another teacher – Anna Vladimirovna. She was elderly, plump, kind, intelligent, she treated every student with motherly love. At first we were upset that Tatyana Georgievna was replaced, but we were told that in the summer she died of cancer. How sorry we were for this young, good teacher! Now I am 65 years old, and I still remember my first teacher – strict, but fair, beautiful and slender. We got used to Anna Vladimirovna very quickly and fell in love with her. She presented the educational material very clearly and tried to use all her knowledge and experience. For some reason Anna Vladimirovna fell in love with me the most. I always knew the given lessons. Studying was easy for me. And if someone did not know the lesson and stood at the blackboard, blushing, she would say: “Well, Linushka, come up and recite the lesson.” And I always went and recited, and I always got “excellent”.

There were two Polish girls in our class – twins Abby and Baby. They spoke Russian, and the three of us were friends. Their mother worked at the creamery. She gave them fried bread for school. How delicious it was! My friends treated me to fried bread, and I gave them the simple one, and everyone was happy. It was enough for me even to share this bread with my brother Vinya. We were friends together until the war ended and they went home to Poland.

The house in which we lived was located on 20 Pionerskaya Street. It was large and many people found shelter in it. In the first large room, which had a separate entrance, lived the mother of Yakov Grigorievich Skorniyakov with her children. The family was large, but they lived together and there were no problems. The



*Ogorodnikov Family*



next two rooms, also with a separate entrance, were occupied by a family of five – Uncle Vanya and Aunt Lida, who were nonbelievers, and Aunt Lyuba – the wife of Uncle Vanya’s brother, Uncle Mitya, with her daughter Galya and her grandmother – they were believers. Uncle Mitya refused to take up arms and for this he was in prison. He was given 10 years. I often watched after Galya after their grandmother died. We often remember this grandmother in our family even to this day, because this grandmother was always hungry, and if we had something left over, we always gave it to her. She always ate everything and thanked us, wishing us that food would not become scarce on our table. And now, when we have something left over, we remember her: “Where is the grandmother to whom we can give this?”

Once, when I was taking care of Galya, and she was in my arms, I stumbled and fell, and Galya hit her forehead on the ground. A large bump appeared at the site of the injury. Of course, it went away soon. When I was already a young lady and lived in Tashkent, Galya also lived there, already with her dad, who had returned from prison, her mother and brothers. She reminded me of the bump. I think that these are the consequences of rickets, since there was malnutrition.

In the third grade, when I was 10 years old, I got measles. There were no vaccinations back then, except for typhoid fever. The injections were made under the shoulder blade. We were sick for several days after that. The boys deliberately hit the injection site, and we were in great pain and very unhappy. When I got the measles, I got a red rash on my body. We were not allowed to go to school with a rash, so I went to the doctor for a form. I wanted my mother to come with me, but she had a lot to do, so she told me: “You are already big, go alone.” The children’s clinic was far from us. I had to walk along our Pionerskaya Street to Komsomolskaya Lake, get to Constitution Street and walk a few more blocks. The doctor examined me and told me to go home quickly and go to bed, to not go anywhere, including school. She explained to me that I had the measles, that other children could get sick from me, and therefore I should only stay at home. She wrote a prescription with which someone should go to the pharmacy and told me to come see her again in two weeks. Joyful, I ran home – I couldn’t go to school! But I didn’t want to stay at home either. So far nothing hurt me, I had no temperature – how could I just lay in bed? But in the evening my temperature rose, and I went to bed. At times, I even lost consciousness. In general, at this age, measles is very difficult. They didn’t put me in the hospital, so I was treated at home. Slowly but surely, I recovered. It was hard for mom to raise us alone without dad. Although we rarely got sick, it was still hard.

Vinya fell ill shortly after me. He had an abscess in his throat and he could not swallow. He had a high fever, for two weeks he did not eat anything, and at times he lost consciousness. His condition kept getting worse, and there was no hope of recovery. Mom had already prepared clothes for him for the funeral. But the doctors decided to perform an operation on him, to open up the abscess. They tied him to the table and began to operate. Although he was very weak, he was able to kick the nurse who held him. I think that the anesthesia was at a very low level then, and he did that because of the severe pain. The operation went well and Vinya recovered.

My brother and I were also sick with malaria. It can be two or three days. Vinya had comatose malaria but was treated at home and recovered. I was in the hospital. The city hospital was on Krupskaya Street. As I remember now, I came to school while it was still early. I sat down against the wall of the building in the sun as I was shivering. And I didn’t get up anymore. They took me home with a fever, and then they put me in the hospital. The attending physician was Tatyana Konstantinovna Chekmareva. She was so good and kind! How carefully she examined everyone and spoke so kindly! We couldn’t wait to get around to see her. It was 1946. One day my mother came to visit and brought me some big beautiful apples. I was very happy – we did not see anything like that and could not afford to buy such expensive apples even for a patient. Then my mother says to me: “Linochka, look, who is it standing next to me?” I looked and recognized the person: “Dad!” I threw myself into his arms. He took me in his arms, hugged me and kissed me. I felt his strong kind hands. What a joy – dad came home from prison! Now we were no longer half-orphaned, and mom wasn’t going to be alone! Dad was allowed to go home a year earlier for a good job.

With the return of dad, our life changed a lot. Mom became joyful and happy. Dad showed us so much love, affection and attention! How good it became! At first, our family also lived with Uncle Gosha. Uncle Gosha taught dad how to make women’s shoes. And we sold it at the bazaar. Soon Dad and Mom bought land at the back

of our yard – a narrow, long strip of land. The gates went out to the neighboring Pamir Street. On this land, at the very end, dad built a house of two rooms. The first – the entrance – the kitchen and the second, where we slept, where my mother sewed – this was our hall. How glad we were to have our own home! Before that we lived in a house, but it was Uncle Gosha's house. We were thankful to him for helping my mother with us so much when my father was not there. And Aunt Vera treated us well. Thank God and thanks to her!

I remember that I was punished twice throughout my childhood. Once, when all the guys from the street gathered to go to the mulberry tree. Vinya asked me to go and ask my grandmother for permission and take a can for the mulberries. I thought that my grandmother would not let us go, so I crept in on the sly, took a can and fled into the street. I told Vinya that grandmother had let us go. The guys wanted to return quickly, but that was impossible. We walked through the fields behind the mosque and further to the railway crossing at Besh-Bol. Everyone had already filled up their cans a long time ago, but the further we went, the larger and sweeter the mulberries became... The snotty mulberry tree is very sweet and juicy. You eat it and you can't get enough. And red, and black, and white and lilac – our eyes couldn't get enough. When we returned home, they were already looking for us everywhere, but couldn't find us anywhere. Vinya calmly returned, thinking that my grandmother had let us go. I confessed that I had deceived Vinya, thinking that grandmother would not let us go, that I secretly took the can and ran away. I was punished. This was my first punishment. I knelt first on corn, then on coarse salt. I didn't like to ask for forgiveness. I knew that I was to blame. My grandmother passed by several times, but I was silent and on my knees. Everyone had already gone to bed, but I still stood there. Vinya tried to persuade me: "Ask grandmother for forgiveness. Say that you will not do this anymore, and grandma will forgive you." But it was hard for me to say. Only when everyone had gone to bed, I went to my grandmother and asked her for forgiveness.



*Church of Fergana*



Grandma forgave and kissed me. Before going to bed, we always prayed with my grandmother. Once I fell asleep earlier and did not pray. At night, I had a terrible dream. I woke up and ran to my grandmother. My grandmother told me: “This is because you did not pray in the evening and did not ask Jesus for protection for the night.” Since then, I have never gone to bed without praying.

The second time they punished me – they beat me with a belt. I was accused of a lie, but I did not agree. I was very stubborn. Uncle Gosha held me between his knees, and my mother beat me with a belt. And although I received a punishment, I stayed in my way.

I remember another interesting incident from my childhood. I went to see my friend home and put on my mother’s brown head scarf, which she wore to the church services. My friend and I walked along Pamirskaya Street to Skobelev, then walked along the railroad to the creamery. I did not want to see her off so far, but we started talking, and kept walking and walking... Along the railroad, a gypsy girl joined us and went with us. Then she said: “What a beautiful scarf you have, let me try it on.” I gave it to her. We walked on and talked. I did not notice how the headscarf was no longer on the gypsy. I told her: “Give me the scarf!” She said: “What scarf? See, I don’t have any scarf.” And she left us. I cried, thinking about how I would confess to my mother that a gypsy girl stole her headscarf from me. And then I decided not to tell her anything about the scarf at all. Mom searched for it for a long time, and did not find it, but I said nothing. And great guilt was on my conscience, gnawed at me that I hid it from my mother. I confessed this to her and asked for forgiveness when I repented at the age of 17. When the war ended, believers were allowed to gather for church services. And gradually the number of believers began to increase.

## Dad

First, one brother, who lived on Navoi Street, invited all the brothers and sisters to his house. Blessed meetings were held there. Souls yearned for these services. How much joy there was! Souls who had not had fellowship for several years began to come to the meetings. Already this place was not big enough. The house could not accommodate everyone who wanted to listen to the Word of God. Then brother Dubinin, who lived on May 1 street, invited everyone to his place. The services took place in the courtyard under the vineyard. In the summer, the vineyard protected us from the heat. Large clusters of grapes hung over our heads. Now my mother always took us with her to the services. Other believers also brought their children, so many children began to attend the services. By the time dad returned from prison, the believers had already bought a building for the Church on Krupskaya Street. The Fergana registered church still gathers in this building.

On Sunday mornings, Dad always read the Word of God to us, then we all prayed in order. Then we sang one of our favorite family hymns: “I love you, God, I love you with all my soul,” “When trials prevail,” “Full of love for my soul,” “To an unearthly land,” “Oh, I’m a poor sinner”, “The Book was given to me by God”, “As a child, my mother said to me, child, pray more often” and many others... After breakfast we went to the church service, as if it were a holiday. The services were very interesting! There were very good preachers, and a wonderful choir sang! There were good directors, there were good voices who performed wonderful solo parts. The soprano solo was performed by mother, aunt Marusya Tyrsenko, Nina Chimirina and others. Uncle Gosha sang beautifully among the basses. Aunt Galya Babitskaya and Matryona Ivanovna sang alto. Uncle Vanya Kramarenko was a tenor. After the service, we always went to a cafe for ice cream. This, of course, was not like a café today, but simply a place along the street: tables were arranged, a shade from the sun was made and ice cream was prepared in a stall nearby. Those who wished could sit at the tables and they were served by the workers – they brought the ordered ice cream. How delicious it was! There were four of us: dad, mom, Vinya and me. It was possible for us to afford to buy ice cream, since dad worked, and mom made some money sewing. How happy we were then! Dad was with us, and mom blossomed and became so joyful and happy! She sewed and earned money for the family, and dad worked as a turner in a factory. When we bought the plot of land and built our house, we bought a cow. We also kept a pig, ducks and chickens. It was so interesting to go into the shed in the morning and collect a lot

of duck eggs on the floor! Chickens laid eggs in their nests. Often, when we swam in the canal, we found nests with duck eggs, as ducks swam along the ditch and often laid eggs somewhere in the grass on the shore. The canal flowed along our street, and it was very convenient for us to swim anytime we wanted. During summer vacations Vinya and I gathered birch grass. We went far to Kosh-Carchi, even further than Say. Now, remembering, I think how could we walk so far? And also carry bags stuffed with grass on our shoulders?! Vinya sold his grass, and my grass was used to feed the cow.

We were already older. The church services were a necessity for us. We ourselves read the Word of God, sang hymns in the family in the evenings, and prayed together. Among the preachers we really loved Peter Ivanovich Chekmarev, Maslyakov, and Ignat Prokopyevich Litvinov. Our dad delivered very informative and captivating sermons. Of all the believers in our church, we loved Peter Ivanovich Chekmarev the most. He poured out rays of light, kindness and affection. He was very attentive to everyone. Having come from a noble family, he was very educated, intelligent and spoke several foreign languages. He invited everyone to his home. His rule was: whoever came to his house sat down at the table, and over a cup of tea or coffee he peacefully talked with them, listened, and gave good advice. It was a home where any weary soul could find peace. How many young hearts repented in his house! He was a teacher in our church. Maslyakov was the pastor. We also loved him in a special way. He was always joyful, full of sincere Christian love. I remember now, everyone was so simple at that time, with an open heart, sincere. They really burned with their first love. The choir directors were Ignat Prokopyevich Litvinov, Jonah Semyonovich Tkach and uncle Vanya Kramarenko.

Believers from other places began to come to Fergana, as life in Fergana was easier. The winter was short and not harsh. The youth in the congregation was friendly. Repentance began, especially after the arrival of Yuri Sergeevich Grachev in 1948. He had the gift to call sinners to repentance. I remember young people gathered in our house. Yuri Sergeevich and three sisters went into the next room, talked – and then they came out of there



*Center - father, Peter Ivanovich Chekmarev and Yuri Sergeevich Grachev. Bottom row - me in a white apron holding a Bible*



with tears of joy in their eyes. They repented. And many young people repented in those days. I really liked Yuri Sergeevich. I was only 12 years old. He gave me a beautiful postcard “Jesus Christ – the Good Shepherd.” It was very colorful: Jesus Christ carrying a small lamb in His arms, and many other lambs are walking next to Him and behind Him... At the youth fellowship, he presented everyone with leather-bound notebooks for writing golden verses from the Bible. On the first page of each of them it was written: “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them...” Timothy 4:16.

One Sunday afternoon after the morning service, all the young people gathered in the house of Pyotr Ivanovich Chekmarev. This house was located in the city center near the city market. It consisted of a beautiful terrace with steps, an entrance hall and a very large hall. They always received guests in this hall. There were a lot of them this time. Mom and Dad were also invited. They took Vinya with them, me and little Milochka. She was born in 1948. The get-together was in honor of the birthday of Yuri Sergeevich. The youth and Yuri Sergeevich asked dad and mom to talk about their lives: how they found each other, how they learned the will of God, how the wedding went. Dad enthusiastically told how God had performed a miracle by helping them find each other, how they learned the will of God, how mother had agreed to marry him, the prisoner, how the wedding went. How he admired that God had sent him a wife – a true Christian beauty. When he talked about the wedding, tears filled his eyes... There were no guests at their wedding... A brother, a pastor, an old man, came to perform their wedding ceremony in the house of an elderly brother in the city of Mariinsk, where dad was in prison. No one sang wedding songs to them, although both of them were part of a choir... Then Yuri Sergeevich asked the young people to sing all the wedding hymns to dad and mom. Mom and Dad wept as they saw how the Lord was compensating for what could not have been done before.

I can also remember the times that we went to the bazaar in the summer to collect watermelon peels. I would take a fleece blanket, a beautiful enamel dish, a sharp knife and a bag. At the bazaar, somewhere on the side near a wall or a closed stall, or near a tree in the shade, I spread a blanket, put a dish in the center and waited for those who would like to sit down with me and eat a watermelon or melon. They were usually Uzbek men. Women mostly worked in the fields or stayed at home with small children. Sometimes they sold something in the bazaar. The men, on the other hand, sat in the teahouse, drank tea and discussed the news, ate manti or plov right along the street where they were sold, and then ate watermelon or melon. They ate the watermelon, and the peels were left for us. By evening, the bag of peels was full. Since there were many of us who needed peels, we couldn't be yawning, but had to ask people to sit on our blanket. I usually called: “Gospadin, idi syuda!” In Russian it meant: “Sir, come here!” And they eagerly sat on my blanket. I lifted the full sack onto my shoulders and carried it home. The sack was all wet, sweet juice ran down my shoulders, and I came home completely sticky. But at least I was allowed to go swimming right away. It was good that the canal was flowing nearby and there was no need to go anywhere. The water in it was clean, running through. Once, something happened: my cousin Zhorik went with me to the bazaar for peels. He got lost in the bazaar. They took him to the nursery. I brought the peels home and we went through them. Those that were cut off with a knife, we washed and ate. Or if the watermelon was not sweet, the Uzbeks gave it to us whole, and we ate it even though it was not sweet. So, while Zhorik was found and brought home, we had already gnawed all the peels, and Zhorik cried that he did not get anything. Also, early in the mornings I went to the tarpaulin factory to sell milk. We sold whole milk, not skimmed, and therefore our milk was quickly bought. I walked along Pamir Street, on the way I went to the Babitskys' and together with their daughter Lyuba we went to sell milk. They also had a cow and they also sold milk.

Our family grew. In 1950, another boy was born – Volodya. He was cute and calm. I'm trying to remember our little house in Fergana. There was no floor. Firstly, slag was poured, and then it was smeared with clay. And so, from time to time it was re-smeared to refresh it. There were no rugs or carpets — it was a simple earthen floor. But there was joy because it was our own place. Everyone was content and happy. Dad was still working in the old place and Mom was still sewing. By doing this, she earned money so that we could buy groceries. The youth sisters ordered dresses from my mother. She sewed very beautiful Crepe de Chine dresses. Many sisters worked and allowed themselves to dress beautifully. Mom could sew in style. Then they made “waffles” on the skirt at the

top on both sides. And on the blouse at the top on both sides too. I watched them when they tried on the dresses with admiration, but I knew that I would not be able to afford such expensive dresses for a long time.

In the fall, dad fell ill. He had radiculitis. He couldn't get up. The doctor and nurse came to our home and gave him hot injections (magnesia) at home. The sick leave was not over yet, he could still get up with difficulty, when suddenly people with red caps arrived and began a search. They turned everything over. They took away Bibles, song books, magazines, books, our notebooks with hymns and poems. Dad was also taken away, and they said: "Everyone who was imprisoned under Article 58 was ordered to be imprisoned again."

Mom was again left alone with four children. Venya was 17 and I was 15. I started eighth grade. Then, starting from the eighth grade, tuition needed to be paid. They promised me that they would exempt me from payment, since my dad was in prison. But as an excellent student, I was forced to join the Komsomol. But I already understood everything. I understood that the communists are the enemies of the believers. They put believers in jail. And the Komsomol is also their godless organization! I told the headmaster that I would never join the Komsomol. A place for me to work as a courier in the district executive committee became available, and I got that job. I moved to the evening school for working youth №2. My brother also attended evening school. And I felt good because we went to school together. At the evening school, I was the best student in the class. Among the older youth, I, a little 15-year-old girl, always knew everything, never missed lessons and helped everyone who needed help. At work, I had to deliver various documents that needed to be signed for to the Regional Executive Committee, the City Executive Committee and other places. For this I received 350 rubles a month. The typist secretary loved me and taught me how to type on a typewriter because I often helped her by dictating what to type. She had to type up large digital reports about the cotton harvest in all the districts of the Fergana region.

Mom would go to visit Dad in prison. Visits were given very rarely and only late in the evening after 10 o'clock. Dad was sitting in the basement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This building still stands in the same place now. The Department of Internal Affairs is still there. The basement is a concrete building, divided into cells, in which the inmates were kept before the trial. Conditions in the prison were better, but dad was kept there in the basement until the end, until the order came to exile him to northern Kazakhstan, to the city of Kostanay. There was an election on November 4, and my mother went to vote in order to buy us something tasty. Before, at the polling stations scarce products would be sold – kielbasa, sweets, cookies, things that could not be bought in stores. So that is why all the children were waiting for the elections.



*Milochka*

Mom left. Vinya and I stayed at home. Then after a while we looked around – Mila was nowhere to be found. We began to look everywhere in different houses, at the neighbors', checked all the canals – maybe she drowned? She was nowhere to be found. None of the neighbors had her, and no one saw her. Then we thought that mom took her with her and began to wait for mom. It took a long time for mom to come home. It turned out that my mother did not take her with her. We began to run around again, looking for Mila. Vinya ran to the bazaar, went into the children's room, just in case to ask if they had seen a little girl? They said: "Yes, there was a little girl, but since no one was looking for her, she was sent to an orphanage." They also said that the girl was looking for her mother, that people tried to find her mother, but since she was nowhere to be found, the girl was taken to the children's room. Vinya immediately ran home, told us that



Mila had been found, and even though she was in the orphanage, we were glad that she was alive, that she had not drowned and was found. Together we went to the orphanage. It was already 5 pm. The head of the orphanage came out to us and said that the girl had indeed come to them from the children's room at the bazaar. She asked for the last name, first name and date of birth. Then she took us to the hall, where they were having a rally in honor of the October Revolution and were watching a small concert. Mila was sitting in the front row. She sat quietly and did not cry. We made sure it was really her and wanted to take her home. But the Head, having learned that dad was in prison, suggested leaving Mila for a while in the orphanage, and when we wanted, at any time we could pick her up. No payment was required. She gave us one day to decide. We went home without Mila... We didn't want to leave her, and although it was difficult for us, we wanted to take her home. Others advised us to leave her there for a while – there was good care, food and they were taught as in daycare. Reluctantly, my mother agreed to leave her there for a while. We came to visit Mila on the first Sunday. Mila went to us and was like a stranger. She did not rush to hug anyone out of joy, did not smile and did not say a single word. She ate nothing of what we brought her. As my mother's heart sank, she cried. We, too, could hardly restrain ourselves. The same thing happened the next Sunday. But then she cheered up, became sociable and got used to her new life. She began to recite the poems that they learned there. I remember she said:

That is how the winter passed. In the spring, dad was going to be sent into exile. Mom was given a last meeting with him and she was allowed to come with her children. At 10 pm we were at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. We were allowed to see my father's investigator. We sat in his office and waited for dad. We also took Mila from the orphanage to this meeting. Mom and her four children were waiting for their dad for a long time. Finally, he was brought in. We all rushed to him: "Daddy!" The investigator did not interfere. He let my dad take Vova and Mila in his arms. Vinya and I stood next to him, hugging him. Dad told us: "Be patient, kids. We'll be



*I, Mila and Vovochka*

together again soon. Soon we will live happily in our new place, and we will all be well.” He consoled and was sorry for mom. “My poor Pashenka, how much you have to endure... Here you are again alone... But calm down, soon we’ll be together again. It will be easier for you”. The meeting ended. We said goodbye to dad and kissed him. After that we decided not to send Mila to the orphanage anymore.

The next day my mother went to the orphanage and told the head of the orphanage that we were going to be leaving soon, and therefore we were leaving Mila at home. Mom thanked the Head for her kind heart and for good treatment of the children. The family decided that dad would go where he was sent into exile alone for now, get a job, and then we would come when we finished school. And when we finished school, we sold the house and went to Kostanay. Mom took the most necessary things with her. She packed everything into bags. We attached straps to the bags so that Vinya and I could carry them. Mom carried Volodya in her arms, and Mila walked by herself. We arrived by bus in Gorchakovo with our things. There we waited a long time for the train. But then it arrived. Uncle Gosha saw us off. He helped us load our stuff onto the train. And then we were on our way...

The ride was very interesting. We looked out the window all the time. Mom prepared a lot of different food for the trip, and we ate everything with a big appetite. And so, we got to Orenburg. In Orenburg we had to take a different train. When the train stopped, we began to take out our things. Mom and the little kids watched our things on the train, I watched on the platform, and Vinya dragged the things from the car to the platform. We had 18 places in total – a whole bunch! We unloaded safely and everything was intact. But then they forced us to carry our things to the scales. They told us that our stuff was going to be overweight and we would have to pay extra. Mom begged them to let us go without weighing our stuff, but the ruthless people had no pity on the single mother with four children. They made us weigh the stuff and pay for the excess weight. Soon that was over. A train approached, on which we had to continue the journey directly to Kostanay. How we looked forward to meeting dad! Everything was new and interesting for us! We looked out the windows. One panorama gave way to another... Soon the forests began. It became green all around. The Uzbek cotton fields were replaced by Kazakh steppes, and there were already green plants here. We arrived in Kostanay in the afternoon. Dad was already waiting for us at the station. He quickly helped us remove all our things and kissed us all! How happy we were! Dad was strong and caring! And my mother became so joyful and happy! Dad hired a cart with a horse, we loaded all the things, got on it ourselves and drove off. Soon, the wagon (cart) drove up to a house. The street was wide. The houses were level, but no fences. There was a well in the middle of the street not far from our house. Our home was a dugout. Two windows facing the street, the bottom of the windows was almost level with the ground. A small front garden with 3 green bushes. We entered the courtyard and opened the doors to the house. First there was a corridor or a vestibule, then a kitchen with a Russian stove, and then a large bright room, the one that overlooks the street. Indeed, you opened the window – and immediately the earth was there. The room itself was of normal height. There were two beds there, one for me and one for Vinya. Mom and Dad settled in the first room with all the little children. There was a double bed. The children slept on the Russian stove. The bed on the Russian stove was roomy, an adult could sleep well there. Everything was interesting there and we liked everything. Dad showed us a bucket of potatoes, which cost only 1 ruble. The potatoes were large and clean. There was a bucket full of fish, still stirring in the bucket. This bucket cost 2 rubles. We ate what dad had prepared for us and went with the whole family to the Tobol river. How it smelled of grass there! How easy it was to breathe! We ran and screamed with joy, with the joy from meeting dad, from such freedom and from the beautiful big river! We went for a swim, sat on the beach, rested, and then went home. We went to the river very often.

A new life had begun. We went with dad to church services. The services were held in the house of an old woman. There were few people. Our family, the family of Prokhor Vasilyevich and some others. Everyone sat on benches. There was a table against the wall — it was a pulpit. The sermons were short and simple. We sang together. I remember that the grandmother, the mistress of the house, also preached. First, she re-read the sung hymn, explained it, then read the Word of God on the same topic. She explained briefly, simply and clearly. And we listened to her, barely wanting to breath. We had the fear of God. We loved God and took everything with reverence. We liked everything and were happy with everything. Vinya started school, 10th grade. I started 9th grade at the same school and got a job as a telegraph operator. The salary was 375 rubles a month. First, we were



taught the Morse code. And we became morses. We received and transmitted telegrams by the Morse apparatus. I learned the whole alphabet very quickly. It was interesting to work on the device: dot, dash, dot, dash... Knock, knock, knock, knock... After Morse, we learned Bodo – this is also an electric device on the telegraph – it has five keys – two on the left and three on the right. If you press all five keys, the letter P comes out. If three on the right – the letter O, etc. I also quickly learned this apparatus. Real letters were printed on it. Tapes with these letters were stuck on the forms of the telegrams and then sent to the addressee. These were already real telegrams. At that time, there were already devices such as the teletype. They had a keyboard like a typewriter with letters. It was necessary to type, in spite of the keyboard. You watch how the text is typed so that there are no mistakes, and your fingers themselves press the necessary letters. I only learned on this apparatus, but did not work with it, as I was transferred from place to place where there were not enough workers. I worked as a telegram corrector, i.e. I checked whether the telegrams received from people and organizations were written correctly. If there were mistakes, I corrected them. They trusted me with this, because I knew Russian well, I wrote competently and therefore could quickly notice mistakes. When there was no one to work at the checkout, I worked as a telegram receiver. I liked any job. I worked well and everyone loved me. I did well at school too. Soon, dad called for his sister Maria with her two children – Alla and Pavlik, to us in Kostanay. Aunt Maria's husband's name was Pavlik. Their last name was Chigaleychik. He went to war and went missing. Aunt Marusya raised her children herself. It was, of course, very difficult for her, and dad decided to help her. They arrived soon after and we immediately became friends. Alla was a year older than me, but she went to school with me to the 9th grade, and we sat with her at the same desk. I really liked the teacher of Russian language and literature. She was of medium height and slender. She always dressed beautifully. I especially liked her brown corduroy dress. I tried to imitate her in everything. Mom made me a new flannel dress, and I asked her to make the style of the teacher's dress.

It was winter. There was a lot of snow. There were no boots like there are today. We wore rubber boots. I also put on new rubber boots and nylon stockings. While I ran from work to home, my knees would become like wood. The tip of my nose turned white and my cheeks turned red from the frost. The frost was crackling. Snow creaked underfoot. Yes, the climate was harsh! It was not for nothing that prisoners were exiled there. The winters were cold and long. In the month of May, people went to demonstrations in coats. There were often blizzards. The snow rushed by with a howl, and the wires rang... The winds were very frequent. When there was no snow, the wind carried sand. There was a large ravine not far from our house. An iron bridge was stretched across it, but it was slightly off to the side. And we were too lazy to run to the bridge, so we ran through the ravine. It was always empty. Yes, we were young, strong and healthy. And this obstacle meant nothing to us. Vinya got himself used to the cold in winter, ran barefoot in the snow, and exercised like this daily until he froze his toes. Since then, he stopped running barefoot in the snow. Finally, winter ended, and spring came. Mom got Alla and me two cuts of staple material for dresses. One with yellow roses, the other with pink ones. I got the one with yellow roses. Alla and I were ordered high-heeled shoes from brother Krylov. They turned out to be very beautiful. And for the first time in my life at the age of seventeen I put on high-heeled shoes. Nylon stockings, a beautiful new staple dress and a dark green suit with a phosphor rose brooch. In the evening it glowed. On top of my head was a new hat. Here is my portrait at 17.

In the summer, Vinya finished 10th grade and went to Tashkent to apply to be a doctor at the Tashkent Medical Institute. He entered, but without a scholarship, since he received a C on the exam. Scholarships were not given with Cs. We promised that we would help him, that all he needed to do was study. He had a place to live in – Uncle Gosha and Aunt Vera allowed him to live with them. A lot of believers began to come to Kostanay, as they heard that it was easier to live there, everything is cheap... both houses and food. The church began to grow rapidly. We could no longer gather at the grandmother's, so we bought our own church building. The pastor, Krylov, also arrived. He preached good sermons, organized the church well, and a choir was established. However, there were not many young people. The children of many families were still small. We were timid. We could sing and attend church services. Sometimes I went with my mother or alone to visit the sick. Mom baked pirozhki from white flour, gave milk, and we brought this to the sick. We visited a lot of German brothers and

sisters. There were a lot of them in the Kostanay region, because that's where they were all exiled. They had their own church services, but we were friends. Sometimes they came to our services and sang very beautifully.

I was already 17 years old. I understood that I must repent. There seemed to be nothing to repent of: I listened to my mother, I didn't lie, I helped her whenever I could with housework. But the Word of God in church worked through the Holy Spirit. And the notion that you have to be born again didn't give me any peace. It was especially hard during communion. I was very worried that I could not, like everyone else, participate in this commandment, that all those participating were saints, worthy, but I... One brother from another city came to our church in the winter. He gave such a good sermon on repentance. The Holy Spirit touched my heart so much, and I was about to go out to repent several times... But I kept hesitating... I could not get up from my place. He finished calling people up... The sermon was over, and singing began... Now it was awkward to go out. I cried, but I hoped that after the meeting I would go up to this brother and tell him that I wanted to repent and could not... I would ask him for forgiveness. But I didn't do that either. My dad invited this brother to our house for lunch. And at home I was too embarrassed to go up to him and tell him about my condition. The brother left... From that moment on, I waited every Sunday for a call to repentance, but the Holy Spirit no longer touched my heart. I was very

afraid that Christ would come and take His children that were ready, and I would remain on earth for torment. Of course, I knew the Word of God and consoled myself with the hope that at the cost of suffering I could receive salvation. I read the Word of God, prayed, but received no consolation. And so, on June 14, 1953, at the morning church service, pastor Krylov said a sermon about the lost lamb, about how Christ loves every lost sinner, how, loving them, he sacrificed Himself, how he voluntarily died on the cross, fulfilling the will of His Father. And the Golden Verse of the Bible reached my heart: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." My sister Alla was the first to go to the pulpit with tears of repentance, followed by me. I thanked God that He finally answered my requests, heard my prayers to give me the gift of repentance. I asked God for forgiveness for all my sins, I remembered everything that I did wrong, where I grieved God with my behavior, and I also remembered the incident with the head scarf. Everything came to my mind and I apologized for everything. I thanked God that He did not pity His Son and gave Him as a sacrifice for my sins. I was glad that Jesus Christ was now MY SAVIOR too! I asked forgiveness from Jesus Christ and thanked Him for His love

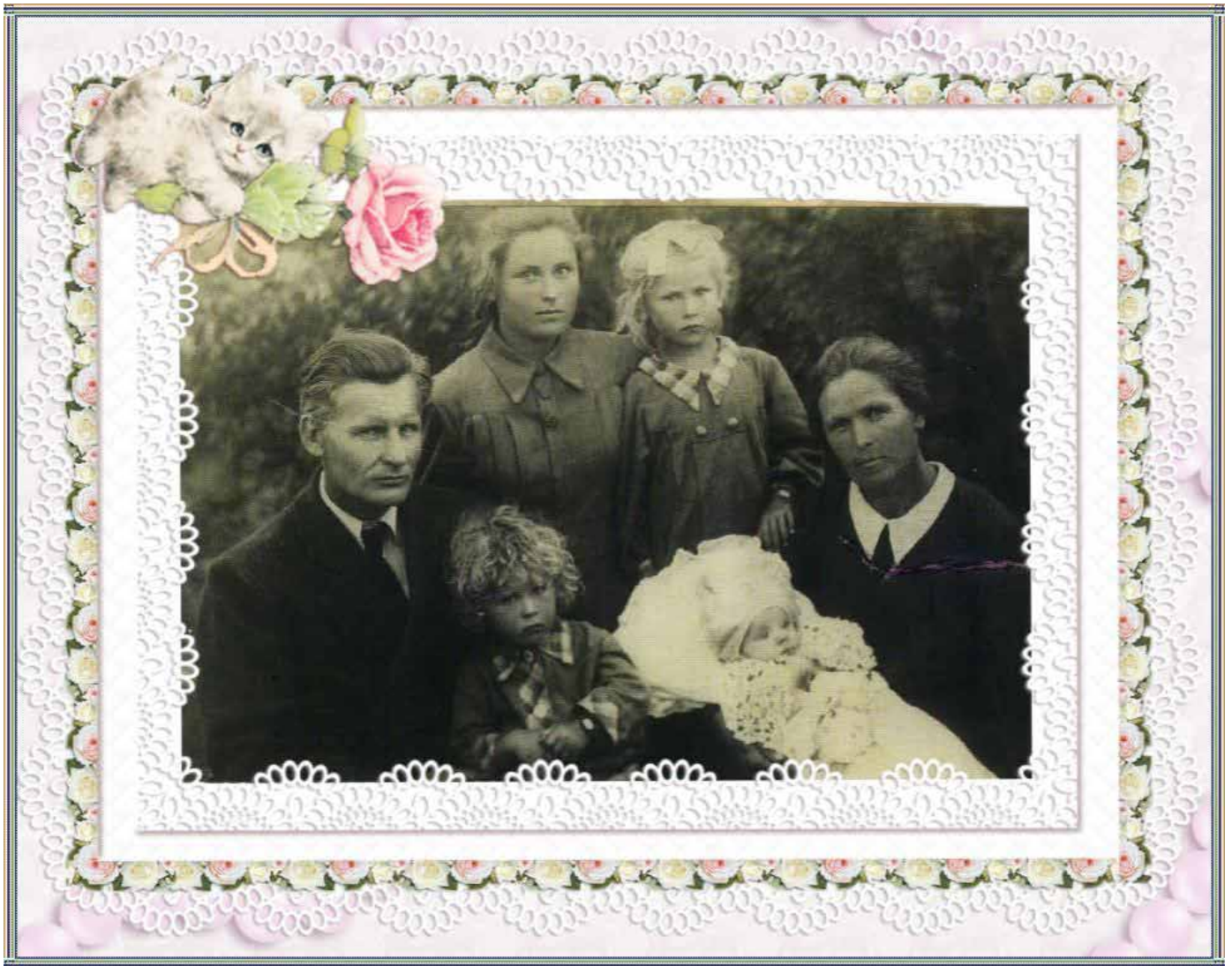


*I am 17 years old*



for me! I was crying with joy! How light my heart felt! It overflowed with love for everyone around me, I wanted to hug everyone and everything around me shone! The church sang a hymn: “Sing a joyful song, heavens”, and Alla and I wept with joy and could not calm down. The pastor prayed for the both of us and wished for us to be faithful to Jesus Christ always. When the service ended, everyone came up to us, congratulated us and rejoiced with us. I went up to my dad and asked him for forgiveness if I offended him in any way. But dad was very happy and said that I hadn’t offended him in any way. Mom had stayed home, so when I came home, I hugged her and asked for forgiveness for everything, both for what had happened in my childhood, and for the scarf. I told her the story of the scarf, and how it had haunted me for many years. Mom forgave me for everything, kissed me and said: “Why didn’t you tell me before? I would have forgiven you a long time ago.”

Now my new life has begun. Everything was fine... School ended. We were taking the last exams. The question was, where should I go to study? I liked many professions: 1. Being a primary school teacher, but believers were not allowed to work as a teacher. 2. Engineer-telegraph operator, but it was necessary to look for a city where I could live. 3. Institute of Foreign Languages – I liked the English language. I wanted to be a translator. But, firstly, believers weren’t being hired for this job, and, secondly, I didn’t want to be a shadow of some other person. There was only one thing left: to go to medical school and become a doctor. My dream was to become a pediatrician. I wanted to always have a supply of sweets in my pocket, wear a white robe, a stethoscope around my neck and always a smiling kind face, so that I would be loved and waited for... The image of Tatiana Konstantinovna Chekmareva



*My family prior to my departure to Tashkent*

– that was my dream. The whole family agreed that I should go to Tashkent and apply to the Medical Institute.

We passed the school exams. And now graduation night. What should I do? Not go? They wouldn't only buy treats, but also drinks. We were deciding with Alla – should we go or not go? Certificates were also being issued at this event, so we decided to go. While the congratulations were happening, while the certificates were being handed out, everything was fine. But then we sat down at the tables. Neighbors started offering a drink to graduation. Alla said: "We are believers and we will not drink, so don't bother us!" And everyone knew that if Alla said so, that's how it would be. Nobody repeated it anymore. And a little later we tried to run home. We saw that we had no place at this table, that we were strangers in this society. But how good it was to be in church services! So easy and so joyful!

Soon I left for Tashkent. I handed over the documents to the medical institute and began

to prepare for the exams. I had to pass 4 exams: Russian in writing (essay), Literature (oral), Chemistry and Physics. I got a B (4) on the essay. I wrote on the topic: "There are women in Russian villages" by Nekrasov. I knew this composition by heart with all its punctuation marks. In school I got an A (5) on it, but here I probably made a mistake somewhere. I also got a B (4) on the oral literature exam. A B (4) on the Chemistry exam. And on the Physics exam, I got a C (3). So, it turned out to be 15 points total, but the passing score for the medical institute where I applied was 16. At the sanitary and hygienic institute, the passing score was 15, but it had its own competition, and it was impossible to transfer there. So, I didn't go to college! I was thinking about what I should do next. Should I go back or stay there? Uncle Gosha advised me to go back to night school again, so as not to forget what I was taught at school, and pay special attention to what was asked on the exams. And go to work. This was the best option, since Vinya again received a C (3) on the exams and again was left without a scholarship. With my salary, we could live with him modestly, without disturbing our parents. I sent my mother a letter asking her to send me my report card for the 9th grade, and with it I entered the evening school not far from Aunt Vera's house. I easily found a job at the post office as a telegram receiver. Everything was fine. The job was easy. The head of the post office was an elderly man, very good-natured, and there was a healthy atmosphere in the team. I received 450 rubles a month. This money was enough for Vinya and me, and we were fine without parental help. We lived at Aunt Vera's in one room, and in the other, very large room, they lived with all the children. We slept



*Tashkent. Near the theater named Alisher Navoi*





*Tashkent. Postal workers*

on the wide benches that stood around the table and on which they sat during dinner. We only had to lay the bed out in the evening and put it away in the morning. Aunt Vera and Uncle Gosha treated us well, and we were satisfied and grateful to them.

In the summer, Lida came to visit Vinya from Fergana. She was going on her vacation at the Vacation House near Tashkent and stopped by to see us. She called the Vinya Vena. At first it was somehow unusual for us, and then we all began to call him Vena. Vena, back in Fergana, singled out Lida from all the sisters as the most serious and sincere Christian. Everyone considered her suggestions and opinions. She was 19 years old. And Vena was 17. He was a serious young man, and that is why he liked Lida. He didn't like laughing for nothing and jibes. He tried to pay special attention to Lida wherever possible. He drove her on a bicycle in the evenings when she needed to go somewhere, and she was a "little fluff" for him. Lida knew our family, mom, dad, and the fact that Vena came from such a sincere Christian family made her disposed to him. When Vena left Fergana, she agreed to write him letters. Through the correspondence by letter, they got to know each other more and wanted to be together. Many brothers liked Lida, and she was proposed to by young men who had houses and everything they needed, but she refused them. She liked Vena, even though he was 2 years younger than her. And now I saw

her again in Tashkent. She became even more beautiful. My friend Galya and I couldn't get enough of her. We asked her to tell us something interesting. But she answered: "You are still young, happiness awaits you – you'll meet a young man whom God will send to each of you. Treasure the one whom God will designate for you, and do not be frivolous. If you accept the friend for life from the Lord, then your whole life will be calm, joyful and you will be happy. " As proof, she gave several examples from life, several happy marriages. She soon left. She now began to call Vena "Vinelka".

The new year of 1954 was coming. Vena decided to go home for the holidays. We set aside some money for the trip. I was working on December 31, but he went to the train station to buy a ticket and leave. Wealthy people lived in Tashkent, and everyone sent many congratulatory telegrams to their relatives. Although there were several cashiers receiving telegrams, there were still long queues. We tried to work very quickly. I saw Vena standing on the side of the line and he told me that his money was stolen, and he could not buy a ticket. Poor Vena! How upset he was! What could we do? I told him: "Let me borrow money from my boss and pay him back from the paycheck." He was delighted. I didn't scold him. I knew that it was already very difficult for him. The manager gave the required amount, and Vena left. This time he was careful, bought a ticket safely and left. He visited our home and returned to Tashkent by the time classes began.

After the new year, I was transferred to work at the post office at the Medical Institute. And I began to get acquainted with student life. Many students received letters before they were demanded, postal orders – that was my job. I also accepted ordered letters. The work was fun. I was very happy. Next to me was another girl who received and issued parcels and transfers. The person that was above us was the manager. We all worked together. For the entire time of work, we did not have a single disagreement. In the evenings I went to school. At the school, we also became friends – both the guys and girls. I was again an excellent student. But then summer came, we passed the exams, and I received the diploma – only As (5s) and Bs (4s). And most importantly, I had fresh knowledge in my head, and it was easy for me to prepare for the exams.

I took a leave of absence from work for the exams. This time I got an A (5) on the physics exam. The teacher was the same. He recognized me. I answered the questions very well. Then he began to ask me questions from all three books, and I knew everything very well and answered everything well. He praised me and gave me an A (5). I got 17 points total. I could have entered the medical or pediatric institute, but I applied to the sanitary and hygienic institute, and they accepted me there. I had to quit my job.

We studied at the institute for 10 days, and then we were sent to pick cotton. The norm was 60 kg. We rarely collected it. But when we began to collect the unripe buds, then everyone exceeded the norm. We were put on the field to collect from rows in order, each person getting two rows. You go in the middle and pick cotton into your apron from both sides. We had no right to leave our rows. The teachers watched us all the time. We picked only a little bit of cotton mainly because we were put on the fields where the collective farm pickers had already picked before us, and we were picking the remains after them. Sometimes we were given new fields, and then we fulfilled the norm. We were paid to pick cotton every week. And we bought ourselves some things from the farm shop. There was enough food for us, we were fed well, as much as you could eat. The food was always fresh and hot. The appetite was good in the fresh air, and we usually gained weight during the cotton season. The money from the scholarship accumulated, and we received all of it when we came home from picking cotton.

During this time, Vena and I were already living in a separate house. Uncle Gosha had another house of three rooms built nearby. We lived in one room. My friend Galya lived in the big hall with her mother. I felt good. Galya and I went to church services together, with the youth, we often sang duets: I sang soprano and she alto. I did not miss a single church service. I always went with the youth. It was a carefree youth! I would get up before eight o'clock in the morning, at eight something I would leave home alone or with Vena, and I would walk to the institute for 45 minutes every day. We walked along Parkentskaya street to the railroad. Then they went along the railroad to the institute. This path was much shorter than taking a tram, actually two. The classes were very interesting. The lectures were two hours long, then practical



*Students pick cotton*





*Vena and Lida*

classes in anatomy, physiology, chemistry, physics. I studied well. I received a scholarship. Vena also began to receive a scholarship. And dad and mom helped us a little. On the 1st of May, Vena decided to earn some money. We bought red material and ordered sticks for flags from a neighbor. Vena made a stencil, and we made flags with the inscription: “Peace to the world!” and a white dove with a twig in its mouth with the inscription “May 1”. These flags were sold at the bazaar and at the tram stop for 1 ruble per flag. I had to skip classes a little, because we could only sell them in the morning. In addition, I whitewashed my rooms and the lime corroded my hands. I had to get a certificate that my arms hurt, and with this explain my absence. Yes, it was difficult for me and Vena. Uncle Gosha worked as an accountant in daycares, and he gave Vena orders to paint children’s pictures: “Doctor Aibolit” and others. Vienna had the ability to paint beautifully and he painted big pictures. For this he received money. This also helped us. Both Vena and I passed the session well.

Vena decided to get married. The wedding was scheduled for August 14, 1955. The wedding was on his birthday. Mom came to the wedding. At this time, Yuri Sergeevich Grachev was again visiting Fergana. He was invited to the wedding and gave a beautiful sermon calling to repentance: “Do we have an invitation to the wedding supper of the Lamb in

heaven?” This made everyone think about their relationship with the Lord. Everyone wanted to be at the wedding feast of the Lamb, so everyone checked their heart, for “only the pure in heart will see God.” The youth worked with great zeal for the Lord: they helped some build a house, they dug gardens for others, they visited the sick, and held conversations with unbelieving friends. Those who had been believers for a long time renewed their repentance, promising the Lord to devote their whole lives to Him. The youth recited poems, sang wedding hymns, said wishes...

And their life was truly happy. In September, Lida moved to live in Tashkent. They lived with Vena in one room, and I in the other. They made a screen – so there was a passage to my room, but their room was closed, and Lida always had everything in order there. Although cramped, it was cozy. We lived very amicably. Lida did not work, and Vena had to look for ways to make a living besides studying. And he found a home-based job painting Crepe de Chine shawls and head scarves. He painted patterns on the white crepe de Chine, and then we colored with him and Lida. What beautiful scarves and shawls they turned out to be! It was interesting to work, because beautiful drawings came out. In this way we earned money for food.

# Youth

In September, I again left to pick cotton. We ended up in another collective farm. There they paid regularly every week. As always, we got up when the stars were still in the sky. And we returned home (to the school where we lived) when the stars appeared in the sky again. And although our lower backs ached, since when collecting we constantly walked bent over, but in the fresh air we were carelessly collecting with our hands, while our heads rested. Students are a cheerful kind of people... There was no time to be bored. In the evening, we went to bed tired and immediately fell asleep. We did not do any business and did not go anywhere. Firstly, we were not allowed, and secondly, it was dangerous for girls to go somewhere. We all tried to be together where we were settled. And



*Picking cotton*





*Students*



*Workshops*

through all the 6 years we did not have a single case of any rape in the cotton industry. Maybe it was a time when the guys were calm, both the Russians and the Uzbeks. Everyone tried to behave well. There were children of the rich and children of poor parents in our class. And everyone treated each other with respect. Mostly all the students had come from other places, and those who were from Tashkent itself were few. Everyone studied well too. There were no incompetent ones. It was difficult for the Uzbeks to study. The first 2 years they studied in their native language, but from the third year they combined everyone. So, Russians and Uzbeks studied together. When we came from cotton, we received money, a lot of money all at once.

Now the three of us lived together – Lida, Vena and me. And we had everything in common. The lunch was mainly prepared by Lida. In the evenings I was almost never at home: either a church service, a choir practice, or a youth group discussing Word of God. I was inseparable from the youth. Soon, Vena and Lida had twins: a boy and a girl. I ran to call an ambulance, and Vena stayed with Lida. An ambulance arrived – a new Volga. Two blocks from us in the middle of the road was a shallow ditch, and the driver did not want to go through it. They took a stretcher and went by foot. When they came to our home and saw Lida was about to give birth, they quickly put her on the stretcher and quickly took her to the car. Vena also put on a white medical coat and helped them carry. This way, he got into the delivery room and helped with the childbirth. I stayed home. I began to prepare for the appearance of small treasures in the house. Lida's mother came to help her in the first days. After giving birth, Lida began to recover, began to eat well, and freshened up. The nausea that had tormented her so much during pregnancy passed without a trace. Her mother stayed a little and left, but her sister Ira came and stayed for a long time. It was good for everyone: Lida had a helper all the time – after all, it is very difficult to manage two children at once, it was good for me because they did not need my help, and it was good for Ira because she could be at large church services and with the youth.

The children were healthy and grew up very quickly. They were calm and almost never cried. The girl was named Venus and the boy was named Vena. And that is how we lived together until Vena graduated from the institute, and they went to live in Kuva. There, Vena worked as an assistant to the head physician and a neurologist. I remember all this now and think: it was interesting then to work as a doctor and see patients... You were respected, you were paid a good salary, and patients used free medical care. They bought medicine with their own money, but it was very cheap.

The most important event of that year was my baptism, which took place on June 24, 1956. The baptism was performed on the Chirchik River in Tashkent. A lot of young people were baptized... Early in the morning with the first tram we all hurried to the river. My heart was overflowing with thrill and joy! How long I had carried this desire in me! At that time, students were not allowed to be baptized. I purposefully went to the pastor's home and begged him to let me get baptized... And he agreed! I passed the test in the church successfully and everyone was happy



*Tashkent, circa 1956*



with my decision. And so, we all gathered on the riverbank... All of us were wearing white coats, white head scarves, white socks. After prayer and instruction, one by one we went into the water... Our solemn promise to serve God with a good conscience was heard by heaven, our friends and the clean Chirchik waters... To each baptized person were sung the wonderful words of the hymn: "All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ!" Galatians 3:27. After the baptism, when everyone had already changed their clothes, the pastor again said a prayer of gratitude to God for this baptism, we sang a few more hymns, finished with a prayer and went to the House of Prayer. The service of the laying on of hands was performed there, and we could participate in communion for the first time. With what trepidation we stretched out our hand for the bread and for the cup of wine! For the first time, together with the church, we participated in the remembrance of the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. There were no words to thank the Lord for the fact that now I was a member of His body!

The youth zealously worked for the Lord, visited the sick, studied the Word of God, traveled to neighboring cities and villages to visit, and had youth fellowship.

In the third year we went to the cotton harvest again in September. We were brought to the same collective farm where we were for the first year – the collective farm named "Communism". We were disappointed and thought that they would not pay us money again, since they still owed us money for collecting the cotton in the first year. We thought that maybe the teachers got the money, but they didn't give it to us... It turns out that everyone turned out to be honest – the collective farm paid us what they owed. We were all very happy, especially those who lived on the scholarship. When we returned from picking the cotton, I bought myself, with the money I received, a green woolen suit, a green hat and high-heeled shoes. I also bought myself a black backpack for classes. This year we returned early – November 4th, but usually we were picking cotton until December. This was a productive year; the plan was fulfilled very early and the students were released early.

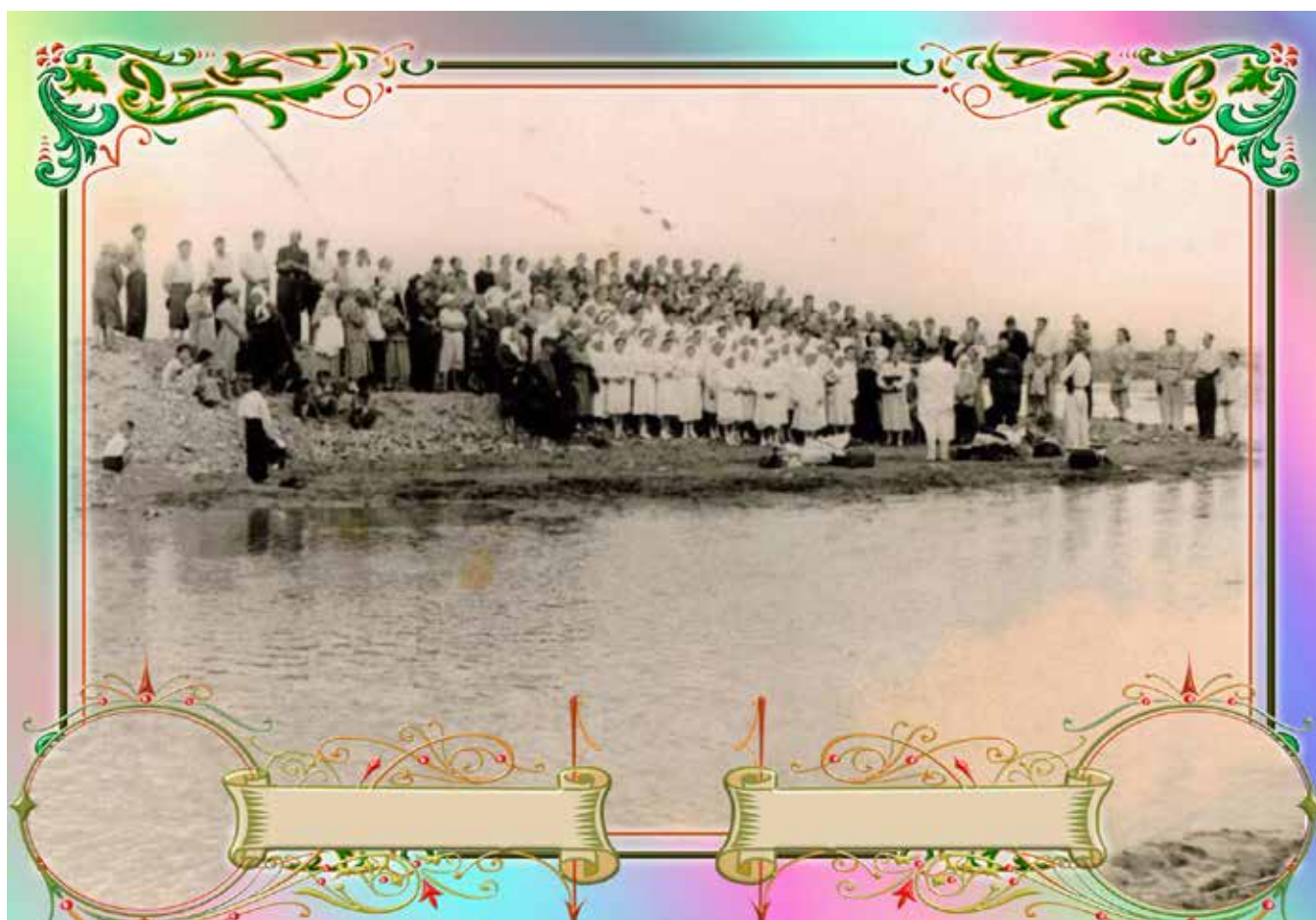
Classes began. Organic chemistry was a difficult subject. It was taught by Professor Campantsev. He himself was the one who tested us. I passed well, but I could not write one formula correctly, and he sent me home: "Go, learn it and come back to take tomorrow". The next day I wrote it for him without a mistake and received a B (4). This was important, since scholarship money was not given with Cs (3s). In addition to the scholarship, my parents also sent me 200 rubles a month. At that time, the students couldn't earn money anywhere. In the morning we went to classes and were there until 4 o'clock. Then, after a light lunch in the student cafeteria, I went to the student library and studied there. All the books were there, and it was quiet, everyone was studying seriously and no one talked. I loved studying in the library. It was necessary to study systematically in order to know everything that was going on. One lecture consisted of 50 pages. And we had to prepare for practical classes every day. It was necessary to learn everything very well there.

After the summer session, I decided to go with my friend Tamara to Kuibyshev. The youth greeted us very warmly. We had fellowship every evening. And during the days, Yuri Sergeevich Grachev and I wrote a book: "Stars of Siberia." When we finished writing, we got together with the youth and read the whole book in one evening. It only took 4 hours. Everyone liked it very much – it set the goal of life in question for the youth and offered them to choose some kind of work for the Lord. Many then began to think seriously: "How can I serve the Lord?" We went to a vacation home with the youth. There we were treated to raspberries with milk. And most importantly, we sang at sunset. We all sat on the veranda. Above us was the blue sky. Tolik Zenkov played the accordion, someone played the guitar and we all sang...

There were many young people in Kuibyshev. Tolik Zenkov was the leader. He was a zealous Christian, played several instruments well, was a choir director and sang tenor. He was very polite and treated everyone very well. Brother Grisha also took a great part in the work among the youth. The happy times flew by quickly. With the youth we once went on a steamer along the Volga, visited a group of believers in a village in the forest, walked through the forest... Another time, together with Yuri Sergeevich, Maria Fedorovna and their son Pavlik, we sailed in a motorboat with Volodya Turkov. We swam to the other side of the Volga, where there were no people. There we sat, rested, swam and ate with an appetite. We became very good friends with the Grachev family and took a photo with them for memory.



*Before baptism*



*My baptism in Chirchik River*





*Youth after baptism*



*Blessing and congratulations after baptism*

From Kuibyshev, I went home to Kostanay, to visit my home and see my parents. I was bringing a gift from Yuri Sergeevich to dad and mom: “Stars of Siberia” – a congratulations to them in honor of the 25th anniversary of their life together – a story about their youth. All the youth came to see me off. They brought me a bunch of flowers and a box of chocolates as a parting gift. That is what I loved back then – flowers and chocolate... I had “Stars of Siberia” on my mind. I was going with a dream to organize a Sunday school in Kostanay, Tashkent.

At home I was greeted with love. On the first Sunday after the church service, all the children gathered in a brother’s house. I told them how all the children used to go to Sunday School, how young teachers in Sunday schools told children about Christ, sang children’s songs with them, prayed, and the children loved these activities. The children of the Kostanay Church also wanted to have such a school. While I was staying at home, I taught them. The best time for that was Sunday in between church services. We sculpted interesting toys from playdoh. The children themselves made some interesting things. One girl made Moses’ basket, another made a Pillar of Salt, one boy made Mount Calvary with three crosses, others made a flock of sheep with David, two fish and five loaves... and many other things. It was interesting how the children easily found a plot that they wanted to draw or make out of the playdoh.

By September I returned to Tashkent. There on Parkent we organized a children’s group of children who wanted to attend Sunday School. Classes were held on Mondays. The children loved their meetings and looked forward to Mondays. Tamara Skripchenko even composed the poem “Monday” for them. It was interesting that the joy from someone in the youth was passed on to others, and everyone was happy, no one had envy or unkind thoughts. The thoughts and desires were pure, not tainted by any sin. There was a sincere Christian love, unselfish.

Sunday School began with prayer. Then we sang a children’s hymn. Then we read a story from the Holy Scriptures, learned a Golden Verse by heart. All the children repeated after me in unison, and then I asked several people separately. Then the most interesting thing followed: I told them an interesting story. It was a new one every time. They listened in absolute silence. I looked for these stories in old magazines such as “Faith”, “Christian”, “Baptist”, and others. I asked the old sisters for books and looked for something interesting to tell them from



*Maria Fedorovna and Yuri Sergeyevech Grachev, their son Pavel and I*



there. After the story, we repeated the Golden Verse again, sang a hymn in conclusion and ended with a prayer. I really liked the meaningful prayers of the children of those times. Comparing them to how children pray now, I wonder why they are so poor? There isn't even anything to say to Jesus in prayer, there is no worthy gratitude for these wonderful fellowships. They are given so much at these meetings. And there are more opportunities and the conditions are excellent. Of course, I think there was more fire in us, we saw the examples of sacrificial brothers who came from prisons. Sometimes I invited these gray-haired brothers to our Sunday School. The children respected them, were glad that such brothers loved them, came to them, and told them interesting stories. Uncle Grisha Tsorba, Nikolai Petrovich Khrapov, his friend through prison... And so, with breaks for the summer, I taught these classes until the end of my studies at the institute, for which they did not give me a diploma... The same children's classes were taught at Kuiluk by Lyuba Perevertan. Much later, when I came to Tashkent for the funeral of my uncle Gosha, one young sister came up to me and said: "I want to work with children."

I really liked our children's classes. I want to devote myself to this work." What could I wish for this little sister but "God bless you!"

After the fourth year, we were sent to residency. Together with one Uzbek student, I was sent to the regional center of Yangi Kurgan, Namangan region. There we were met by the Chief Doctor – an Uzbek. He was a surgeon. He allocated a separate room for us in the hospital, and I lived with this Uzbek woman all the time until the end of the residency. We were hired as nurses, and we took turns working with her in the hospital. It was easy to work. The hospital was not big. There were a lot of extraordinary things. Several children were in the surgical ward. Their muscles on their thighs fell out, because instead of 5% glucose, calcium chloride was injected into the



*Tashkent, circa 1959*

muscles of the thighs. These children were daily bandaged with streptocide emulsion in fish oil. The wounds were deep, and we had already worked our shift and gone home, but these children were still in the hospital. One day an ambulance brought two women – an old one and a young one. They had been in an accident. The old woman persuaded the young one to go to the market. They had gone in a truck. And there was an accident in the mountains. Now this young woman was quietly dying, repeating the words: “Voy bolam!” She had four small children. There was nothing we could do to help her, since many of her internal organs had ruptured. We only gave her pain-relieving injections. How difficult it was to look at her... The second woman cried and kept saying: “I wish I had died instead.” She had minor injuries and was due to be discharged soon. Also, during the obstetrics residency, I had to oversee a woman giving birth. A woman who was no longer young was giving birth, and it wasn’t her first time. It seemed that I knew how to do everything, but then the doctor left, and I was left alone. It was time for the woman to give birth, and I had to help with the delivery myself. The woman was calm and patient, she did not scream in pain, but only moaned. A



*My friend Valya and I. Fergana. 1959*

boy was born quickly. The birth went well. I had to deliver so many more babies when I worked in Saur-Bulak! Thank God, live normal children were always born, the afterbirth quickly appeared and there was no bleeding.

And so, after the fourth year of my residency, I finished with the highest grade. The only bad memory left from my residency was my attitude towards one patient. At the very end of my residency, an elderly man, a Tatar, was brought to our hospital. He had stomach cancer. The abdominal cavity had torn apart, eaten away by the cancerous tumor. There was such a stench in the patient room that no one wanted to enter it. My Uzbek friend was on duty. The doctor prescribed him a cleansing enema. She refused. I didn’t do it either, since it was not my duty. I still reproach myself, why I, as a Christian, did not show love to this dying person? Having done something good, I could have talked with him about eternity, about the love of Jesus, even though he was a Tatar, which means he was a Muslim. We soon left, and what happened to him after, as well as how long he lived, I don’t know, but no operation could help him.

From this time, I can also remember that one Sunday very early in the morning I went to Namangan to find believers. I didn’t have a single address, and I didn’t know where the church services were held. I only heard that believers in Namangan were severely oppressed. I tried to find believers based on their appearance, but I could





*Me in Tashkent in 1959*

not meet anyone. Then I went to the bazaar and started asking if they knew where the church was, where believing Baptists were gathering. I found someone who showed me the place where the services were held. I came to the church service. There were not many people. They were untrusting towards me. But after the service, the sisters came up and asked me who I was. I told them that I was studying at the Medical Institute in Tashkent, and now I was doing my residency in Yangi-Kurgan. I wanted to have fellowship with the people of God. After the service, I returned back by bus to Yangi-Kurgan, as I had to go to work in the morning.

After my residency, I went to Fergana. There I stayed with the Shimkovs – the parents of Vena’s wife Lida. Irina – Lida’s sister – told me that she had a fiancé, and she would introduce me to him. On Sunday morning we went to church with her. Sasha, whom she wanted to show me, went to Andijan to preach the gospel. So, meeting him was postponed until the fellowship after the evening service. After the evening service, all the young people gathered around Sasha. Everyone was waiting for him to suggest where to go. He invited everyone to gather at the Shimkovs’. All unanimously supported this proposal. At that time, fellowship took place without any refreshments, but it was very interesting, and we had a very rich spiritual table. All the youth constantly read the Holy Scriptures, and questions would arise about what they read, which they discussed during fellowship. They also sang very well. All the voices were strong. They sang harmoniously. Before the beginning of the fellowship, one of the brothers always preached a short sermon. The youth shared their experiences of the week, and everything was so different, useful for everyone in instruction, reproof or encouragement. After the fellowship, no one wanted to go home. We would stand in the street for a long time and talk. Sasha was in charge of everything, and it was clear that he was everyone’s favorite. When we went to bed, I told Irina that she made a good choice, and we were waiting for an invitation to the wedding. However, when I arrived in Fergana for the winter holidays, I received an invitation from her, where in the photo I saw another brother instead of Sasha – Vasya Nalobin. I asked: “Irina, what about Sasha?” She replied that nothing worked out with him, but Vasya was sent to her from God. They got married and are living well to this day.

I spent this time in Fergana with my childhood friend, Valya. She was studying at the pedagogical institute and was taking her exams, and after that she wanted to go with me to Tashkent, where she wanted to have fellowship with Nikolai Petrovich Khrapov. She really wanted to repent, but it was difficult for her. The holidays passed by quickly, and on March 5 she and I had to leave. At the station in Gorchakov, Sasha and Lyonya Litvinov saw us off. Lyonya stayed a little, wished us a happy journey and asked to go home. Sasha accompanied us to the very end. It was March 5, and in honor of March 8, he presented Valya and me with scarves for memory. A train came up. Sasha put us in the train, and when the train started, he ran after it and shouted to me: “Lina, brunette or no?” and ruffled his chestnut forelock. I answered him, “It doesn’t matter.” And we left while he kept waving his handkerchief to us. When we sat in our places, Valya asked me what Sasha had told me. She realized that there was some secret between us and wanted to know. It became clear to me that she loved Sasha, I tried to somehow entertain her, but her heart remained in Fergana. She attended youth fellowships with me, repented, but had no joy. She was eager to go home. How could I help her? And what actually happened? And only one communication between him and me was to blame. Before leaving, the youth gathered at Valya’s on Saturday after the church service. The fellowship kept going until 2 am. And before that, Sasha told me that his father and mother were inviting me to visit, and that today, after the fellowship, I was going to their house. When everyone began to leave, he said: “Lina is coming to my house to visit.” I did not stay overnight at Valya’s and went with Sasha. When I said goodbye, I noticed that some of the sisters avoided me and did not want to say hi to me. I didn’t pay much attention to that. Although it was late, Sasha’s parents did not sleep but were waiting for us. His mom set a table for us in Sasha’s room. They talked with us a little. They asked me how my parents were living, how much longer I had left to study, if I liked Fergana? Then his mother said that I would sleep in this room, and Sasha

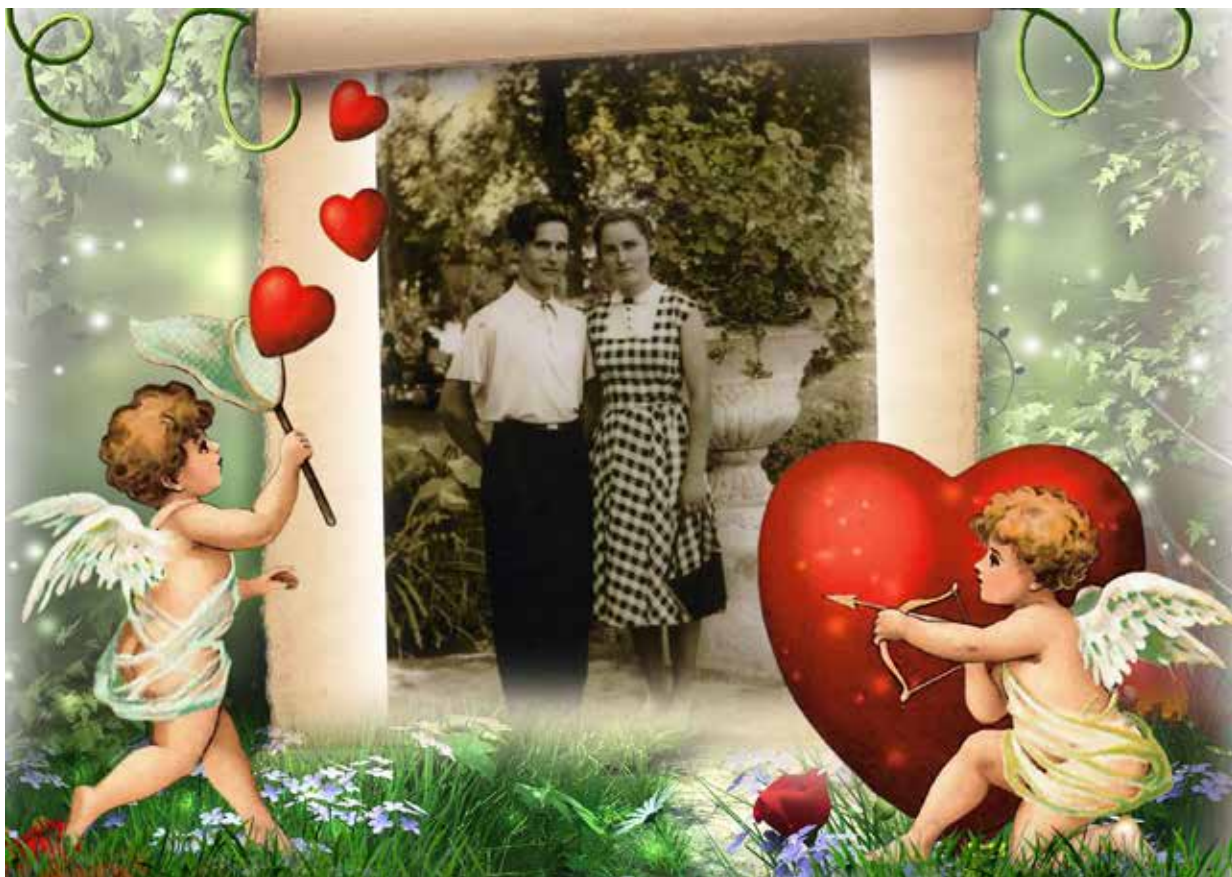


*Sasha. Fergana. Baptism*

would sleep in another. And in the morning, we would all go to church together. And then they went to sleep, and Sasha and I kept talking for a long time. It turns out that Sasha’s parents came to Fergana when we were still living there. They knew my mother and our family well. And when they saw me, they advised Sasha to propose to me. It didn’t come to that, of course, but our conversation dragged on until 5:00 am. We talked about youth affairs, about work, about the church. Imperceptibly Sasha asked me to describe my ideal of a young man, who I would like to have as my friend. My ideal of a loved one had been formed a long time ago, because, while studying at the medical institute, I was always among the young, saw many young brothers and knew their value. Therefore, I calmly told him: “It is desirable that he is tall, slender, and brunette. A choir director, preacher, youth leader, part of the choir and sings tenor.” Sasha listened attentively and said nothing. When I asked him: “What is your ideal?”, he replied: “That she is a sincere Christian.” And that was it. I thought, wow! I opened up my entire soul to him, and he got away with one word.

I looked around... In his room we sat on a beautiful sofa. A small round carved table was set in front of us. The buffet was really pretty, and the wall closet was the same. A clean bed, covered with a green Chinese bedspread, and above it was the painting “The Ninth Wave”. The furnishings were welcoming, and it was simple and free, like at home. And now, when he saw us off, he asked me:





*Sasha and I at the park. Fergana*

“Brunette or no?” I replied that it didn’t matter. Yes! Sasha was a youth leader, well-read, knew the Word of God well, preached in the congregation, sang tenor in the choir, sang solos well and was the choir director. Everything I dreamed about! But if only he was a little taller, and the hair wouldn’t be black, but brown. But the voice of my conscience said: “What else do you want?” – Yes, this is exactly the kind of young man I wanted.

Valya did not stay in Tashkent for long, and when the holidays were over, she left. My life continued to flow like before in Tashkent. I was among the youth, I was in the core youth, we met with Nikolai Petrovich Khrapov, planned the program for the upcoming youth conference, worked with children. And I was able to do everything well. In the summer of 1959, there was supposed to be a youth conference in Moscow. They began to select candidates for brothers, youth leaders who should go to Moscow. Nikolai Petrovich asked: “Who will go from Fergana?” I said that the youth leader there is Sasha Maltsev. So, he should go. Now it was necessary to tell him somehow that he should come, find out the location of the safe house and the time when he should be in Moscow. They instructed me to do it. I wrote a letter to my friend Valya and asked her: “Tell Sasha to urgently be in Tashkent this Sunday. Tell him to send a telegram and I will meet him. I miss him.” Now I wonder, how could I do that? Write that? How hard it was for Valya to read such a letter... On Saturday I waited for a telegram all day. It did not come. And I went to church disappointed. I sat down in my place in the choir – on the first bench on the edge in the sopranos. The church service began. After the prayer, we sang a hymn all together. Suddenly I heard a beautiful strong tenor from the ranks of the preachers. Who was singing? I turned my head to the left – Sasha was sitting in the ranks of the preachers! And I didn’t even dress up! I thought that he would not come. How did he get straight to the church service? A beautiful hairstyle, an open look, a blue suit, a white shirt... My heart started beating fast and my face was blushing... Sasha preached second. The theme of the sermon was: “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied” 1 Cor. 15:19. And he convincingly, on the basis of the Word of God, explained what we have in Christ not only here on earth, but, most importantly, in eternity! I listened carefully, and I liked his sermon. It was informative, it strengthened my faith and hope.

After church, the youth gathered at the Serins, because besides Sasha, as a guest, there was also youth from among non-believers. Sasha was entrusted with the leadership in the evening, as the young men asked many

questions. Everyone participated, but Sasha explained everything more clearly and understandably. Everyone liked him right away. After the evening we went with him to see Nikolai Petrovich. They were already about to go to bed, but Nikolai Petrovich received Sasha kindly and gave him all the instructions on how and where to meet and when. We returned home late, and thankfully the trams ran until two in the morning.

On Sunday morning, Sasha went to church, but I went to an additional lecture. After the church service, we were supposed to meet at the central building of the Medical Institute. After the lecture, I had to wait a bit until Sasha arrived. We decided to go with him to the Museum of Art. The Museum of Art in Tashkent is very rich. We walked from room to room, admiring the beautiful paintings. Sasha was very fond of paintings and looked at everything very carefully, since he was in this museum for the first time. I often went with many guests, so everything was already familiar to me, and I stood to the side and watched Sasha. I saw his disposition towards me and internally checked myself if he would suit me. Would I be taller than him? I, myself, was in high-heeled shoes. And it seemed that even with these heels, I was shorter than him. And when I looked at his face, his gullibility and simplicity in the way he addressed people condemned my conscience. “What more do you want? He’s so cute, and you are checking things!”

In the evening we were at church again, and after the service he went home, since he had to go to work in the morning. He bought the ticket in the sleeping car. Even though it was more expensive, he would sleep all night. And in the morning, he would go to work with fresh energy.

A few days later, I received a letter from Sasha that won my girlish heart over. The epigraph contained words from Song of Solomon 2:14. “My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.” My heart fluttered



*Photo given to Sasha for his album on his birthday*



from these words and from what was written next. He wrote that he had found his girlfriend, singled me out from all the girls, that being with me was pleasant to him and he treasured it. That he prayed for a long time that the Lord would send him a friend of life, and now he sees the answer. His parents themselves told him to notice me – which means they agreed too. What about me? I had in me the secret desire to have such a friend – so the Lord answered me. Sasha wrote that his parents were asking for consent to go in the summer to Kostanay with them to my parents and arrange a wedding. I was finishing my fifth year. It was necessary to study for another year. How should I solve the wedding issue? But then I passed my last exams... the residency had been completed... In August, Sasha and I went with his parents to Kostanay to our place.

## Fate

I told my parents that we were coming to visit. I wanted them to meet Sasha and his parents, and to bless our marriage. They were expecting us. We were cheerfully excited about heading there! Sasha's parents took it upon themselves to cover all the expenses along the way. His mother prepared delicious fried chicken for the expedition. What a wonderful flavor it had! Along with the meal, we drank soothing tea with cherry preserves. There was little to do on the train. We would often step out into the hallway and have long and thoughtful conversations with Sasha. We occupied an entire compartment in the reserved car. Sasha and I slept on the upper shelves and the parents slept on the lower ones. Sasha and I were happy, and the parents were also pleased, as they intently observed us. Sasha was 24 years of age, whereas I was 23 and a half. This was no longer wind in the head. All decisions were made quite seriously. Sasha had already served his required term in the military and now worked with his family in a furniture factory. I still had one year left to study. We consulted with Sasha about what decision to make, and after careful consideration, we decided it was better for Sasha to wait one year, and when I graduate, to get married. All this had to be discussed with his parents and mine together.

The train did not go directly to Kustanai but stopped at a small town where you had to go to Kustanai by bus. When we came out, however, it turned out that the bus had already left, and it would not be there again that day. We decided to go by truck. Such a car was quickly found. Sasha's parents jumped in the front cab with the driver, as we climbed unto the hay bales in the back of the truck. More people joined myself and Sasha in the back of the truck. At first, the weather was delightful, and people were having a good time laughing and sharing stories. Then a cold wind began to blow, followed by heavy pelting rain. Sasha and I quickly pulled a tarp over our heads to stay warm, but the tarp was raggedy and full of holes. It struggled to contain our warmth as it allowed cold rain to seep in through the holes. We were unbearably cold, and I nearly started to cry, but I didn't want to shame myself in front of the other riders. We sang to lighten the mood. Other people started hiding at the bottom of the truck bed, under the hay.

Ah yes, the month of August. We were in summer clothes, and it was freezing here! We couldn't wait until we finally arrived.

We made it! As we climbed out of the truck, I asked myself "What did we look like?" I was wearing a new salad colored dress with a yellow blouse. Sasha was wearing a simple shirt with black trousers, plus a sunhat. Our clothes were covered in hay, which was sticking out from all sides. It was a great deal of effort to try to keep ourselves clean. We hopped on a shuttle bus which nearly took us all the way home. I knew the road there very well. And here, at my beloved home, we were expected and received very warmly. The entire family was there. My mother made a delicious dinner. Everyone was invited to the kitchen, around the table. My father said a prayer of thanks for our safe return and asked for a blessing on the food. After that, my Dad asked for everyone to eat with cheerfulness and simplicity in their heart. But Sasha's father - Kupriyan Nikolaevichhe, said they would not eat until they had made their case. He said that their son is 25 years old and they would like to endear him and their hearts to Angelina. I prayed too, I have a bond to Alexander, and now I want to get my parental consent. My father

asked me “Do you see the will of God in this?” I said “Yes!” They also asked Sasha “Do you see the will of God in this union?” He said “Yes!”. Then my parents announced that if the children see the will of God to join together as one, and Sasha’s parents bless it, then we also bless this union. Kupriyan Nikolaevich asked permission to pray. He was an Evangelist and had the wisdom from above to invite God into this decision. He thanked God for the agreement that Angelina’s parents gave, and that they did not journey such a long way for anything, and that the Lord would bless each one individually before marriage. Only then did everyone start eating.

After dinner, everyone gathered together to get to know each other more. The evening was spent in joyful and pleasant conversation. On Sunday after morning service, we invited our pastor Krylov to our engagement party. He gave us a prayer of blessing. Then, he made sure he had a conversation with us on how to behave before the wedding together. We decided to do the wedding in a year when I graduate from the Institute because last year was very difficult in that we had to prepare for the state exams. Sasha told my parents that from now on, Lina was under his financial wing and he takes responsibility for her. Instead of my parents providing for me, Sasha made sure he sent me at least 200 rubles every month to cover all expenses. My parents were happy about this, as they were building a house and they needed the extra money. Sasha’s parents stayed for a few more days and then left. My father started building a house, installing doors and windows. Sasha built the door and window frames. The wood from the forest was damp, so the work was much harder than usual. But Sasha knew how to do it because he worked as a carpenter, and he was good at it. He completely made the Windows and doors for the new house. We returned home in September. Sasha went to Fergana, and I stayed in Tashkent. Only 1 year left to study. Despite the fact that this was the last course, the Government still sent us to pick cotton. This time we were back on cotton for a short time. The harvest was good, and the plan was implemented immediately after the November holidays.



*Kostanay. After the engagement*



And all the students at once were driven home. The study passed quickly, and the winter session came. I passed it with flying colors. There wasn't much to study. All anybody has to do is pass the state exams, and then you are practically a certified doctor! Was I worried about where and for whom I would work? During winter I did not take a vacation. I got a job as a nurse in a pharmacy near the medical institute. I always left the house before dark. At 6 o'clock in the morning, I had to heat the oven that was used to heat the pharmacy. The stove was heated with coal. As soon as I lit the stove, I quickly started mopping the floors. After that, there is still time before the pharmacists come. I wash dishes, cones, wipe the dust everywhere. Only then, the pharmacy will open. The main priority then is only to help the pharmacists by cleaning their beakers and boiling various solutions. Overall, I liked the work as it was important to earn the money I desperately needed.

In March my studies started and I left work. The government had a medical distribution soon, where they would send doctors to various countries and cities to work and learn, and I needed a reason explaining why I should be sent to work in Ferghana. That meant I would have to register my marriage with Sasha. I went to Fergana. Kupriyan Nikolayevich agreed with the manager of the registry office, and the next day Sasha and I went to register. Just the two of us. No one accompanied us, no flowers, and no farewell. I had an old coat on. I removed my coat and put on my mother's black plush coat and put a beautiful Chinese pink handkerchief on my head. Then they were still just appearing and were counted as fashionable, inaccessible to many. On March 18, we registered. The registry office congratulated us and wished us happiness! In the evening, the whole family gathered. My mother prepared us for an exceptionally good dinner. We began addressing the question of our wedding date. We decided to celebrate immediately after the final exams.

Sasha gave me 600 rubles to buy shoes and a wedding dress. I bought white shoes with high heels, but I didn't have any money left for the dress, since I bought a new imported beautiful green dress and a pretty head covering set. This is for when I need to go out. I'm supposed to look good, you know.

There were no problems with Government distribution. I was sent to work in the Ferghana City Council as an epidemiologist. I loved this job... I knew it very well. And here came around the feast of Passover. The prayer house was at that time closed and we gathered at various houses. We invited Uncle Peter and Mrs. Sima Piglatin. They had a very big yard. We set up the pews. The service was at 10 o'clock in the morning. The program was huge, involving many children and youth, as well as a beautiful musical choir.

Our director of programs was Akson Flegontovich. At the end of Church service, representatives of the Communist government and police alike burst into the service, demanding to terminate the program. The brothers told them that when the service was over, they would talk with them. So when the meeting came to a close, the faithful slowly began to disperse. Older brothers and owners remained to sort out the issue. The authorities drew up a criminal charge of "Illegal Assembly". After lunch, we had an Easter program for the kids. Some parents suggested moving the celebration to next Sunday, but after the police left, they decided to continue with the celebration that day.

The children gathered at the house of Ani Zabirko. The tables were set right in the middle of the courtyard, under the vineyard. It was terrific! There were two amazing courses prepared, along with cake and bakery sweets to go along with the tea. The kids were ecstatic about the food. At teatime, the celebration began. Kids learned Easter poems, some sang and played instruments. Everything was going quite blissfully. Suddenly, a mob burst into the courtyard and raised a noise: "Who allowed you to collect and gather children? Why do you mutilate their souls?"

They demanded the mistress of the house which was inside of the house. The group of people broke into the house. Using this distraction to our advantage, we escorted the children home through neighboring yards and lawns, so that none of the children were left. Now came a powerful government representative out of the raided house. Seeing the absence of the children, he called for all the adults to enter inside the house. They asked, "How many children were there, whose children, their surnames". But Anya Zabirko said that: "I invited the children to the holiday. This is my business, and I'm not going to answer you. Our children also have the right to joy and the right to gather." The police began recording the adults. They recorded Tamara Skripchenko and me. When they found out that I was studying for 6 in a course at the Medical Institute, an activist from that same Institute

said: “What a shame for our Institute! A doctor who believes in God! God and medicine, God, and science- not compatible! How can such a pretty girl believe in God? We will help you get rid of this drug!”

After that, it was quiet for a long time. However, I was called to the Chairman of the institute, but I didn't go. Classes at the Institute ended. I prepared textbooks and was going to go to Ferghana to prepare for the exams. On the 17th of May, there was an issued order to allow students of the 6th year to pass state examinations. Among them was my last name. We were the first to take therapy. I prepared my textbooks to go to Fergana for the examinations, but I was urgently called to the Dean's office. I might not have gone, but uncle Gosha said that you need to respect the administration. I had to go. I went. The Dean of the faculty said, “Tomorrow is Saturday, we're going to have a meeting with the writer and we can't spare any time for you, so come to the Institute at 5 o'clock on Monday to the Assembly hall. There will be an extended meeting of the trade Southern Council Union, Komsomol, and party organizations of the Institute with the participation of the Institute's assets. They will decide if you qualify for the Institute.” I had to stay in Tashkent and wait for Monday. At the appointed time, I came to the assembly hall. I was dressed in a lilac chiffon dress with a beautiful cover. The dress was made by Lida with the material given by Sasha's dad. Nice purse, low-heeled shoes. Hair, as usual, gathered back in a bun. Back then, all believers in the faith had this hairstyle. When I arrived, I saw that a lot of students were crowding near the Assembly hall. They especially came to see what kind of girl who studied for 6 years at the University and remained a believer of the faith. They expected to see a downtrodden nun but instead saw it was a modest modern girl, with a very pleasing appearance. Only invited guests were allowed in the hall. I was also invited inside. The Chairman of the meeting announced that the Director of the Institute- Gulyamov, was currently located in Moscow and that the Vice-Chairman would take his seat instead. Our company arrived. Representatives of the trade Union, Komsomol and party organizations, Institute activists, government representatives: Chairman Kuibyshev, the District Executive Committee, and a representative from the KGB. The first to speak was the Head of the Department of Philosophy saying he personally conducted several conversations with Angelina Lobkova. The student is well-read, developed, knows both philosophy and she reads newspapers and knows the Bible well. It was very pleasant to discuss with her, but it was impossible to change his mind. Her living faith and love for God are sincere and concrete. We were powerless to change her mind. After that, the Chairman of the Kuibyshev district Executive Committee of Tashkent said, “Angelina Lobkova was present at the Baptist children's Easter celebration. A doctor cannot be a believer! We won't let her work as a doctor! How can she medically treat people as a Baptist, a backward element! We'll give her a shovel in her hands, let her dig holes, let her hands be covered in blood calluses! So she will earn her bread! We demand to expel her from the Institute!” Then, one Komsomol student from the third year of our faculty spoke. With tears in her eyes, she said that Angelina Lobkova is a student of our faculty - by her act, by her conviction, she tainted the honor of our faculty. We ask you to put Angelina in prison for ruining her children with her obscurantism. After her, a KGB officer spoke. He said: “We have known Angelina for a long time since she came to Tashkent. We are closely monitoring her behavior. As soon as she arrived, she was actively involved in steering and leading the youth. Starting from the third year, I began to conduct classes with children in Sunday school. We looked for ways to influence her, but nothing happened. They could have taken action, but since it does not fit at least one article of the criminal code, they couldn't imprison her. Therefore, we appeal to the Administration of the Institute to resolve the issue of her stay in the walls of Your Institute.” There were many more speakers, many more questions were asked about wars, about prayer, about where I found to put my faith in God? With God's help, I tried to answer all of their questions. After that, they asked me to leave them for a while, until they would decide upon a decision. They conferred for a long time. Then they invited me and said: “Due to the fact that I fully completed a six-year course of study at the Institute, they can't expel me from the Institute, but they will appeal to the Director of the Institute into denying me the right to pass state exams and retract my diploma”. The meeting ended. I calmly got out and went home. Only now I felt tired - 4 hours I spent in this unequal fight, but the Lord helped me and gave me the strength and wisdom to respond to all of their questions.

Now we have to wait for a decision - will I take the exams or not? On May 25th, a separate order was issued from the Institute: “6th year student of health and hygiene Lobkova Angelina for active religious work and





*Wedding invitation*

propaganda among children of preschool and school age, will not be allowed to pass the examinations.” I tried to come to the first exam, but the Dean of the Faculty of Health, Sharipov was there to make sure I didn’t take my exams. When Director Gulyamov A. G. returned from Moscow, I went to see him. He received me very well and was very sorry that it happened in his absence. He exclaimed, “I would not allow this, daughter! But there’s nothing I can do now.” There was nothing else to do in Tashkent. We consulted with Sasha and his parents and decided to set the wedding date on June 19. We didn’t have any photos for invitations. Sasha and I spent a long time choosing samples of invitation cards so we settled on one thing: the two of us in the photo, above us- angels and the inscription: “Therefore what God has joined, let no man separate.” Below- “We invite you to the wedding feast on June 19, 1960 - Angelina and Aleksandr Maltsev”. I found a photo of myself with my cousin, cut myself out, and another photo with Sasha with a friend, cut him out. I glued the cutouts together, and it turned out to be a pretty good photo. One woman photographer made a film for printing invitation cards for 50 rubles. We bought paper with Viktor Obertas, and printed 300 or 400 invitations overnight.

We decided to do the wedding in Sasha’s yard. There were 600 people at the wedding. On Sunday morning, we attended service. The church asked us to present ourselves. There was plenty of room for everyone. A youth group and a choir from Tashkent arrived. A group of children from Sunday School gifted me a chandelier and a big, luxurious tablecloth. Some people gave gifts in advance as they could not attend the wedding ceremony. After Sunday, Sasha came to pick me up, and on Tuesday we left Tashkent. I had a lot of things to transport: two suitcases with books and miscellaneous things, a double bed with a valuable nickel-plated back, blanket, and pillows. That’s all I had. I could not buy the wedding dress, because I could not afford it. Therefore, I asked to borrow a wedding dress from Lyuba Turkova. The dress fit perfectly on me. We decided to purchase the veil and wreath in Ferghana. On Wednesday, Nelya and Lyuba came to help me, for which I am the uttermost grateful. Their help was badly needed. Preparations in our house for the wedding were in full swing. The pastor of our church, Nazartsev, visited with his wife, and stayed at our home. They were friends with Sasha’s parents with whom they often lived for a few days at a time. His wife helped my mother bake for the wedding, and in her spare time, she asked me to show her the wedding dress. Nelya and Lyuba dressed me, and I appeared before

her... To my surprise, she gasps, "...A bride in a dirty dress?!" What could we do? Where could I find another dress now? I took off the dress and burst into tears; but, thank God, Lyuba and Nelya calmed me down. They said, "Don't worry, the dress is very pretty! It looks very good on you. We'll take care of your dress now!" They quickly washed it. Then, sister Lyuba ironed it for three hours, as it had a lot of folds. And when I put it on again, the pastor's wife was pleased: "Well, now it's a completely different matter – the dress looks like new! And how beautiful it looks! Thank God!" We took the wreath and veil from the wife of Sasha's friend. So, everything was already ready. In the evenings, together with the youth, we walked among the believers and collected beautiful vases for the bridal table. On Saturday, during the church service, it was announced that there would be a wedding during the evening service tomorrow, and they asked us to get up. When we were driving home from the service, we met my mother on the bus. Mom! – how much joy I had that my mother came. They were building a house and did not promise to come. And suddenly – mom was here! I asked why she didn't tell us because we would have met her. But Mom said she wanted to surprise us. "Uncle Gosha and Aunt Marusya will also come tomorrow with Volodya (my brother)," said my mother. All of us together, joyful and happy, arrived at home. Sasha's parents were also very glad that my mother came and that more relatives would come.

We were all at the church service on Sunday morning. We were again asked to get up and it was announced that in the evening at 6 o'clock there would be a marriage ceremony at this place, after which there would be a wedding feast down the street Mayakovsky proezd, in house number 3. In the afternoon, Galya, my girlfriend, and Lyonya Litvinov, Sasha's friend, came to us. They were going to be our bridesmaid and groomsman. They helped us get dressed. Sasha was in a white shirt and black trousers, I was in a wedding dress and a veil with a wreath. We wanted to take a picture on our way to the church. Nobody had cars then. We hired a taxi for 50 rubles. This car was supposed to take us to the church, wait until the wedding ceremony finished and take us back home. When we arrived at the photo studio, it turned out that it was already closed. So, we took amateur photographs the next day. The wedding ceremony went well – everything was like in a dream, the questions, the answers, the wishes – everything was mixed with excitement. There were no tape recorders or video cameras back then. What remained in our memory was it. After the wedding ceremony, we took a taxi home. But they didn't let us into the house, and they told us to wait for our parents. We stood near the house, then the neighbors invited us to their place. Everyone was walking from the church to the reception, and it would take half an hour. But then our parents came. They invited us. Before entering the house, our parents performed a prayer of blessing over us, and we entered the house. By this time, many guests had already gathered. We sat down at our table. Our table was on the veranda, and all the guests were sitting in the courtyard. Everyone saw us



*Wedding day June 19, 1960*





*At the wedding table*



*With relatives*

and we could see everyone. Galya was sitting next to me, and Lyonya was sitting next to Sasha. They waited on us. We didn't feel like eating anything. We were glad that so many guests had come from Tashkent, my relatives had come, and there were many guests from the German and registered communities.

The Tashkent choir sang great! The Fergana choir also sang a lot. They recited wedding poems and wishes to the bride and groom and sang wedding songs... Galya and Lyonya went to the youth, as they took part in reciting poems with them, and Sasha and I were left alone. And we felt so good! When someone was addressing us and wishing us something, we would get up. A mountain of gifts has already accumulated near us. But we didn't need anything... We were glad that all the worries were already behind us and now we would be together... How good it is! To love each other, trust each other, understand each other... To be one... And although it was not yet clear, we felt genuine joy and happiness.

The wedding ended well past midnight. Some of our Tashkent guests left by the night train, as they had to go to work in the morning. Some were taken in by friends to their homes. We took our relatives into our home. I remember it was 3 am. I had already changed into a house dress and a headscarf. Our relatives sat at the table for a long time. They recalled the old days... And there was no end to their conversations... Sasha's dad especially remembered our family and expressed joy that we were now relatives. Sasha and I went to make the beds for everyone. When we put everyone to bed and went to bed in the courtyard in the garden, it was already starting to get light outside... On Monday during the day, everyone gathered again, and we took pictures. In the evening, Sasha and I went with the youth to Gorchakovo to see off our Tashkent friends. Everyone was cheerful and happy with the time they had spent there. They wished others to follow our example. We returned home very late. My family stayed for a few more days and then left. Mom brought us 600 rubles for the wedding. But the wedding was already taken care of by Sasha's parents, and we did not need anything, and therefore returned the money to mom, since they were building a house, and for them it was a great help. Mom cried and thanked Sasha. She said that it was with great difficulty that they collected this money, and now it would be a precious present for Dad from us. Aunt Tanya, my mother's sister, was the last one to leave in July. She came to help mother during the wedding. Despite the fact that she was 10 years older than my mother, she was healthy and quick. Everything burned in her hands. After seeing her off, we returned home joyful that now we would rest from all our worries. But...

When we approached the house, a kind of ominous silence reigned around... We ran into the courtyard... Sasha's mother was lying on the bed on the veranda, his dad was alarmed, the doors were all open and no one was there, although it was already night. We asked dad: "What happened?" Dad said that Valya's (Sasha's sister) husband had beheaded her to death with an ax... And everyone had gone there, while Dad stayed to look after Mom. They had a daughter Svetochka who was 9 years old. She was taken in by Valya's neighbor, and Valya's husband was taken to the police. Valya's husband drank heavily. That day, after a night shift in the daycare center, Valya had stopped by our house. We sat together, had breakfast, and then Valya asked us to show her our gifts. She took two fabric pieces to sew me dresses. We gave her one piece as a present. Then she asked me to style her hair the same way mine was styled. I did that. That hairstyle looked so good on her! She said that she would now style her hair that way. After that she went home. She was a dressmaker who sewed dresses for people. And so, she sat and sewed. Her husband came home and asked her for money for alcohol. She didn't give it to him. She was sitting with her back to him behind the sewing machine. He came up from behind and sliced her head with an ax in such a way that blood splattered the ceiling and walls. Valya fell down dead, and he ran after his daughter, who ran out of fright across the yard to her neighbor, shouting, "dad killed mom!". Seeing that he would not catch up with her, he returned, closed the door on the hook, lay down next to Valya and began stabbing himself with an awl. When the police came, he did not get up and open the door. The police had to break down the door. He lay next to his dead wife and sobbed. He was immediately arrested. After a while, there was a trial, and he was given 15 years. Svetochka began to live with her grandmother. After all that she had suffered, she began to lag behind in her studies, especially in mathematics. Sasha and I studied with her. We tried to explain everything to her so that she would understand, with examples. Subsequently, she graduated from high school, from technical school and successfully married. Oh, and the father had filed a petition from prison to the education department so that the girl would be taken away from her grandparents and sent to a boarding school for education, since



the grandparents were believers, and he did not want his daughter to grow up to be a believer. And the request of the murderer father was satisfied, despite the fact that the grandfather and grandmother said that he couldn't be a father, since he was the one who had deprived the daughter of her mother, and now was making such claims. Educators arrived and brazenly took the girl away from her grandparents. We visited her at the boarding school. After leaving the boarding school, Sveta studied at a technical school, graduated well and married a young man from a good family. His mother was a teacher, and his father was a military man. The family loved her, and she lived well. Her grandfather and grandmother endured this tragedy very poorly. And on our honeymoon, Sasha and I could no longer laugh or rejoice.

Mom and I would get up at 6 o'clock in the morning and cook breakfast for the men. We cooked in the yard on an iron stove. On the stove, we burned sawdust that the children brought home from work. All Maltsev men worked in the same team at a furniture factory as carpenters. They made sofas, wardrobes, dressing tables, and sideboards. Everything was done very nicely, and their products were sold very quickly. People in those years lived in peace. They didn't earn that much money, but with that money it was possible to live a normal life: they were able to eat, to dress, and to have everything they needed in the house. Lamb meat cost 1 ruble 70 kopecks per 1 kg. Fatty pork – 1 ruble 90 kopecks. A loaf of bread cost 16 kopecks. Buns were sold for 5 kopecks. Greens and fruits at the bazaar were also inexpensive. Sasha's salary was 100-120 rubles. After everything got better at home and everyone calmed down a bit, I went to the Oblzdrav to ask for a job. According to my assignment at the institute, I had to work as an epidemiologist at the City SES. But the head of the personnel department told me that they could not hire me as a doctor, since I did not have a diploma. And they could not hire me as a medical assistant or a nurse, since I was a doctor. And so, I went to Oblzdrav every morning for two months and asked for any kind of work, but they didn't take me anywhere. The secretary-typist told me, "you can already be included in our report card, since you visit Oblzdrav every day without absenteeism or delays." Finally, after all the torment, they took me to work as a radiologist at the Regional Sanitary and Epidemiological Station. The chief physician of the Regional Sanitary and Epidemiological Station was urgently leaving for Tashkent. In her own place, she put a young Uzbek doctor-radiologist, and hired me in his place. I was sent to Tashkent for specialization for 10 days. I got to know the job.



*Sasha and I, Fergana 1960*

I really enjoyed the work, and I managed it well. It is true, however, that while I worked as a doctor, my salary more closely resembled that of a paramedic—50 rubles plus 7.50 for hazard pay. Doctors at that time were making 75 rubles. I was responsible for the Rabies Department throughout the Fergana region. Whenever there was a disease outbreak, whether, among animals or individuals, I immediately drove or flew to the site, identified the source of the infection, scheduled appointments for all who came into contact with the disease, and left. I worked in that position for 5 years. There was a government Rabiologist that was quite fond of me. He went to the institute to petition on my behalf for me to receive a diploma. But he was told that while I was loyal to the cause, I was too much of an activist. Imagine how their views would hold up today. If they have not changed by now, they are beyond hope. I myself wrote several times both to the institute and to the Ministry of Health—everywhere, I was refused. My brother, Bena, wrote to the Uzbekistani Prosecutor's Office, but this was not helpful either. So, Sasha and I continued to work and lived on a modest salary.

We lived at Sasha's parents' house. His room, which became ours, was furnished quite beautifully. He handmade the furniture—it was beautiful. We had everything that we needed—a cupboard, wardrobe, sofa, bed, a table for guests. Additionally, a year before I was married, I was able to accumulate a lot of figurines, napkins, beautiful paintings... Aunt Vera gifted us a wedding set—a beautiful shelf for handkerchiefs and two round pictures featuring chickens. We hung all of these items on the wall as a decoration and flaunted them. Friends would often come over for a cup of tea; they loved to chat in our cozy little room. When all the young people would gather, dad would welcome us into the main hall. Our house was the preferred place for young friends to spend the evening socializing. Our house was always very tidy. Our room and main hall were always prepared to welcome guests. Mom and dad really loved our guests and were always so happy when they arrived.

In the spring we bought six beehives from Sasha's friend, Sasha Panibratsky. They were for sale on the road to Gorchakovo. Sasha bought a new bicycle and we rode there together on Easter. Beekeeping was interesting. In May, we awaited our gift from God. Would it be a boy or a girl? We were happy with whichever option. When I went on a business trip to Tashkent, I bought a nice stroller there for 25 rubles. Sasha met me and helped me bring the stroller home. We rode from Gorchakovo to Fergana on a shuttle bus; during that time no one had cars. To buy all of the necessary things for the baby. Sasha built a cupboard to sell. We took it out to the flea market. The market was located on Pamirskaya Street—it still exists there today. They offered us 90 rubles for the cupboard but we wanted 120. Then, all of a sudden, members from the finance department surrounded the market and began to take a census of everyone who was selling handmade goods. They scoffed and summoned them to the Foreign Executive Committee. We did not want to take the cupboard home, so we sold it for 90 rubles. After some time had passed, Sasha was summoned to the Foreign Executive Committee. He was at work at that time. I went with him along with Valechka who had just been born. The well-fed administrators sat there—these fat, evil people did not care about poorer people. They said to me, “Look, she wants pity! She came with a child.” And they issued a fine of 25 rubles. I burst into tears and left. It is true that the well-fed do not understand the hungry. There were so many hurdles in life. But we always had enough. We always had something to offer when a friend would come over. We were always content, joyful, and happy. We held private religious gatherings. We sang in the choir; Sasha preached and acted as the choir director.

But eventually, we arrived at the time of persecution; the authorities arrived and told our brothers, “If you do not back up and get ready, we will get the bulldozer and destroy your tent.” The brothers consulted with one another. Behind Aleksey, Prokopyevich stood the tent in his yard and before he stood his house—of course, no one wanted to deprive him of his home. So, at the morning meeting, they announced that it would be the last. My heart throbbed at the words: “the last meeting.” Many brothers and sisters gathered. We all cried. What would we do next? Join a registered church? Some did just that. They instantly left for a registered church. However, some decided to gather secretly in nature and in houses. Sasha gathered some young followers and zealous Christians and on Sundays, we would leave town for Avval, Yangi-Check, among other places. At first, a great many brothers and sisters attended these meetings, but by winter this was not the case. Many people left for a registered gathering. We even went once but returned—my heart just did not agree with their teaching. We began gathering once a week in Kirguly among the Germans. We would plan our program in advance, deliver the



prepared sermon, read the word of God, recite the Golden Verse, read an interesting story from a magazine, sing, and pray. Over time, however, our souls languished without a church. We were silent, we stopped planning, and we decided to attend the registered gatherings. We listened attentively to the sermons and waited to see how the other brothers and sisters would receive us. There was never any hostility, they always greeted us with a warm heart. We prayed about it for a while and decided to temporarily attend there. Much later on, we became members of the Church. We began to sing in the choir; Sasha would occasionally conduct. I was still on maternity leave. I was young, strong, and healthy. I had a peaceful pregnancy with no toxocosis.

On Friday, May 12th we attended the rehearsal. My contractions had already begun so I took my maternity hospital documents with me. Sasha told me that we would go to the hospital after the rehearsal. We learned the hymn, "When Misfortune is Worse than Suffering." I sang along but my child was already asking for freedom. After the rehearsal, we walked on foot to the hospital. They took me in and Sasha was sent home. He returned home quite late, no one noticed that he returned home alone. Early in the morning, he went to our local bazaar. He bought strawberries and chocolate and came to me. I was already in the general ward. All of the pain had passed, I gave birth to a girl and was resting. In the morning I saw Sasha out the window calling out to me.

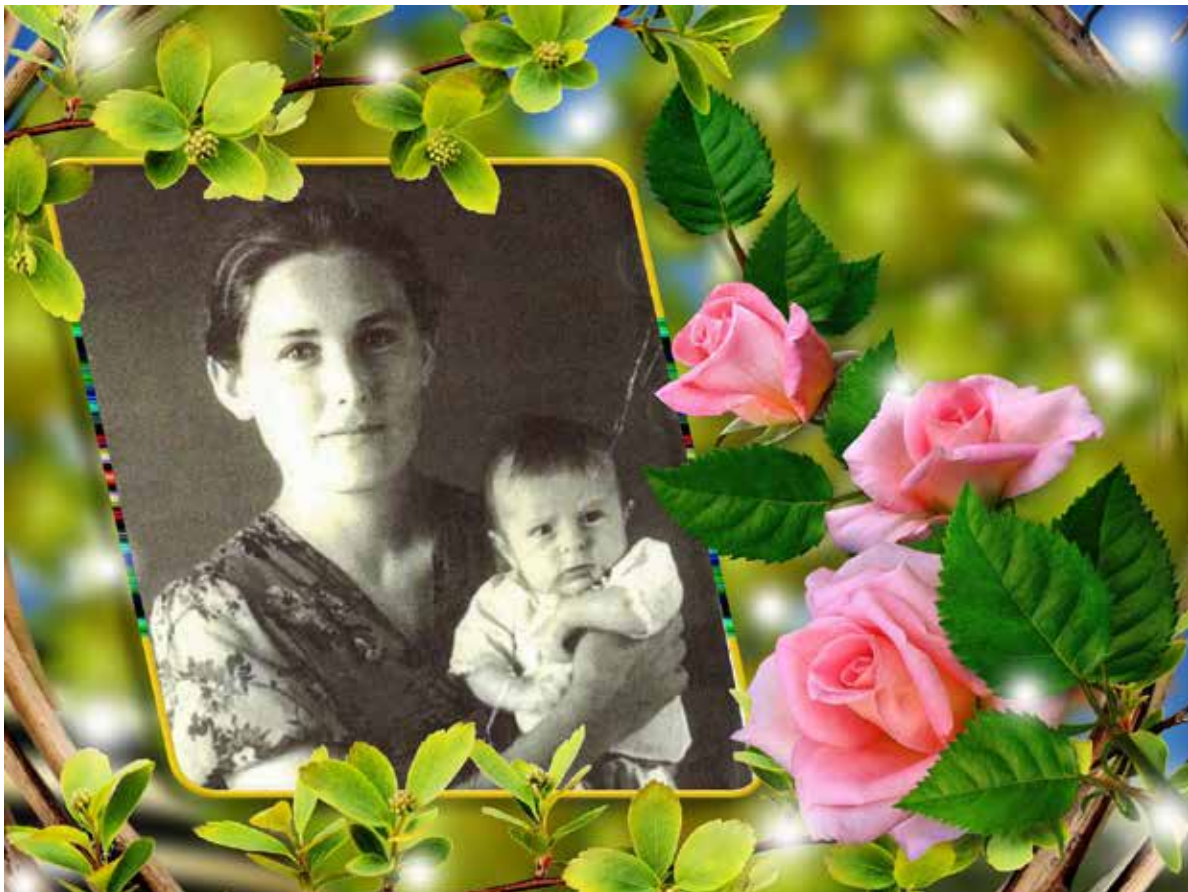
\* \* \*

*It does not matter whether, it was morning or night,*

*It was a wonderful moment for me —*

*You came to life, little one; our daughter.*

*And the sun greeted you on your first!*



*Valechka is 40 days old*

# Mom

Becoming a Mom! We had a baby girl weighing 2500g (~5.5lb). They showed her to me right after she was born; what a pink, little angel she was. She cried as she was being born. Cleaned up, weighed, and wrapped in a blanket she quickly fell asleep. Then they took her to the nursery. I was supposed to be in the delivery ward for two more hours before they moved me to the maternity ward, but at least I could lay down more comfortably for now. It wasn't long before I fell asleep. As morning was quickly approaching, I woke up and hadn't received much rest. Valechka was born three-thirty in the morning. When I was transferred to the maternity ward, everything was so much better! The bed was so much softer! Fresh air flowed into the room through an open window. Everyone was asleep. At six o'clock in the morning, the other mothers woke to feed their newborns, but I was not allowed to, so I shortly fell back asleep. Seven o'clock in the morning I get woken up again by a few mothers nearby saying: "Your husband is here!". I opened my eyes and saw Sasha standing outside the window. He was smiling at me and was filled with joy. A midwife saw him outside and wanted to yell at him but, as if it was ordinary, he proceeded to ask her to hand over a package of food he had brought for me. I do not know if she was just very kind, but she opened the window, picked up the package, and passed it to me. Then said, «What a husband you have! With him around you won't perish.» I was pleased that Sasha loved me so much and took care of me. After labor I was hungry, so I immediately opened the package Sasha brought. There was my favorite sausage, Shaker-churek cookies, chocolate, and fresh strawberries. I thanked him and sent him off because he had to go to work. Over lunch he announced that he was officially a Dad, and everyone was surprised, wondering when exactly Valechka was born. He answered, "She was born while you were all asleep."

Mothers have their worries. I could not wait to see Valechka again. When were they going to bring her back to me? I wanted to look at her closely, see who she resembles more. It was not long before they brought her. Babies from the children's ward were brought in on one large bed, on which they lay next to each other. The nannies took them one at a time and laid them out on the mothers' beds. For the first time, I took my baby into my arms. Then I began to breastfeed. She did not have much of a pull, but there was something unique about it! Yes! It is pleasant to feed a baby! A kind of bliss runs through your whole body and you become thirsty. There is great happiness in



*Sasha, Valechka and I*





*Valechka*

being a mother! From this joy and happiness, you forget everything, all the pains of childbirth—as if nothing had happened. And like little children with dolls, we grown women babbled with our treasures. Each mother spoke to her baby, ignoring the others. It was interesting to think about whose eyes and whose face did hers more closely resemble, mine or Sasha's? I carefully unwrapped her and inspected her tiny feet. The second and third toes were half-fused. Our baby! Mother's genes! My mother, I, and some of my other family members have this unique trait; the second and third toes on our feet are half—fused.

In the hospital, days flew by quickly. Many times a day we were delivered food, we would get to feed our newborns, and I'd get health checkups. For mothers having their first baby, it was required to rest afterwards for three days. Now, looking at childbirth in America, you will be amazed: a woman is allowed to go home on the same day or the next. I remember how our Vera drove herself home after giving birth. I couldn't wait for the call, I couldn't calm down, how could we let her drive? It could make your head spin! But, thank God, everything turned out fine. Well, they were going to keep me in Ferghana for 14 days, since the baby was born weighing less than 2500 grams. Such a newborn should be under the supervision of a doctor for two weeks. But as a doctor myself, I asked the department to make an exception for me—to let me go home on Saturday, slightly earlier. A big cake was brought in for me by my coworkers, but I passed it down to the doctors. That's how they let me go. I felt healthy and strong. When everyone left for the church, I scrubbed the floors in all the rooms, cleaned the place. My mother found out and was shocked, telling me to rest and do nothing more. But I couldn't sit still. Valechka was getting better by the day. At that time, the hospital gave you a birth certificate immediately, then gave you one month to decide on a name. We went through a lot of names and decided on the name—Valechka. Every day, our friends came to congratulate us, bringing gifts such as shirts, diapers, and toys.

Valechka slept for the first time in a comfortable stroller. I sewed the mattress and the pillow with a cross stitch and a ribbon around the edges. I also made a blanket. Yes! For the first child—everything new—underwear, sheets, and diapers—all of it was simple flannel. There were new concerns. I fed Valechka often—every 3 hours. She was very calm and rarely cried. Once, when she was already two weeks old, while we had guests over, she fell asleep on the sofa. After the guests left, we didn't want to disturb her and left her sleeping on the sofa. In the middle of the night, there was a loud thump and a child's cry. We jumped out of bed and found Valechka lying on the floor. She somehow rolled out of her blanket and fell. I calmed her down and everything turned out fine.

She grew quickly. In a month she was already capable of laughing meaningfully. When she was 3.5 months old, I went to work. For 5 months, I looked after her. Then we put her in a nursery. In the morning, I took her along with me, leaving her at the nursery. Then I took the bus and went all the way to the regional station. My work started at 8.30 am. I was always on time. I worked an hour less than before—instead of three, I left at two. If there was a bus heading back, I took the bus, if not, I walked. Walking at a fast pace, I managed to reach my house before the bus was even in sight.

Sasha and I were still in touch with the local youth. We took Valechka with us everywhere. Everyone loved her, everyone wanted to hold her. She was light and agile. We bought her a crib with a mesh guard. At seven months, she easily stood up: holding onto the mesh, then holding onto the crossbar, she jumped. Oh, how she jumped! Her hair rose and fell, and she had a happy smile on her face. What a joy! Every day there was something new in her behavior. When Sasha and I went to choir sessions, one sister, Lena, looked after her. She loved her like her own child, bought her toys, and played with her. Interestingly, Valechka could go to anyone who wanted to hold her. She was friendly with everyone. At that time, for the first time, beautiful new plush toys appeared in stores. We bought her the most beautiful ones, since they were fairly inexpensive. Our friends also bought toys for her.



*Valechka and I are in the yard*





*Valechka, Anechka and I*

In June, when Valechka was 1 year and 1 month old, the father of Lida, Vienna's wife, came to visit us and invited me to go with him on the train to Kostanay. He was going to visit his children and asked me to go to my parents. By this time I was already on maternity leave, pregnant with my second child. I thought I was about a month away from giving birth. But Sasha wouldn't let me go. I really wanted to go. I wanted to stay at home with my parents and give birth there, and then go home. But Sasha explained to me that he was not able to go with me in order to drive us back, and that it would be very difficult for me alone with two babies. He remained adamant. I got upset and did not agree to go with him to a youth meeting the following evening. So he asked our family friend Valya to come over and persuade me into going. She came, and I felt that I would give birth very soon. I told her so. Then we agreed that we would all go to youth together. And if I felt bad, Sasha would take me to the hospital, and she would stay with Valechka if necessary. The evening had already begun, I stayed a little while, and the contractions got worse. At eleven o'clock Sasha took me

by bus to the hospital and at one o'clock in the morning our second daughter—Anechka—was born. Sasha wanted a boy, but God saw it in His own way. My coworkers came over from work, congratulated me and said: «Don't worry that it's another girl, you do believe that this is from God, right? Call her Anechka.» At home, we discussed it and liked the name, so we named our second daughter Anechka. Later, Sasha told me: «See how good it is that I did not let you go, you would have given birth on the road, what would have happened?». Yes, you should listen to your husband, he always foresees in advance how it will be better for you.

Now I was even more cheerful. Valechka spent the whole day running around the yard, staying near her grandmother, and hugging her sister. She was not jealous that her mother wasn't spending as much time with her anymore. Anechka was born weighing 2600g. She was bigger, stronger, and easier to breastfeed. And she was gaining weight fast. I've had a good rest for three months and had to go back to work. I decided to enroll both daughters in a nursery. I filled out all necessary documents and took them to the nursery. The stroller was very comfortable, and the drive there was very short. Anechka behaved well at the nursery, but Valechka threw a tantrum every day—she did not want to be there. But there was nothing I could do: I left them and went to work. I picked them up at two o'clock, and by then, Valechka managed to cry so much that her voice became hoarse. The nannies tried to give her everything, but she did not want anything, only asking to go home. An old sister in the church offered to babysit my daughters for free, as long as she had a place to live, and we agreed. We had a "guest house" in our yard that our parents gave to us for a children's room and for this grandma to live there. It turned out convenient for all of us. Valechka ran around the yard as usual, but grandma did not let Anechka go far, holding

her in her arms like a treasure. I came home on a bicycle to feed Anechka at 3 o'clock. Later, grandma managed to feed her before I arrived, because Sasha's brother Volodya also got married, and they had a son a month later than we had Anechka. Volodya's wife had plenty of milk, and she could feed both her son and Anechka. Then I started coming home at two o'clock in the afternoon.

\* \* \*

*I became a mother again in my life.  
Before me lies me little one,  
I look at her carefully  
And my heart beats hollowly.  
Let the worries become even more,  
And more sleepless nights come,  
But in my hands is a precious gift, —  
And plenty of patience.  
I don't know what life will bring us,  
God is with us! I'm glad of that.  
If I get weak or tired,  
I'll admit it to Him alone.  
Mother's happiness! What is greater?  
I feel it with my body and soul.  
When my life will be a thing of the past, —  
I wish to see my children saved.  
Then not in vain were all the  
Pains, difficulties, sleepless nights...  
Let me grow old, but with the same tenderness  
I will be a mother — it is great happiness!*

At my job everything was good. I always sent monthly reports to Tashkent on time and correctly. My professor Joffe also liked me and was happy to have me back at work. The incidence of rabies among animals has sharply decreased, thanks to the coordinated work of three services: the police, veterinary medicine and health education by medical workers. The police forced all residents to register and vaccinate their dogs; the veterinary service caught stray dogs, and we conducted sanitary and educational work among the population; published posters and sanitary bulletins. As a result, its incidence among people has decreased from 7-10 cases per year to two. That's good. But our task was to eliminate this disease completely. All those who got rabies died on the second or fourth day in full consciousness and in great agony. I myself saw a woman with rabies in Margilan: she was lying in a separate room, the windows were completely covered up with dark blankets, because all these patients are afraid of light. No one was allowed in the room. Every gust of wind gave her an attack. «Photophobia, air phobia and hydrophobia» - these are the classic symptoms of rabies disease. The rabies virus, after being transmitted via the bite of a sick animal, quickly spreads through nerve fibers and reaches the brain. There, bodies of Negri form, and their presence allows pathologists to recognize the disease. If the bitten person takes a vaccine in time, the virus does not replicate, since the body produces antibodies that will stop it. This is where my efforts were, I tried to make sure that people knew about this and took their vaccinations on time. Still, sometimes people got rabies. Only one year in my 5 years of work, was there not a single case of the disease; and among animals, we took all necessary measures.

When I went on maternity leave for the third time, Sasha let me go to my parents' to stay there for a short time and return home before giving birth. I went with my daughters. There was a transfer in Tashkent, and overall my trip was great. At home, I was welcomed with joy. My mother said that she would look after the children, and that I should rest. This was such a relief for me—I was so grateful that Sasha let me go. At this time, my father and mother lived in a large 2-story house. Mila, Vova and Verochka were still young and lived with their parents. Vienna, Lida, and their children lived separately in public housing. I went to visit them. I brought Play-Doh as



a gift to their children; what else could I bring them? After all, we lived very modestly too. For example, if returning from somewhere, we saved money by walking home and only taking a taxi sometimes. Valya Razumovskaya, when she visited me in the hospital while I was giving birth to Anechka, brought me red sandals to see if I wanted to buy them. I tried them on, and they were a good fit for me, but what could I say to her? I told her, «They are good for me, but I don't need them yet, I already have something to wear.» And so here I am at my mother's house. Mom said if you like something of ours, take it. I liked the children's wicker table with 4 chairs, so we packed it and sent it as luggage. Mom also sewed a lot of new dresses for Valya and Anechka. Interestingly, Valechka began speaking well while I was here. She was only 2 years old. You tell her, «Can you call Vova to eat.» She runs to him and says, «Vova go eat.» Once Valechka climbed to the second floor, and from there even higher to the balcony. My heart nearly stopped. She could have slipped between the guard columns and fell onto the concrete below. I quickly ran to the balcony, cautiously approached her from behind and grabbed her. Thank God everything went well. From then on, we closed the doors upstairs so that she could no longer get to the balcony. My vacation passed quickly, and I returned home. In Tashkent, at my uncle Gosha's I had delicious grapes. There, I got to see friends from my youth again.

In October, we had a baby again, and it was a girl again. She was so pretty and so calm. Her weight was low—2300 grams. Even though this was my third child, I still treated her like a doll. I put small gloves on her and tied decorative bows on them. Likewise, I tied small bows on her onesies. She slept a lot and for long. I had time to run through all my errands, and she would still be asleep. Valechka and Anechka often sat at the table that we brought from my mom's and scribbled. Sometimes they formed something out of Play-Doh.



*Sasha is in the Pansion. 1962*

## Our house

When Linochka, our third daughter, was 3 months old, I went back to work. My mother looked after the children. I also worked from 8:30 am to 2 pm. I went to church less often now. I bought a new green coat for 38 rubles. At work, I was offered a new white hat. I gained some weight and began to look much better. Everything was going well in our family too. We lived very amicably with Sasha and his parents. They now had three daughter-in-laws: Vasya's wife - Valya, Sasha's wife - me, and Vladimir's wife - Vera. And we all lived in the same house.

During the winter, Sasha brought home beehives and put them near the fence. The only transport we had was a bicycle. Honey was brought from the apiary on trucks. We sold the honey right at home to our friends. In the summer, Vera sewed all three of my girls beautiful dresses from the same material and in the same style. They wore them to church and as guests at peoples' houses.

We had a good time at our parents' house, but there were already a lot of people gathered in the house, and we had to slowly start building our own nest. Vasya and Valya bought a house in Yar-mazar. We were looking in Besh-Bole. We found one house with 2 rooms. It was converted from Uzbek to Russian style, and both rooms had no flooring or light. In the first room, there was an ordinary stove on which we could cook and use to keep the house warm. There was another private room at the entrance to the courtyard which had both light and flooring. Other people lived in that room. The courtyard was large, but long and narrow. There were many fruit trees and strawberries. Across the yard there was a ditch, so it was easy to water the plants. This house cost as much as 1,500 rubles. Since we had no money at all, Sasha asked for a loan from a fellow Christian beekeeper - Peter Fedorovich Bezinsky. He gave us money and we bought this house. My parents didn't want to let us go, but we had already made our decision. Eventually, it was necessary for us to start living independently. We hired a moving truck and loaded the most necessary things, leaving the rest in our room temporarily, until we can pick them up. When we were moving, Lina had a high fever. My mother asked me to leave baby Lina with her, but we decided to take her with us. I gave her medication, and the fever gradually passed. I clearly remember how we moved, unloaded our items and put everything in its place, ate dinner, and Sasha left for work at night. I was left at home alone with the kids with no light and only a candle. There was a terrible storm outside, and a strong wind was blowing. The trees creaked and the wind howled in the chimney. The children and I prayed and went to bed.

We were alone now. I was used to always having a lot of people in the house, but now it was just my own family. We put cardboard on the floor of the house. We used an ordinary stove with two burners to cook food on and keep us warm. We bought coal and burned it inside the stove. The day after we moved in, they brought us three piglets. They were brought from Uzgen. They were small but healthy, clearly of a good breed. All three together cost 100 rubles. We only had 100 rubles. Volodya, Sasha's brother, gave us this money for our storage chest that we left for him in our room. We put the piglets in a dug-out storage which was meant to store potatoes, and we laid down some straw in it. It provided plenty of space for them and offered a way for them to keep warm. Food was given upstairs in the trough. We cooked them vermicelli or grain soup without meat. We ate the same thing. Sometimes I rode my bike to the farmer's market and bought straw for the piglets. Sasha was with the children at the time. The piglets grew very fast. In the spring, we moved them to the room by the gate. We laid straw on the floor there as well and that was where they slept. The food trough was nailed in another corner.

Soon the Razumovsky brothers, Vitya and Yevgeny Petrovich, wired electricity to the house, which gave us light. It was so much better with the light! In March, we were expecting a new addition to the family. I was going over my term for a whole month, so Pavlik was born on March 30, 1965. When I went to the hospital, only 3-4 trees bloomed in our garden. When I returned home, the whole garden was blooming! Oh, how beautiful it was! And the smell! Strawberries also began to bloom. This time my baby and I were brought home by Sasha's friend on the Volga. This was very convenient, since you couldn't walk there, it was very far, and I was already weak. It's not easy to have four children in five years. I remember that my father and mother and Baba Uley came to visit us. They brought ready-made food and various gifts for Pavlik. At the time though, he was just a boy with no name. We had to choose a name together so that everyone would like it. It is interesting that this was the first boy in our family, long-awaited. When Pavlik was born, Sasha went to visit his parents. They sat him down to eat. He was joyful and happy. This did not slip past the parents. They asked him what had happened, "why are you so happy?" He confessed, «A son was born!" They all congratulated him. Employees of the Regional Sanitary and Epidemiological Station, where I worked, also visited me in the maternity hospital, and were glad that, at last, God sent us a boy. And so now I was at home and surrounded by the care of my parents and relatives.

Grandma Yuliya proposed the name Pavlik in honor of her son. We all liked this name, so we named our first son Pavlik. While I was in the hospital and for some time after, while I got stronger, Aunt Tanya lived with us (we called her Grandma Lyolya) - mom's sister. Afterward, she went home to Chardzhou.



When my maternity leave ended, I went back to work as a “rabies specialist” and resumed my morning shifts that started at 8:30am. When Sasha worked the second shift or at night, he looked after the children in the morning. When he worked in the morning, Taya Otkidicheva looked after the children. They lived next to us, and she also had a little girl named Ninochka. This is how this kind, good sister helped us out, even though she also had many children and a lot of work of her own. She was always cheerful and kind; an attentive and sincere Christian. She was an exemplar.

One evening I went to the pharmacy to buy medicine. An Uzbek man stood in line in front of me with a prescription. The cashier was arguing because she could not understand what was written. The Uzbek man told the cashier, «This is our new doctor in Saur-Bulak.» Sasha worked as a shift supervisor at a thermal power plant. One of his workers was a Tajik who lived in Saur-Bulak. Saur-Bulak is a village in a vegetable-growing state farm, which was located between Fergana and Kirgili. Sasha once visited the worker in his home, and he really liked the place. In passing, the Uzbek at the pharmacy told me that this doctor planned to leave and continue his studies, so his position would soon be vacant. The next morning, Sasha and I went to the first-aid post and there we met with a medic. He was incredibly happy that I wanted to work here, because he had to leave to go to college. Then, Sasha and I went to the head physician of the Yarmazar hospital, who oversaw this first-aid post. I asked to work at the Saur-Bulak first-aid post. The head doctor, having learned that I had graduated from the Tashkent Medical Academy (ТашММИ), invited me to work as a doctor at Chek-Shura. But I begged her to hire me at Saur-Bulak. The head physician, Sofia Aleksandrovna Negrimovskaya, was a wonderfully kind person, a good leader, and an excellent, experienced doctor. She was a favorite of all the people among whom she lived and worked. She agreed to hire me at the Saur-Bulak first-aid post. However, she said the pay rate at this post is that of a medical assistant, so she said she would add 0.5 to the rate of a nurse, and I would receive 105 rubles a month. It was almost 2 times more than I received while working at the Regional Sanitary and Epidemiological Station. I had to work 6 days a week. Patients were received from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Additionally, I had to make house calls to see sick patients, visit field camps on the state farm, and administer preventive vaccinations. This was all familiar to me. I was not afraid of work, and I was knowledgeable. I just had to learn the Uzbek language.

Since childhood, living next to Uzbeks, we were able to speak Uzbek and buy everything at the bazaar. The Uzbek language was taught at school, so I knew the basics. Now I just had to learn medical terminology and have an ability to understand complaints in the Uzbek language. After we agreed with Sofia Aleksandrovna, I was supposed to start working in Saur-Bulak the next day. Therefore, I immediately went to the Regional Sanitary and Epidemiological Station and applied for a transfer to Saur-Bulak for family reasons. I explained to the head doctor that it was difficult for me to ride a bike to work every day and there was no one to leave my children with, so the head physician agreed to the transfer.

The next morning Sasha stayed home with the children while I went to my first day of work. To get to work, I had to first take the bus from the bazaar to Joydam, then I had to walk quite a bit to reach Saur-Bulak. The first-aid post was in the center of Saur-Bulak. An old woman was walking towards me. Seeing me, she asked, «Are you a doctor?» I said, «Yes.» She said, “Well, my grandson is sick. Let us go to our house. If you cure him at home, you will work out. If you cannot cure him at home by yourself, you are a bad doctor. We are terribly busy with work and do not have time to go see doctors. We do not like hospitals very much either. You must quickly heal everyone in their own home.» She brought me to her house. A sick one-year-old boy was lying on the bed. He was skinny and boney, and had big eyes. He had a bad case of diarrhea. Without any doubt, I diagnosed him with toxic dyspepsia. I said to the grandmother, «Such patients are treated only in a hospital. He has severe dehydration, vomiting, diarrhea, and no appetite. How can we leave such a child at home? I propose to bring the child to the Yarmazar hospital.” But the old woman continued to repeat one thing, “Treat him by yourself here at home. Write the prescription, we will go to the pharmacy for the medicine and administer it to him according to your instruction.” I decided to try. I prayed that God would help me heal this child at home, so that he would get better and not die. The Lord helped me. The boy quickly began to recover, and everyone fell in love with me and believed that I could indeed work there.

# Saur-Bulak

This is how I started working in Saur-Bulak. Buribekov Alizhon, my first patient in Saur-Bulak, recovered quickly. Word got around among the villagers that I was a good doctor. I rode a bicycle to work and always came to work on time. There were a lot of sick people. I knew some words in their language, some I had to learn. For example, they pointed to the liver and said - gigar. Showed to the heart - said yurak. The head is bosh and so I quickly learned to understand them. Prescriptions I could write out correctly and clearly. I knew Latin well and could correctly write all the doses of all the drugs that were used. Sometimes I bought the medicine myself for 5-10 rubles and sold them to those who could not go to the pharmacy to buy medicine. The medication was very inexpensive, and everything was already at the first-aid post.

The first aid post occupied one room. One window overlooked the courtyard, there was an old sofa by the window and there was a large Uzbek blanket on it. To the left of the wall stood a large office table with side tables and drawers for documents. Patients sat at the side of this table, and I sat in the middle, and it was very convenient for me to treat them. I checked them in, treated them and addressed all their concerns. Every day I treated at least 30 people. There were many thin sick women, especially old and pregnant women. All of them had to receive intravenous glucose with ascorbic acid. Some were given gamma globulin, especially the weak children. I treated a lot of pregnant women myself, gave them prenatal and postpartum care. I gave school children information about exemption from classes. Students were not allowed to attend classes without my permission slip. This was very important, especially if someone had an infectious disease. Once a week, we went and reported on our work. The head physician Sofia Aleksandrovna trusted me and never worried about me.

After working for about a month, I asked the general manager in Saur-Bulak, to allow our family to live in the room next to the first-aid post. The room was large with wooden floors and 3 large windows. The yard was nice and there was plenty of storage. The General manager was a kind person and allowed us to live there. So, in August 1965, we moved to Saur-Bulak. We already had four children. But we all fit in one room. We really liked the new place. In the morning at 9 o'clock I went to the first-aid post. The children played quietly while I worked. If there was a break in-between appointments, I would run home and see what the children were doing. When Sasha was at home, I didn't have to worry about the children. There was a bakery next to the infirmary and we often bought fresh baked goods from there. There was a spring across the road and a large concrete pool. Some people came there to bathe in order to be healed. This place was both sacred and comfortable for relaxation. So, we liked our new home and the people among whom we settled.

After work, I also did house-to-house rounds on families, and children. Sometimes I had to take my children with me. People loved them, gave them cookies and sweets. If there was a wedding, I was always given a large gift of flatbreads, samosushki and sweets. It's nice to remember that time and how the Lord took care of us! Sasha also began to work close to home. In autumn of the same year, the city allocated us a large plot of land - 13 acres in Juydam. Sasha and his dad planned out the plot, and we filled the foundation for the house in the same year. The concrete was bought ready, made by machines. Concrete cost 12 rubles a car, and large stones – 5 rubles a car. We laid the foundation for 5 rooms and a kitchen. Over the winter, Sasha's dad bought good wood for beams and for the floor. I bought ready-made frames and doors. In the spring, we hired three Uzbek men to make bricks at 13 rubles per 1,000 bricks.

They leveled the place where they were molding the bricks, they took the land for the bricks right from the yard. I cooked lunch and would bring it to them. They boiled tea themselves. In three weeks, these people made us 30,000 bricks. We also helped them. We came to turn over the bricks and stacked the dry ones in rows. Everyone worked. Even little Pavlik, who was only a year old, also brought bricks. Once, a brick fell on his leg and he started to bleed. His legs had not healed from the burn yet. He got the burn, falling into the hot coal dust, which



was thrown out by the flatbread makers. This dust was thrown out on the side of the road. Anya, Valya, Linochka and Pavlik walked along the road holding hands. The children were going to the neighbors, and Pavlik stepped into the ash with both of his feet. He cried out in pain. At that time, I was at the first-aid post. Hearing his cry, I ran to the children. The skin on Pavlik's soles and toes had been burnt. I grabbed him and quickly brought him to the house and lowered his feet into the water. He felt better, and stopped crying so much. I had not noticed previously that they were throwing coal along the road, and the lesson was for me to be more attentive. After all, any other child or adult could have suffered this way. I applied a streptocide emulsion in fish oil to the burned surface. I also applied eye ointment. That day I changed his bandage 10 times, because as soon as I put the bandage on, he would calm down, and would not cry. That night after dressing the bandage, he fell asleep so quietly that I was scared he died. But I listened to his breathing and he breathed evenly, calmly. The next day I went to a surgeon in Kirgili and showed him the burn. But the doctor and nurse treated Pavlik so coolly that I decided not to go to them anymore. They applied a thin layer of ointment and told me to come back in three days and to no longer bandage the burn during these three days. Even though I looked after him so well, he still has scars on his feet - toes that have grown together with a scar. At that time, we did not know of ointment that does not leave scars.

When they finished making the bricks, Sasha took a vacation from work and hired three healthy, strong Crimean men, and together with them they built the walls up very quickly. Then Sasha's brothers came and put up beams and rafters, they covered them with a slate - and the house was ready. Floors were laid down in all rooms except for the living room. Then we hired one family, a husband and wife, and they began to plaster our house. First, they plastered the outside while it wasn't cold so that the plaster could dry. We put a gas stove in the kitchen so that Uncle Vasya and his wife could boil tea for themselves or warm up food. Uncle Vasya was a jack of all trades. He also made a very good temporary wood stove, this stove warmed up very well and never smoked. They stoked the stove every day so that the plaster would dry quickly. Every day after work, I took the children and



*Our family with 6 children, 1969*

went to the new house to heat the stove. The workers were good and they also made such beautiful ceilings and cornices! They had already finished working on half of the house. We worked on the other half of the house. And the children's room, our bedroom and kitchen were already ready. In the nursery we spread a large warm blanket on the floor, and there the children played on the floor. During the time they played I would heat the stove, clean everywhere, and cook dinner. From constant work with the mortar, water, and from the cold, my hands were all cracked. It was already November and although it was not far for us to walk, it was cold. Valya and Anya walked next to me, holding onto the hem of my dress. I carried Linochka and Pavlik in my arms one on one arm and the other in my other arm, and so that they would not fall I would interlock my fingers. The cracks burst, and severe pain pierced my hands. The children who walked on their own would cry, and I also cried with them. Venochka at that time also walked with us, quietly settling under my mother's heart. It's all forgotten now, but then? I remember with tears how we got our new house.

In the month of December, we moved into our house. Valya was five and a half years old, Anya was four and a half, Linochka three years old, and Pavlik a year and a half. This was how God gave us our new, big, and beautiful house; in which we lived for 10 years under His blessings. From the remnants of the bricks, Sasha's brother Vienna built a fence, a storage room, and a garage for us. They placed a large iron gate and painted it. What a beautiful house it was! It was the most beautiful house in Joydam, in our area. The yard was very large which we planned out and planted fruit trees. At the entrance to the courtyard and in the courtyard, asphalt was laid. It was good inside the house too. Most importantly, it was warm and cozy. In the children's room we put 4 cots and children all slept separately. I bought 4 baby blankets from the store, just for their bunks. I covered the beds with the blankets during the day. Our bedroom was next to the children's room. The kitchen had a canned gas stove, a table and chairs. When the second half of the house was completed, we moved the rest of the furniture from our parents house into our home. After vacation, I went back to work. The children now stayed at home with Sasha or alone. Valya and Anya had already grown up, and it was possible to leave the children with them. At 12 o'clock I would return home. If anyone needed help urgently, they came straight to our house. I was always at home and never refused anyone. Venichka was born on May 22. He was a very calm child. It felt good to stay home with children. But the vacation ended, and I went back to work. Since I got a job at the Regional Sanitary and Epidemiological Station, I worked without a break, resting only on holiday break or maternity leave. Sasha also worked at the CHP. He was now a shift supervisor and was highly regarded as a good worker. He began to earn good money, and it became easier for us to live. I have fond memories of our neighbors and living at this house.

## Juidam

After we moved into our home, I offered the manager to transfer the first-aid post to the room where we lived, that is, to make two rooms—to make a waiting room, and equip the second room for receiving patients. He agreed and completed the renovations—painted the floors and the windows. The village council gave funds for medical equipment, chairs, bedside tables, and curtains. I bought two live flowers in pots—very beautiful, green, and lush. They allocated money for essential medicines, alcohol, syringes, and sterilizers. We also bought a gas stove with bottled gas. It became quite good. The syringes were boiled not only in an electric sterilizer, but also on gas. So slowly my first-aid post grew richer. The old couch was replaced by a new medical couch. Now they gave me the rate of a nurse, and I received a half rate. Now I didn't have to worry about cleanliness myself. The nurse cleaned up and boiled the syringes. I arranged Lyuda Samsonenko as a nurse. She did her job well. In addition, she was able to design the health bulletins well. Appearing in front of me were colorful and well-designed health bulletins. When I started working, Sasha's mother went to Chardzhou and brought us Aunt Tanya (Baba Lyolya). She was completely blind. She underwent surgery to remove cataracts. The operation was



unsuccessful and the eye went blind. The second one also couldn't see due to cataracts. We agreed that even though she was blind, she hears and is near the children—still an adult. So that's how we got Baba Lyolya. I went with her to ophthalmologists, but they said that it was necessary for the cataract to mature—then they would do a second operation. In the meantime, she worked wonders; she managed to cook dinner and feed Venochky. Valya gave, said, and brought her everything—so she could do everything by touch. Once, after celebrating New Year's Day in 1968, I again took her to the doctor. We got to see the head physician of the department. She carefully examined everything and said: «Well, bring her on Monday for an operation.» And it was Friday that day. From the happiness, I even cried with joy.

The operation was done very well. Already on the table, Baba Lyolya said: «Doctor, I see!» She began to see. She was so glad! During the time after an eye surgery, standing up wasn't allowed for four days—requiring to lie only on the back. We brought food to her. After lying as long as necessary, she returned home. She was also offered by them to remove the lost eye, as it hurt, and put in an artificial one. She agreed. The second operation went well too. Now our grandmother not only began to see, but became beautiful. But not for long, we were glad Aunt Tanya quickly wanted to go home. I had to see her off.

Again, we were left all alone. I went to work every day except Sunday. Sasha still worked at the Lenin Thermal Power Plant. He worked in shifts. We sowed radishes in our garden—large good radishes were grown. There was nowhere to put them, so we sold them in Kirgily—two bundles for 15 kopecks. We also continued to deal with bees. The bees were placed somewhere among the Uzbeks. Sasha bought a car, a GAZ-67. The car was sturdy, reliable, and strong. Sasha could manage it well, since in the army he worked on a GAZ-69. On Saturday, he took me with the children to the apiary — it was a vacation for us. The Uzbek hosts loved us very much and always cooked pilaf for us. The fresh air, the coolness, the garden was so good! The children were running and playing. I helped Sasha work with the bees. In the summer, Mila came to us with Vera. Vera had to continue her studies at school. Mila got a job as a nurse. They started attending a separate church. We still went to the registered one. We really liked their zealous life, a sacrificial life. They attended all the services, and they were with the youth all the time. Both were beautiful. Mila had a nice, long, thick braid. She herself was well built. Dressed well. Vera was very beautiful. She played many instruments. We had a German accordion. She played it so well! She also played the violin. Mila played the guitar. We often sang together with them.

In the fall of 1968, our Valechka went to school. I took her to school 14. This school was built on the place where in my childhood there was a push, where I went to help one grandmother collect her goods in the evening at the end of the bazaar. For this, she would give me something. Sometimes she gave money. Sometimes I would find sewing or machine needles on the floor and bring them to my mother. My mother really needed them. So on this place now stood a beautiful two-story school. The head teacher of the school accepted us, Valya and me. She asked Valya to tell a poem. And she, with enthusiasm and without hesitation, recited a poem: «Here is my village, here is my home, here I am sledding on a steep mountain...». The head teacher praised Valya and took her to the 1st grade. There were no trolleybus roads yet. One could walk or take a bus from Juidam. Valya studied well. From the beginning of the school year, I studied with her for a month, and she quickly mastered reading. She finished the academic year with good grades. The next year, Valya and Anya went to study at the 2nd school. It was not far from the 14th. But it was a specialized school. In it, English began to be studied from the first grade. Lina, Pavlik, and Vena subsequently studied at this school.

We tried to dress the children beautifully. We often bought new things. Sometimes we bought beautiful things at the flea market. I remember all three girls going to church services in the summer wearing white dresses. They also wore them if they went to visit some friends. In 1969, Nadenka was born. She was chubby and had big, pretty eyes. She was also a good commander. She stopped feeding off breast milk when she was just one month old, no matter how hard I tried to feed her. Nothing worked. I had to feed her baby formula. This blend went well with her, and she grew and gained health well. This was our sixth child. Sister Pauline Gordeeva visited our home, and she was from a registered church. She gifted 10 meters of beautiful fabric for diapers and sheets.

In 1970, Mila had a wedding. The Lord sent her a friend for life, her soul mate — Yura Kozubenko. Mila and Vera were brought to our home from church gatherings by two brothers, Yura Kozubenko and Sasha Eremenko,

on motorcycles on behalf of the Church Council. They often visited us. Sasha Eremenko played the accordion very well, and we sang together. Sometimes my husband Sasha taught them to conduct. Sasha's movements were smooth and seemed to work themselves out. Conducting was easy for him. It was harder for Yura, but it was still good. The choir consisted of Mila, Vera, me and Sasha, and of these two future conductors. Both later became choir directors. While Yura was driving Mila, he saw his fate. He proposed to Mila, and she agreed because she liked him as well. My father and mother came to the wedding. Dad had thick, wavy white hair on his head and the same went for his beard. When he walked around Saur-Bulak, everyone greeted him with respect saying, «Domlya» («Teacher»). Then when they found out that this was my dad, they were very happy that I have such a respectable father.

In the village of Saur-Bulak lived mostly Uzbeks, a few Tajiks, and we were the only Russians. Yes, in all my 28 years of work there were only three Russian women who married Uzbeks in this village. One of the guys brought a girl from Ukraine, where he served in the army. The girl was beautiful and smart. This guy told her that he had a house in Ferghana, and that it was very good to live in Uzbekistan. When she arrived, she saw a two-room small cabin. No sewer, no running water. She tried to adapt to this new life but could not. Her mother sent her money, and she went home leaving everything she had brought with her husband. Another woman married an Uzbek and worked with him in the same factory. Her husband was good and diligent. He built a Russian-style one-room house on the mountain, next to his father's plot. They lived there amicably, and their house was tidy. Nonetheless, they lived poorly because sometimes her husband drank. Once I went to them after work to find out how she was feeling, since she was pregnant. I look and the child is lying on the bare floor and she is standing frozen and not able to call for help. The placenta has not come out yet, the umbilical cord hasn't been tied or cut



*Mila's wedding*



either, so I took the baby. The baby was alive — it was a boy. I wiped him with a rag and I took everything I needed out of my suitcase, cut the umbilical cord and bandaged his navel. I wrapped the baby in a diaper and blanket, and I put the mother on a blanket on the floor. Her legs were numb. I pressed her stomach, and the placenta came out. Everything was fine. I washed the mother, cleaned her up and put her on the bed. Then I cleaned up everything on the floor and called an ambulance to take her to the hospital.

At the time, there were no telephones in all of Saur-Bulak village. Every time we had to go to Juidam village to make a call. There was no other way. Many Uzbek women gave birth at home. They called me at night and day. They did not want to go to the hospital, but everything often went well. We were allowed to give certificates to the registry office about the birth of a child. Unfortunately, it was later forbidden to give such certificates, and all women in labor had to go to the hospital, whether they wanted to or not. Young mothers who worked in factories with the Russians were already modern, and went to the hospital themselves. They also learned how to plan children and after three kids they would say, «Seekdir» that is we tired of it, exhausted, or we had enough. I had to talk to many women to avoid abortions. A lot of mothers after giving birth to a child said, «This is your child». But oh how pretty they were — those children! God has always blessed these women, and these children brought joy to the family. The old Uzbeks liked to say, «If God will give a child, He will give him a place in the house, and give him a piece of cake.» This saying is truly right.

As soon as Mila got married, she began to live in an apartment on Vodstroy. They lived amicably. Vera was left to live with us. After finishing school, she went to study at the local technical school in Avvala and graduated with honors.



*Six daughters: Tanya, Valya, Nadya, Anya, Lina and Verochka*

# Family

On November 7, 1970 we celebrated the birth of our daughter whom we named Tanya. She was our seventh child in our growing family. I was 35 years of age and so was Sasha. At that time I was in the prime of my life and quite attractive. I was preparing for discharge from the birth center and dressed into a fitted at the waist green dress with buttons. Despite the scolding for many births, the obstetrician gave me a compliment, “You look like a young bride.” She looked down from the window and saw a handsome man dressed up in black suit with white buttoned shirt and tie. In his hands he was holding a bouquet of flowers and a package. The obstetrician stared at me, “Whose man is this, dressed up and with flowers in his hands?” I looked out of the window and confirmed, “Mine.” She replied, “You’re very lucky. That kind of man can bring up his children.” Yes, this was the truth.

We were happy. Our lives have improved, for Sasha’s income from work has increased. We had our own bees and pigs, and our own big house. Everyone was healthy and thriving. We started attending a conservative church group. While I was staying at the birth center, Sasha informed me that he visited the conservative group and I supported his decision. The church services were organized in the private homes and the pastor was Aleksandr Semenovitch Muhin. The church services were wonderful and were well attended, especially by many young people. We liked that the youth and children were active participants in the services by singing and reciting poetry. The choir was small but had strong voices and was able to sing complicated compositions. Sasha was asked to be the choir director, because their director was quite old and taught by the older standards. Sasha respected his advanced age and hard work; therefore, agreed to work together during choir practices. It was a joyful time for everyone involved. The church services occurred either at Besh-Bole at someone’s house, or at textile place, occasionally on Sasha Ermolov’s property, or at our home. I remember one youth service at the textile place/barn of elder lady Anna Danilovna. I remember my sister Vera preaching on the power of a prayer. The preacher by the name of Yura Kozubenko said a good sermon. A song “Quietly the evening shadows descend” was sung by a husband and wife, Nadezhda and Volodya Okhotin. The youth recited poetry and sung many hymns. We were middle aged, so only youth participated during the youth services.

The Resurrection Sunday was solemnly celebrated. The church service was scheduled at 8 AM. Vera made a pretty text that read “Christ is Risen” from broken glass ornaments; it was hung up on the wall for everyone to see. One special occurrence was participation of our children in this church service, and not just our children. They were saying a poem about flowers and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some were holding a peony, or a daisy, or narcissus and proclaiming about Resurrection. During this special celebration service, pastors prayed over our seven children. A prayer of blessings was prayed over each child separately. Valya was blessed by Ivan Ivanovich Brykov. Over others – Aleksandr Semenovitch Mukhin, Vasiliy Nikitovich Filaretov, Petr Timofeevich Langin, Yuriy Fedorovich Kuksenko. This was a joyous occasion for our family because it was the first time our children received the blessing through pastor’s prayers, on Resurrection Sunday of 1971.

The Lord blessed us – both Sasha and I at work, and children were doing well in school. Our small children caused no trouble at home. I almost never been sick. I remember once in the evening I became feverish. Sasha was working second shift. Children gathered around me, but I was fainting and feeling as if I was falling somewhere... And singing songs... Children could not help me. Sasha came from work and gave me medication, and they were telling him: “Mama got sick, and was very hot and was singing songs.” Praise God, I got well quickly.

In April of 1972 I gave birth to a boy – Vova. This was on Sunday, April the 20th. The day before Sasha drove me to Kirgilinskiy birth center. The midwife gave me an injection to speed up labor, but it was ineffective, and both of us calmly slept through the night. In the morning, after a shift change, I was examined and was told, “You will give birth soon.” I was given some medications to drink. At 11 o’clock my midwife said, “Wait for us, do not give birth yet, let us go and buy a baby stroller right now.” And I said, “No, help me deliver the baby first,



and then you may leave for as long as you want.” I was taken to the birthing table and soon delivered a ball of energy – a very nimble boy.

Arrival of every child to our family was accepted with great joy. All children were healthy, beautiful and smart. We had eight children. Valya was 11 years of age, Anechka – 10, Lina – 9, Pavel – 7, Venya – 5, Nadya – 2.5, and Tanya – 18 months. During the night I got up to attend to three younger children, and in the morning I went to work. Good thing my job was my rest, for I loved my work and performed it with ease and enjoyment. Probably because everyone loved me there. I treated people thoroughly. I tried to help everyone quickly that way everyone was satisfied. To this day I have good and pleasant memories of my job. I’m remembered as well and good wishes are sent by many.

In June of 1973, I gave birth to Vera. She was a chubby, and very calm baby girl. Sasha picked me up from the birth center on a blue motorcycle K-750, with an attached sidecar. Sasha was a good driver. At that time he was a strong and healthy man. He worked as a head manager of a boiler station TEC Lenina. He was respected and loved for his intelligent mind and friendly attitude towards coworkers. He received a new blue car “Zhiguli” from work for which he paid 5,500 rubles. How wonderful it was to own a car. Now Sasha drove us to church and to beekeeping. Before owning a car, we walked through Saur-Bulak, Chim-Kishlak, Besh-Bolu to children’s lessons and to church. Right now I wonder how our children never whined or complained, that it’s far or cold. The walking distance was long, which we walked even in snow. Children’s Bible lessons were led by Lida Kozubenko, whom children loved. She taught them to sing good children’s songs.

We really liked our house. We had a fruitful apple orchard. They were the winter apples, large, juicy and sweet. We wrapped them up into paper and stored them in boxes, from where they would disappear one by one until all gone. Choir practices were scheduled in our home regularly, because we had a large room. We had a piano by the wall, farther off were benches, and there was enough space for all choir participants. The choir has grown and was able to sing concert compositions. We continued to have choir practices in our home for a few years. All choristers walked together to the city. No one owned a car at that time. A few young brothers had a motorcycle. Once we invited the whole youth group for tea and honey. This was a blessed and unforgettable evening! We had many of those wonderful evenings in our lives. In Tashkent, unforgettable evenings were spent with Nikolay Petrovich Khrapov, Mikhail Ivanovich Khorev who was young at that time... I remember how on one of the New Year’s Eve, 17 young people repented and asked God for forgiveness... However, this evening was special... The evening was led by Viktor Brykov, who has already repented and was everyone’s favorite. He explained God’s Word very well and knew the Lord as his Savior. He was a good organizer. Before he was baptized, no one knew he was married and had a son. The brothers from church suggested that he brings his wife and child to live in Fergana, and he did accordingly. We got acquainted with his wife Tonya and his little son, Andrew. At first, they lived together with Sasha’s parents. Tonya started to attend church services. Their baby son looked like an exact copy of his father. So, when we were gathered in our home, the Holy Spirit worked in hearts, one after another people prayed and repented. It seemed the roof will rise from all of the prayers. When prayer ended, everyone cried tears of joy. This special evening is still in our memories.

Then aunt Katya Burtseva suggested for church to gather at her place on a regular basis. At first, a separate group met, but she desired for everyone to meet at her place. Some have stayed with us and some have left; however, the church started having church services at her property up to this day. Choir practices were occurring there also. Our home became more opened for guests.

Our family was big and united. We attended church together with children. All sung well and recited poetry. Sasha and I lived in harmony, loving each other. He took good care of me. For my birthday he bought an imported master bedroom set: two beds with massive bed boards, beautiful closet, two nightstands, and a console mirror. We moved it to the living room, which became our bedroom. Children slept in the other rooms; there was plenty of space. One room was occupied by my sister Vera. There was another spacious room before the living room that we designated as the guest room. We purchased a living room furniture set: sofa, two armchairs, a writing table, console mirror, cabinet with glass doors, and a big drawer. Everything was new and painted into beautiful green color.

# Lyubochka

The year of 1974 became significant by two events – the wedding of my sister Vera (of whom I have written above) and the birth of our tenth child – Lyubochka.

Lyubochka was born on August 25, 1974. Her sister Tanya loved her the most. She was often by her side and repeated her made up name, “Lyubaneska-ska-ska.” Lyubochka would give her a full toothless smile. I was on maternity leave and then on a work leave, then I came back to my job in November. The influenza epidemic started. Full households were in bed with high fevers and in serious health conditions. I left my home at 8 o’clock in the morning and until 9 o’clock at night I made home visits, assisting sick people. Some of the patients were given medications, and to others I wrote pharmacy prescriptions, some were sent to the doctor for signatures for sick leave from their jobs. At the same time, I would administer antipyretic mixtures to bring down fevers, or antibiotics for those who had harder complications. At 9 o’clock in the morning I saw patients at the clinic. There were many sick people, including small children who required a doctor’s note for their schools and the childcare centers. I worked quickly, so patients could be able to go home and rest in their beds. My young assistant opened a small pharmacy in the clinic and had enough supplies of much needed medications. She gave out medications by my prescription, and people paid for them on site. At the time of the pandemic, medications cost pennies. Patients were glad to avoid another stop to the pharmacy. My assistant was the top notch in her cleanliness, and I had no worries regarding the tidiness of my clinic. After appointments, I visited homes that were requested by phone. I came home at about 4 o’clock in the evening. While I was gone, Aunt Tanya looked after my baby Lyubochka and she fed her with formula or baby cereals. Only upon my return, I could of nursed her.



*Sasha and Vera's wedding*



On a Friday, after I returned from my home visits of patients, Aunt Tanya told me that Lyubochka had diarrhea and was vomiting. I decided to take her to the hospital, because I wouldn't be able to take care of her and still be treating patients with influenza. Lyubochka was admitted to the county hospital. Under doctor's orders, we were given a separate two-bedroom room. The doctors often checked on my baby's condition, because she was the smallest patient they had, and she needed much care. The doctor prescribed intravenous glucose and strophanthinum, also he increased her hydration and told me to exclusively breastfeed her. That night went by well. On Saturday morning, the nurse took her away to administer IV (intravenous injection) medications. The nurse returned soon, and put her in the bed and said, "She tolerated the treatment quite well, and didn't even cry." I took Lyubochka in my arms and started talking to her. She smiled in answer. Suddenly the arm where the shot was given, jerked and dropped. The same happened to the other arm. Then my Lyubochka took a deep breath, jerked, and stretched out. She stopped breathing... I screamed. At this time, a doctor was passing by and ran into our room when he heard my scream. He saw the unresponsive baby and started CPR. A nurse ran in with oxygen. Within seconds Lyubochka took a breath and opened her eyes. With joy and relief, I breathed out, "Praise God! She's alive!" At first, everything went well. Lyubochka was calm and breastfed well. Then her stomach became bloated. She was given shots but with no relief. In the evening during a shift change, our doctor, Amina Borievnna Yarmazarskaya came in. She calmed me down, "Do not worry, Lina, wet a small towel in hot water and put it onto her abdomen. Everything will be fine." I followed her advice. Now all the doctors were checking in on my baby's condition. On Sunday, her stomach appeared to be better. After the evening church service, Sasha visited us in the hospital. I informed him of Lyubochka's improvement and requested to bring some dill water on Monday morning as early as possible. Around 10 PM, Lyubochka's temperature was checked and she had a fever of 38.5 C. I called Dr. Amina Borievnna. She listened to my baby's lungs and said that there was no abnormal sounds but she was certain that it was the start of pneumonia. She said, "Lina, this is it. Now we cannot help you. Such small children cannot handle pneumonia. She probably got a cold from the compresses. Be strong!" She killed me with her conclusions. I stayed up with my child for the whole night, not closing my eyes even for even a second. I thought that she almost stopped breathing... She was dying... I listened – she was still breathing. The sleepless night passed by in weariness and waiting.



*Lyubochka*

A 3-month-old boy from Avval was brought in during the night. A young mom with her firstborn. Since the doctors have been frequently checking Lyubochka, the woman with her child was put in the same room with us on the second bed. The baby was chubby and beautiful. He was short of breath, restless, and screaming. The mom tried to breastfeed him, but he cried and refused. He was given injections. Other doctors came to consult and stated that, "He has bilateral inflammation of lungs. Septic pneumonia. The baby was brought in too late..." At about 5 o'clock in the morning the baby boy died... The mom was in grief and confusion. She requested to call the postal office in Avval to inform relatives, so they could pick her up with the dead baby. The postal office was silent. Uzbeks do not allow autopsy. In this case, it was for the benefit of the doctors, because not a single hospital wanted to register another death case under their care. One nurse advised this young mother by saying, "Wrap the baby in the blanket, I will open the side door, and you can run with the baby; otherwise, they will cut the baby." The mother agreed. The public buses start working at 6 AM. She left the hospital around 6 AM with a swaddled dead child, so she can ride home on the early bus. Poor woman... I felt my skin crawling from that kind of treatment.

It became very quiet in our hospital room. Lyubochka calmly slept. I didn't take away my eyes off her... On Monday morning, the shift changed, and a large Russian woman nurse picked up Lyubochka for more injections. I was left behind in the room. Sasha came in and saw me alone, he was afraid and asked, "Where's Lyubochka? She died?" I replied no and explained that she was taken for more injections. We could hear loud crying from the treatment room. I told him how last evening Lyubochka had a high fever and Dr. Amina Borievna diagnosed it as pneumonia and promised no more hope... I told him of the sleepless night, and the little boy dying. He became upset. Then Lyubochka was brought in. It seemed that she cried a lot while getting the injections; she was all blue, barely alive... Upon seeing her in this condition, Sasha was not feeling well... We gave her my breastmilk from a teaspoon. She swallowed it with difficulty. Sasha brought me the dill water. I put a small amount in a teaspoon and tried to give it to her; however, she could not swallow, so the dill water came out from her mouth... With our own eyes we saw her take her last breath and then stiffen up. How Sasha cried! I however had no strength to cry... We waited some time, sitting by her, but she has passed away into eternity... The Lord took our precious child, the tenth child. Our other children were all growing up healthy, almost no one was never hospitalized. The hospital was not able to treat her but only helped her die... I could not believe that my Lyubochka was no longer with us. The doctor came and took away our baby. They instructed us to come back after 4 PM, but for right now they will perform the autopsy. On Friday I came with a child, and on Monday I left without one. Sasha told me, "We shouldn't have gone to the hospital. Lyubochka would not be dead." It was too late to say something... The fate of a human is in the Lord's hands.

In the beginning of our married life, when Valya was a year old, she had multiple teeth growing all at once. She also had diarrhea and we were admitted to a hospital with a diagnosis of dyspepsia. She got well quickly. I made gamma globulin injections for her and after a few injections, she got her strength back. On the day of discharge from the hospital, a tragic incident happened before our own eyes. A few mothers with children as well as I were sitting on the benches by the fence. The older children were playing with a ball nearby. An ambulance drove in through the gate. After stopping for a short time, the driver started to back up. At this time the ball rolled towards the ambulance. One Uzbek boy ran after the ball and got hit by the car. He was only 3 years old. He was brought to a hospital at the same time as us. His liver was enlarged after being sick with hepatitis and a doctor transferred him to a long-term treatment for his liver. The mother had left him at the hospital with his older sister who was 12 years of age. When children were playing, the sister was sitting beside us and read a book, and when the boy was hit by the vehicle, she ran to her brother. He died immediately and did not even cry out. He was assessed by the doctors who have determined that his liver had burst upon impact. His mother was notified and oh how she screamed and cried! Poor mother wanted her child to just receive treatment and recover, but he found his death in the hospital...

Other than Lyubochka I never had to stay in the hospital with any of my other children. Praise God, all my other children were healthy!



On Wednesday we held a funeral for Lyubochka. The casket was small enough to fit into a small car. A small procession of eleven cars drove to the cemetery. In the front yard of our home we held a goodbye service. I was grateful to our Lord, because during the funeral I felt sincere love from our brothers and sisters in Christ. I always remember the preacher Vasiliy Nikitovich Filaretov when he said that the Lord loves Lyubochka more than any other child. He took her to heaven. She did not feel grief or worry and not even sickness. Those words had brought me peace. Lyubochka was buried at the old cemetery by the fence where Valya and Kolya were also buried. After the funeral, for a long time, I could not get used to the idea that my child has gotten the eternal life before us. When no one was home, I cried and grieved. I wrote a letter to my papa and mama about our grief. How painful it was to carry this burden of loss. My father replied with a comforting letter saying that these are our first birds of our family that flew away to heavens. (My sister's Mila first son has also passed away). Papa wrote that it is their turn to follow their grandchildren to heaven.

Next year, March of 1975, my papa became sick. He had trouble getting his food down his esophagus. After multiple tests, the doctors diagnosed him with a benign tumor of esophagus. He started radiation treatments for his tumor. Prior to radiation, he walked by himself without any assistance, but after the radiation he became bedridden and never stood up again. Mila and Vera flew to Kustanay to visit our sick Papa. In June, I received a letter from Mama, requesting to visit Papa while he is alive. Sasha agreed that my visit to papa is necessary. My directing doctor also approved my leave, but asked to turn in the semi-annual report before my departure. I completed the report immediately and left for the approved two weeks leave.

First, I took the train to Tashkent. I arrived at the airport right when they announced the boarding of the plane to Kustanay. The cashier at the window said that no tickets are available for the next two weeks. With tears in my eyes, I explained that my father is dying, and I need to fly out immediately. He took my money and asked for an additional charge, then gave me a ticket. I was grateful to him! Praise the Lord that He had softened his heart to give me the ticket. I ran to the boarding gate. The plane arrived to Kustanay when it was already dark. I took a bus to the post office, and from there I walked a well-known path to my home. I reached my parent's home quickly. I knocked on the door and no one answered. I was afraid to enter, because of a shepherd dog in the yard.



*Lyubochka's funeral*

The only lights that were on were in the upper room. I tried to quietly walk into the front door. The dog did not bark. I walked into the door and it wasn't locked, so I let myself in. No one was at home and I went up the stairs to the second floor. The door to my papa's room was opened and the lights were on. When papa saw me, he smiled, "Angelinochka, is this really you? How did you get here? God has sent you..." I hugged and kissed him. He was all white. The thick hair on his head was all white, long white beard, white clothing and snow-white bedding. Papa asked me to tell him about my travel. I told him of my travels. He grinned with gladness. I asked, "Where's mama?" Papa replied that she had to work to replace him. Besides his retirement money, they needed a little extra money for some good deeds. My dad used to have a side job as a security guard in a warehouse. He would take his shepherd with him, a transistor through which he listened to Christian programs, and this way he worked nights, and my mother was at home. Now, my dad was at home and mom went off to work. During the day, she was completely occupied, taking care of her husband. Besides his problems with esophagus, he also suffered from severe pains in his lower back and his right leg. He had such pains as if his flesh was being torn in pieces. He massaged his muscles, rubbed it with different ointments, but there was no relief. It was very difficult for mom to carry such a load on her own. Their sons had their own families, their worries, their work. They visited dad every day, but the whole burden laid down on my mother.

After weeks of being exhausted with work and my dad's care, my mother got the idea from the Lord to write me a letter, so I came to see my dad while he was still alive. And the Lord helped to arrange everything wonderfully. How much joy it was for dad! He said: "At least mom could get a little bit of help. She's so tired of me. I would be glad not to bother her, but I have such severe pains, as if wolves are gnawing my live meat. It's so difficult for me. Nothing helps. Vienna and Volodya visits every day. They bring fresh fruits, berries, chicken. But I don't need anything. I can't eat anything except for 1-2 tablespoons of broth and 1-2 tablespoons of some kind of juice."

"Okay daddy, I'm glad that I can give my mom some rest. I can stay here for two weeks and I will take care of you. I will let my mother rest. What can I do for you now?" "Daughter, I'm all burning, as if I'm on fire. Please take some cold water and wash my face and hands." I went downstairs. I quickly took a jug of cold water, a basin and a towel and returned to him. It was a pleasure for me to help him by cooling him down with cold water. I wetted his hair and washed his face, beard and hands. After that, I rubbed him well with a towel. Then daddy asked me to rub his right shin with tiger ointment. It is where he had the terrible pains.

Mom came home from work in the morning and she cried when she saw me, I hugged her, kissed her and said: "Mommy, I have arrived. Now I will take care of dad, have breakfast and go rest." "Thank you," my mother said, "I cried when I went to work last night. My children scattered in all directions, my husband is sick, and I no longer have the strength. But now, thank God, it turns out that you were already on your way to our place."

I started my duties. There was no rest either day or night. When dad closed his eyes and fell asleep, I had to run to wash his clothes. It was all white, almost pure, but it still had to be changed often. I had to cook the chicken broth and make juice. I fed my dad myself. When I was able to manage faster, I went to bed in the next room to rest couple minutes. Falling asleep, I could already hear my dad calling me. I would get up, put therapeutic bottles on his back and on his leg. I had to apply mustard plasters, rub his muscles with various ointments, and warm it up with a heating pad, hot sand, or salt. I tried everything that was possible to compose. I felt exhausted. I was pregnant, in the second half of the term. I had little Sasha under my heart. All of a sudden the Lord overshadowed me to ask dad about his notes about his life. He was delighted and told me where to find these books. I found them in the attic, hidden in a secret place. We got them in time, because after my dad passed away, no one would be able to find them. My dad died four days after my departure.

I began to read my dad's notes to my dad himself. They turned out to be stronger than any medicine. When I read to him aloud – he was listening quietly, smiling, and explaining details to me. Then he would slowly fall asleep. His sleep was calm, peaceful and longer than usual. During this time I tried to do a lot of things, and sometimes even had some time to rest. I started reading one small notebook, from which I learned everything about my father's relatives. And about our family when we were still very small. Then I read five large notebooks, where dad described his youth in the village of Varaksino in Siberia. It was about his life when he was imprisoned,



about preacher's courses in Moscow. He wrote about how these courses were distressed and all teachers were imprisoned, and then the students were imprisoned also. I especially liked the fourth book. All five books were titled "God's Will or Destiny." Indeed, THE FATE OF MAN IS FROM THE LORD. From a small book I learned that my father's ancestors lived in Belarus. My dad's name was Vladimir. Daddy's dad was named George (in the popular way, Yegor). Father's grandfather's name was Titus. Daddy's great-grandfather had a brother Ivan. He was a strong man. He cracked nuts between his fingers. The family was well respected. In the village, they were chiefs. And their last name was Starovoitov. One time this great-grandfather's brother chopped the nuts with his forehead, then everyone started calling him Lobeco. After that, one branch of kinship has remained Starovoitov, and the other - LOBKOV. Papa's relatives have already were known as Lobkov. They lived well in Belarus. The whole family lived together. If the family would divide, they would become poor. Therefore, the family decided to move to Siberia. First, they sent 'walkers' there. They found a suitable place where they began to build houses is the village of Varaksino - the owner's name of this place, who sold them the land with the wagon.

My dad was born in Siberia in 1902. Since 1925, dad lived in Omsk, attended a church community there. It was a very good community. In 1928, he went to Bible courses that were held in Moscow. The teachers were Pavel Vasilievich Ivanov-Klyshnikov, Pavel Yakovlevich Datsko, Vasily Ivanovich Sinitsyn, Nikolay Vasilievich Odintsov. They were teachers with deep knowledge, and the youth eagerly absorbed this knowledge. But soon the teachers were arrested and the courses were closed. Everyone went home. Daddy returned to the village Usovka, where he lived before, and there he was arrested on February 14, 1930. He sat in Mariinsk prison.

## God's Will or Destiny

In his five-volume book series, "God's Will or Destiny," Dad describes his life from a young age. He writes about the youth of the village of Usovka, about the church, and the choir of young brothers and sisters, which he organized and to which he was elected as choir director. He could play the violin a little. The youth loved him.

Dad had a friend, Tima. One time, he and Tima both went to propose to two sisters. They invited the sisters for a stroll in the forest; Dad proposed to Dusya, and Tima proposed to Dusya's sister. Neither Dad, nor Tima succeeded. Dusya was silent for a long time, then told Dad that she respected him, but she could not marry him because her heart was silent. Dad did not expect such an answer, and was very upset. He and Dusya silently returned home. Tima also returned upset. He also did not receive a "yes." He and Dad were both upset, but accepted it as from the Lord.

The book series also describes a New Year's Eve on which there was a new girl, who had a short, masculine haircut, and was dressed in a men's suit. She played the guitar well. That evening there were many poems recited, duets and solos sung, and there was still time until midnight. Someone proposed to write wishes



*Father in prison. Mariinsk, 1932*



*Mom in 1932*



*Mom and dad*



to each other for the New Year. A “postman” was chosen, and he was given the wishes to distribute to the correct addressee.

That evening, Dad received many wishes. The young friends wished each other abundant blessings from the Lord, wished many to improve, to become more zealous and kinder. Someone wished for Dad to choose one sister and marry her, rather than try dating the girls one by one, as each girl dreams of something. That is when he began having feelings for this new sister, Olya. Dad thought they were meant for each other; however, when Dad was imprisoned, she quickly forgot him and married an unbeliever. Feelings can be so deceiving...

While in the Mariinsky Prison, Dad searched for the whereabouts of his sister Marusya, since he had no correspondence with her. One of the brothers-in-Christ who also imprisoned with him, recommended he write a letter to Pasha Ogorodnikova, so that she could find Marusya and send him her address. Dad did so.

Soon the answer arrived from Pasha with Marusya's address. Papa became interested in his correspondence with Pasha. He began to write her, and she regularly answered him. Then these letters became desirable for both. Without seeing each other, without exchanging photos, they got a feeling of mutual love. Eventually, Dad proposed to Pasha by mail.

It was hard for Mom to write “yes,” because Dad was in prison. She prayed and fasted; God set her heart to this imprisoned brother, and she decided to share the bonds with him, sending her written consent. Her letter arrived at the home address of Dad's friend. The postman asked the friend's wife, «Does Lobkov live here?»



*My father's funeral*



She replied, “No.” And then, remembering that Lobkov was a friend of her husband, she ran, caught up with the postman and took the letter from him.

Later, the friend often told Dad, «Had it been a little longer, the heartfelt “yes” of your bride would have been returned back to her.» Following this letter, Dad and Mom exchanged photos. Both were satisfied; both were beautiful, and both were sincere Christians. At the first meeting, having finally seen each other, they realized that the photo does not correspond to even a hundredth of the beauty that they found in each other. Both were grateful to the Lord for the fate that He had destined for them.

In 1932, they decided to get married. Dad obtained a leave with permission to go into town. Mom came to dad. An elderly pastor from Mom’s church arrived and they were married in the apartment of an elderly brother-in-Christ, in Mariinsk. There were no guests at the wedding besides the owner of the apartment. Nobody sang a single hymn to them, although Dad was a choir director and Mom was a soloist in the choir. After the marriage, the elderly pastor returned home, and, after staying a few days with Dad, Mom also went home... From then on, they already understood what it meant that the “two had become one” - all thoughts were now about each other, and the desire was only to be together.

In 1933, their first son, Veniamin, was born in Mariinsk. As there was a famine in 1933, my mother went to the village and sewed for people there; the fee was paid in produce. For three months of work, Mom earned four bags of potatoes, two bags of flour, some lard and butter. In 1934, Dad was released from prison; the five years in prison were finally concluded... At first, Dad and Mom went to Novorossiysk, but the city authorities gave Dad twenty-four hours to leave the city.

They moved to Krasnodar. Dad was permitted to live there; his documents were issued and he found a job. Here, in Krasnodar, one could somehow live; other places were much worse. People collapsed on the way to work and died from hunger; entire villages died out. People ate dogs and cats. Some went to the villages, hoping to exchange their belongings for groceries. In some villages, all people died and only empty houses remained.

I was born in Krasnodar in 1935. Dad named me Angelina. It was also a precious gift from God. Dad and Mom were both young, very fond of each other, and delighted in their beautiful babies... Soon, my parents moved to Alma-Ata as some of our relatives lived there. Dad got a job and they gave him an apartment. In 1937, Dad was again sentenced for ten years under Article 58, and Mom was left alone once more, now with two children. From Alma-Ata, mom moved to Biysk, and from there, in 1939, we moved to Ferghana. This, of course, is all brief story. Dad wrote a lot about his life, and when I was there when he was sick, I read to him with emotion, so that the precious time was stretched, and it was enough for me to read through the whole duration of my vacation.

After spending two weeks there, I flew to Ferghana on a Saturday. Prior to my departure, Dad gave me one thousand rubles which was to be a donation to printing Bibles and Christian magazines. Dad also wanted me to ask our church to pray for him - that the Lord would either take him, or that the pains be soothed somehow. Upon my arrival in Ferghana, I handed the funds over to the church for printing, and on Sunday morning, I asked the church to pray for dad.

On Wednesday night, Dad passed away. At 2 a.m., when Mom checked on him, Dad was still alive, and at 3 a.m. he had quietly slipped into eternity... He was buried on July 11, 1975 in Kustanai, the city of exiles, at the age of 73 years. None of us were able to attend the funeral; it was good that Mila, Vera, and I were able to visit him when he was alive, though sick. Veniamin, Volodya, and their families buried Dad. My father’s sister, Aunt Marousia, and her husband were also able to attend the funeral.

Dad’s passing took a hard toll on Mom. She became sick and was hospitalized. When she recovered, she was brought to Ferghana, where she lived another three years after dad’s passing.

On November 2, 1975, another son was born to us - Sasha. He was born large and was strong. He was calm and nursed well too. However, a month after we came from the hospital, his temperature began to rise, reaching above 39 degrees. I decided to return to the hospital again, although my husband Sasha did not agree. I was admitted to our Yarmazar hospital. Baby Sasha’s fever was brought down by a lytic mixture, but his temperature continued to hold at 37.4–37.7 for a whole month. We even decided to test his blood for staphylococcal sepsis.

During this time, we went to visit Mom and Dad. They had a hot sauna heated up and I decided to take Sasha into the sauna. I poured water on the hot stones and the dry heat rose to the top. I then picked up Sasha and held him near the top of the room. I did this several times. From that day, baby Sasha's temperature returned to normal, and he recovered.

On March 1976, we sold our house in Juidam to a neighbor's brother for 14,000 rubles and temporarily moved in with my Mom and Dad. We were looking for a house in the city, as our older girls had already grown up, and it was dangerous for them to return home late. We saved money to buy a new car and were able to collect 5000 rubles, so at that time we have already accumulated 19,000 rubles. We were looking for a suitable house, but were unable to find one, so we lived with our parents.

July 25, 1976 was Sasha's birthday. That day he worked in the second shift. He was supposed to finish his shift at midnight and return home. It was already one hour past midnight, but he still had not returned. Soon it was 2 a.m., then 3 a.m. and he still had not arrived, nor did we receive a call from work. We no longer knew what to do. Finally, after three in the morning, we received a call from his work and were informed, "Your husband suffered severe burns and is now in the hospital on the Frunze massif. You can only visit him early in the morning."

Sasha's dad and I decided to take the first trolleybus. We arrived very early. The hospital was quiet and everyone was still asleep. We went up to the 4th floor and went into the trauma unit. We were escorted to the room where Sasha was lying. There were several more patients in the room. Sasha was restless; he had a very high temperature and was covered in bandages... Seeing us, he tried to smile. Sasha's father prayed and thanked God that we were able to see him alive. He also asked God to save Sasha's life for the sake of our small children, for the sake of our large family, as we already had ten children. After that, Sasha's father left, and I stayed to look after Sasha. I was constantly with him for a month.

At first, I petitioned the head of the department to transfer Sasha to a separate ward. There was an available ward with room for two patients, but they did not want to offer it to us, since one man died recently in that ward from a burn. We agreed to that room nonetheless, because Sasha needed peace. At a Wednesday church service, Sasha's father requested that the church pray for Sasha, so that God would save his life and give him healing. On Thursday, a church brother arrived at Sasha's room early in the morning and brought a liter-sized jar of ointment. He said it was a very good ointment for burns. A bandage oiled with this ointment did not stick to the burn surface, and changing dressings was very easy and not so painful. He recommended changing the dressings each day. I thanked the brother for his care, not knowing at that time that this ointment would bring so much benefit, that thanks to the ointment, such a severe burn will not even leave scars, and Sasha will be able to walk.

In general, doctors change dressings once every three days. Other ointments dry during this time, the bandage becomes soaked in the body's burn liquid and adheres to the wound. When changing dressings, the bandage is torn off, along with the scab; the wounds bleed, and the patient experiences unbearable pain, despite the fact that painkillers injections are administered before changing of the dressing. To begin using our new ointment with the dressings, we needed to get permission from our doctor who was the head of the department. People from Sasha's workplace originally wanted to send him by plane to Leningrad to the burn center, but the head of the department decided to keep him. I began to lubricate Sasha's burns where the bandage could be slightly peeled back. I applied it on his hands, on his legs, on his stomach. There was no negative reaction, and I asked the doctor for permission to dress the wounds with our new ointment. He examined the ointment and allowed to try.

At this time, my mother became ill; she was suffocating and needed to be given injections of aminophylline. I asked the head of the cardiology department, which was adjacent to the burn ward where Sasha was being treated, to admit my mother for treatment. The manager was a very kind, compassionate woman. She agreed to admit Mom into her unit. This allowed my mother to receive specialized care, and, at the same time, she could visit me twice a day and help me with dressing Sasha's burns. Mom would come in at five in the morning, when all the doctors and nurses were asleep, and we would dress Sasha's wounds. In the morning, we bandaged the upper body, arms, stomach, and chest. In the evening, when all the doctors went to bed, we bandaged the second half of Sasha's body, his buttocks, and legs. It was especially difficult to bandage the soles of the feet; there was no living tissue on them. Everything was burnt; there was nothing to hold on to the leg to lift it. I don't know how



Mom managed to hold the edge of the heel so that we could raise Sasha's leg and bandage it. And so, she and I bandaged Sasha daily twice a day for a month.

Sasha could only lay in the hospital bed; he could neither sit nor get up. His temperature was above 39 degrees and did not drop for 18 days. Several times there was an allergic reaction; once from an infusion of plasma – the medical staff put Sasha on an IV drip and left. Sasha began to choke and tell me: “Lina, why did you open the window? I have caught a cold and can't breathe...” I looked at him, and a rash appeared on his face - big blisters and so many of them... I called a doctor - he immediately stopped the plasma infusion and began to infuse calcium chloride. Sasha gradually got better. After a month of treatment, fresh, very delicate skin appeared on Sasha's feet. If he lowered his legs down, then they became crimson with blood. Despite the pain, Sasha left the room himself and walked down the corridor. The doctor saw him and praised him.

And at that moment Sasha requested to be released home. The doctor thought for some time and said: «If the district doctor agrees to watch call on Sasha at home, I will release him.» The district doctor agreed, and we were released home. Sasha could only sit in a chair or lay in bed. His dressings were changed daily. The dear brother supplied us with ointment until Sasha fully recovered. Brothers and sisters obtained sunflower oil, beekeepers donated good bees wax, and we bought red onions at the bazaar. All this was done by the brothers and sisters themselves; they exhibited great care, sourced the needed ingredients, and the brother prepared the ointment. May the Lord reward him in heaven for this great deed that he has done for our family! Also a young sister named Tatyana Kulikova constantly brought us fresh dressings. May the Lord also repay her for her good deed, which she did for us! Who would run around, find, and source all the supplies we needed? She knew what we needed and brought it to us. We never had an interruption in the supply of ointment or in the dressing material.

Now Sasha could rest at home in the presence of family, children and parents. Brothers and sisters began to visit him more frequently, although many also visited him in the hospital. Just at that time, Alexander Semyonovich Mukhin was released from prison; he and his wife, Valya, also came to visit Sasha.

A month later, Sasha returned to work. Everyone at work was surprised that he remained alive, and even more so at his rapid recovery. Sasha told everyone that it was God who helped him recover so quickly, since everyone prayed for him.

## The New House

We harvested honey, and I went to the head physician of the city's veterinary station to receive permission for turning it in. The head physician told me that she knows of a house for sale that will be suitable for our big family. The house was located next to the house where her mother lived. We found the address and right away went to take a look at it; Sasha, his father, and myself. The owner of the house wasn't home, but the girls – her daughters – allowed us to take a look inside. After seeing it, Sasha's father told him: “Buy this house regardless of the price.” That evening we met up with the owner. She worked as a teacher at the school and her husband was a professor at a polytechnic university. He was in Andijan at the time. The wife called him and he said he will come on Friday and would like to meet with us. Friday morning, he called and invited us over. We had 5,000 rubles saved for the purchase of a new car and we sold our house in Dzhuizdam for 14,000 rubles. Sasha's dad gave us a thousand rubles for his funeral fund. Therefore, we had 20,000 rubles total. That was all we had. When we came to meet with the owner of the house, he invited us into the living room. We couldn't get enough of this beautiful big room: 10 meters in length and 5 meters in width. We sat in the chairs. The owner told us that Jews were giving him 35,000 rubles, but his wife didn't agree to sell it then. What will you give? Sasha said that we can't give that much. Right now, we have 20,000 rubles and in a matter of a week, we can borrow another 8,000 from friends. So, we can buy it for 28,000. The owner thought about it for what seemed a long time, then said, “Okay. I really like you. You are good people, I've been told about you. You have a lot of children. I will sell it to you. Okay, 28,000 and you pay all the fees.” We agreed. He took us into his car and we went to work on the documents.



*Our house in Fergana*

It was already 2 PM. First, we went to the City's Finance Department to get a certificate for sale. Then we went to another department where we received a permit. Lastly, we went to the Notary, where we were already expected. They took our passports and began to work out the purchase contract. Here we found out that we cannot have a single owner for this house – the square footage was too big. So, we went home, brought dad, and completed paperwork for the house under his and my name. In such a way, we became owners of a new house that we really liked in a matter of hours. Then, we drove to the bank with the original owner to put the money into his account. He told us, “we will move out of the house by next Friday, so you can start moving in on Saturday. The rest of the money you can give to my daughter. She takes care of the home and finances.” That is how we received a house from God, in which we lived and rejoiced for many years; from September, 1976 until March, 1995, a full 19 years, up until we moved to the United States. Right now, our older son Paul and his family live there.

When we moved into our new house, our family consisted of 12 people: Sasha, me and our 10 children. Sometime later, we took Sasha's parents to live with us – now there were 14 of us. We gave a separate room to mom and dad. Also, we had mom's sister – aunt Tanya – that makes 15 people. Sometimes my mom would live with us too – that's 16 people. Oftentimes, Sasha's brothers, Ben and Volodya, would stay with us. So, our house would host up to 18 people, and we lived very happily. I took care of mom, since she was paralyzed, and had a very hard time moving her left leg with help of another person. In the morning before work, I took her out into a veranda, put her in a chair, and fed her. Sasha often took me to work, but if he wasn't home, I walked to the station, then took a trolley to Saur-Bulak, and walked the rest of the way to the clinic.

I worked the same shift – from 9 in the morning until noon. I triaged patients, then I would also do all kinds of other work – home visits, visitations of work groups, and prophylactic immunizations. Sometimes Sasha would come for me and we drove together in his car. Other times, I would run around on my own and do what needed to be done. Once a week we had short meetings. We would report various accomplishments of our work and receive new tasks for the upcoming week. All work was evenly distributed throughout the schedule. This was very convenient for me, the workforce, and the patients. Everyone knew which days I worked, and this allowed me to do what needed to be done in an efficient manner. On a typical day I visited patient homes, then field workers, later hospitalized patients, and finally scheduled children's immunizations. I had many other types of interesting jobs, but this was my typical routine. Sometimes, the health department would come to check in on our clinic, and we prepared for this. Our clinic was always exemplary. They always praised me, saying that my clinic was always clean, I always had all necessary medications, and a lot of educational material.

Things at home were good too. In the new house we now had a water heater, a bathtub, and a septic system; although, the restroom was outside for some reason. We were happy that our parents lived with us. Aunt Tanya helped us a lot too. She often cooked and washed the dishes. The children washed the floors and cleaned around the house. I would do laundry myself and sometimes my mom would also help. When my mom was over, she would clean up all the closets, and carefully fold all the clothes, especially those that belonged to the kids, and did the laundry herself. We used that same washer "Kirgizia," because it worked well and didn't break.

Sasha's father was a very good Christian. As I remember his life, I want to be more like him. He was a good example to me. He read the Bible daily. Every year he would read through the Bible from start to finish. He would spend a long time in prayer for all the children and other needs. He was always wonderfully peaceful and calm. He lived through many pains and difficulties, yet he never complained, but endured everything with meekness and humility. He never raised his voice at anybody. Dad never missed church meetings. Before, when he still had bees, he would finish his work with them on time to make it to church. He had one more very good quality about him; he never did anything without prayer. He had great love for his mother throughout his entire life. Back when we lived apart, he would come every year for a visit and would bring a bag of chocolate candies for our children and would ask us to remember his mom and celebrate her birthday. He said that his mom was very nice and kind. Dad treated me very well, and it was easy for me to live in their home, in their family. He tried to make mom's last days as pleasant as possible.

He would buy things for her to make her happy. Mom also was never a great burden for us, even though she was paralyzed. She always enjoyed the food she was given. She was always clean. She never grumbled, never asked for anything. I often bathed her, and that wasn't a hard task for me at all.

Unexpectedly, mom got sick with pneumonia and passed away shortly thereafter. We didn't expect that she would leave us so soon. She had no obvious symptoms of pneumonia at first, it just seemed to be a mild cold. And then all of a sudden, she died on March 2. The funeral went really well. We invited all the neighbors that lived close to her. It was the year 1977. Three days later, our daughter Natasha was born. I wanted to call her Maria after grandma, but all the children had already said before, that if we have a girl to call her Natasha, so we did.

That year went by peacefully. In place of grandma, Pavlik moved in with grandpa to keep him company. Dad's sons – Volodya and Ben often visited him. We lived well. The children had bikes. Pavlik got a new bicycle. He was so happy and enjoyed riding it. One time, the children were riding and went to the store to buy something. Lena and Valya went inside while Pavlik stayed outside to watch the bikes. The girls weren't coming out for a while, so Pavlik decided to go inside to check on them. They were already on their way out.

When they came out – Pavlik's bicycle was gone. Someone stole it in that short time. Oh, was he ever worried! Grandpa saw how he was searching for his bike in his sleep. To save him from more worries, he bought him a new one.

Dad began to miss mom a lot. His health began to decline. He would often get high blood pressure. One time he was hospitalized in Kirgil for hypertension after eating dumplings at auntie Uliasha's. Having a feeling that he would pass soon after mom, he began urging me to change the house paperwork all into my name. We needed a permit from the city to allow such a big house to be registered under one owner. We were able to receive





*Funeral of Sasha's father*

such permission and completed the paperwork. After we finished filing that documentation, he soon passed away. About two months before his death he stopped talking and moving. We called an ambulance. They advised us to call a neurologist. After examining him, she said there is nothing that can be done to help. He may very likely die by evening. We all sat around him. To our great joy, he got better by the evening. He got up and began talking again. It was a miracle to all of us. We could hardly believe it. But that was the reality that God granted to us for a short time. We all rejoiced, since we loved dad very much and he was a very desirable presence in our home. The children loved him too. I tried to force him to stay in bed for at least a couple of weeks. Thus, dad lived with us for another two months.

One time, we came home from the morning church service. Pavlik was home with grandpa. Suddenly, he ran out in tears and said, "Grandpa is dying!" I ran to his side. I looked at him – his arms and legs were already turning blue, he wasn't talking but rather, just laid there motionless. I immediately gave him a Cordiamine shot. Slowly the blue color started to fade away, his arms, legs, and face began turning pink again. His heart started working again. He lived paralyzed for another month. Ben, Sasha's brother, was always with dad, taking care of him. We also helped when we could. We often changed his linens. It was summer, so laundry dried fast. We washed everything in the washer. Aunt Uliasha, dad's sister, was visiting her children at the time, so we sent her a message to come home as soon as possible. Dad went into eternity without saying another word. A while ago, he asked me to sing this song at his funeral: "Your city isn't here in the midst of dead dessert, where sinful passions rule, where hearts darkened by disbelief are sinking into the hugs of sly nets... oh no! You are only a traveler here to the heavenly city; whose builder is God. He is your rest and joy in the sad valley of trials..." The funeral went by well. There were a lot of people. Like mom, dad was also buried at the new cemetery.

We didn't even have time to return tables and benches from the funeral, when exactly a week later, my mom died. My sister Vera with Sasha and their children decided to move to Herson. Mom stayed with us. She was supposed to live with us and with my sister Mila. That night she stayed at Mila's place. Vera already purchased tickets, sold their house, and moved mom's belongings into our house. They spent the night with the Lebedev family. In the morning, as I was getting ready for work, someone knocked at our gate. Sasha came out to find Mila

crying and saying, "Mom died." I heard it and began crying too. Mila told us that around seven she woke up and found mom awake, sitting on her bed. Mila asked, "Mom, do you need anything?" She replied, "No I don't. Sleep peacefully." Mila went back to sleep. But soon she woke up again. She looked - mom was still sitting on the bed, with one leg hanging down, she was already dead, and the children were still asleep. Yura was on a work trip. She left the children alone and ran to our house to tell us and to let Vera know not to leave. We sent Pavlik to Lebedev's residence to inform Vera, while Sasha took Mila and myself back to her house to get mom dressed. Mila and I washed and dressed her and put her on the bed. We decided to have a funeral at our place. It was hot so the funeral was scheduled for the next day. We sent urgent notices to Ben and Volodya. The brothers quickly made a casket. Mom was placed in it and the casket was moved to our place. We had the service in the evening. Vera postponed her departure. Ben flew in the next morning. Volodya and his wife flew in to Tashkent, but couldn't fly to us for the lack of flights going our direction. We waited for them until four o'clock and decided to go through with the funeral. It was very hot, so we had to say our goodbyes and close the casket. Then she was buried.

Volodya and Sveta came the following day. We went with them to the cemetery. They spent a little more time visiting with us and then went back. Vera and Sasha also left with their children. They changed their route. They first went back to Kustanai, where they fixed up and sold our parents' house. They divided the money evenly among the children as an inheritance from our parents, 1000 rubles each.

With that thousand rubles, we purchased half a house that belonged to Volodya. Volodya, Sasha's brother, also died that same year 1978 in September. As we found out later, one young gypsy man murdered him in a public restroom near the sauna on Communist street. He died from seven stab wounds from a knife. People who knew him and our family told us about what happened. We drove to the scene and yes, it was Volodya. We called the police. They looked at everything, examined the scene and took him to the morgue. When they gave permission to have a funeral, we had it at our house. All of the relatives got together, and we had a meal together after the funeral. We had a memorial service for him. He was a simple man, harmless. He got married, had a son. He's a



*Funeral of my mother*



good boy, the same age as our Anichka. Life didn't go as planned for some reason and they soon got a divorce. Vera, his wife, later got remarried to another man who raised the boy. As for Volodya, he lived the remainder of his short life alone. He often came and visited us, especially when Sasha's parents still lived with us. After his death, Vera did the paperwork for his half of the house to go to his son, then sold it to us for 1000 rubles. They were okay with that and so were we. A thousand rubles was fairly significant money back then

In the other half of the house lived Ben – Sasha's brother. He was a decent man. He finished school, went to study at a Petroleum college and graduated with really good grades. He stayed single and never got married. When he started making some money, he got addicted to alcohol. After he finished college, Sasha helped him get a job at his work. He worked really well at first. But later he began showing up to work under the influence of alcohol. This was strictly prohibited at work. Sasha had to stand up for him, but after a few violations, he was fired. When he had no money to afford a living, he would come and live with us. He helped with the bees and around the house. He was a jack of all trades. He was agreeable, not picky, although that usually only lasted until he once again wanted to drink. Later then, he would go back to his house for another drinking spree, until hunger would force him to come back to our house. Still, he was a part of our family. We were worried for him; we wished him all the best. We often invited him to come with us to church and sometimes he would. He knew everything, but had no desire to repent and begin a new life.

In the summer of 1979, aunt Tanya died. We left to move the bees. Gennadiy, Sasha's brother in law went with us. He wanted to see how it was done, so we took him with us. We moved the bees and he left home with the driver to rest, while we stayed. We put out bee boxes and set everything up, then laid down to get some rest. Suddenly, Gennadiy came and called us to come home – aunt Tanya had passed away. Together with Anya, Sasha's sister, we washed, dressed, and prepared the body. The funeral was scheduled for the following day. At that time, we had conductors' courses in Fergana. Yevgeniy Nikiforovich Pushkov was one of the teachers. Sasha asked the choir, all of the students, to come to the funeral and Yevgeniy Nikiforovich agreed. During the funeral, we put the casket

outdoors, people sat on benches and the choir sang hymns. That heavenly singing gathered a crowd of neighbors. There were some good sermons too. It was a very good testimony to the neighbors. Yes, aunt Tanya's funeral went really well. Even better than my mothers or fathers funeral. She deserved it. How much she loved the Lord! She never missed a single service, she didn't wait for Sasha and I to take her in our car. As soon as time came closer to six o'clock, she would drop all her work, wash up, get dressed and walk to church. Even though she was 84 years old, she would walk for 45 minutes one way and the same distance back as if she were still young. If Sasha had to stay after for a meeting and wasn't going home right away, she



*Aunt Tanya's funeral*



would walk home from church. She was an example worthy of looking up to. She did all of that with pleasure. She wanted to be sick before death, be in bed, to have time to prepare for passing into eternity. That's exactly how it happened. She was ill for seven months. The doctors concluded that she had breast cancer which metastasized into her liver. Being sick, she was never a burden to anyone. She was very calm and only coughed occasionally or had episodes of shortness of breath.

Shortly before that, Natasha spent time at a children's hospital. She was bitten by a dog. Moreover, she fell down and dirt got inside the wound, which had resulted in an infection. Her hand got red and swollen and infection travelled up toward the shoulder. We went to the hospital and consulted with a young surgeon. He told us to take her into the surgery immediately, since he wasn't sure the hand would even work again. The surgery went well. The surgeon was able to make careful incisions, and more than half a liter of pus came out. But the hand maintained its function. All of the nerves and tendons were not harmed. We were very happy.

So, our family was left without the helpers and the elderly. Now we had no one to leave the children with. Older children now watched the little ones by themselves. I had to take more time looking after the home. That year, on August 14, Sasha was ordained as a pastor. I used to dream for him to become a pastor. He was a lead conductor, part of the church board group and was active in many different church activities. He often went to the mountains with the youth group. Young people loved him, because he was young in spirit and related to them quite well. And now he had finally become a pastor. We had many pastors, but every single one was valued like a treasure. There was much work for all of them. We had a car, so we were able to go to nearby towns to do communion there or lead some kind of a holiday service, or a funeral. Also, we visited the sick in their homes and did communion with them. People began inviting us for their engagement celebrations. Sasha was asked to do marriage ceremonies. Everyone liked the way he did marriage ceremonies. He was also invited to do so in other cities. We loved life when it was in service to the Lord. That's what we longed for. It was our second youth. And although we now had 11 children, and a lot of tasks, we worked with great desire.

In March, 1981 we had another daughter Marina. We thought that Natasha was the last, but it turned out that God had given us another girl. We named her Marina. And since it has been four years since Natasha was born, and all the children got older, Marina was like a toy to us – a living doll. Everyone loved her very much. She was very calm. Before going into labor, Sasha and I began moving the beehives from Kuva into the mountains of Karaul. We had a car and our own trailer "Skif," and we were able to fit 8 hives in at a time. This move was a pleasure. We didn't get tired of loading them up, tying them down; driving was also easy. Unloading and putting them up was also fairly enjoyable to us. And all of that we did during the day.

When Marina was 19 days old, we began taking her with us for those moves. When we were loading, she would lay inside the car on the back seat. And when we were driving, I would hold her in my arms. Back then in Uzbekistan, we were not required to use car seats for children, we could just hold them. It was convenient. We came to the Kirgizian people and left Marina with one of the older ladies there. She looked after her and cooked a meal from the food that we brought. During that time, we would unload the hives, put them out and open them up. After that we would eat together and head back home. On the way home, we would stop by aunt Olga's house – Olga Mihailovna. In such a manner, the three of us moved our entire apiary. That year went really well. Bees were multiplying fast – we had new frames, great wax, and wonderful seeds. We had 98 simple hives and 50 two story types. Ben would sometimes help us in the mountains.

Karaul had beautiful sceneries. There was a mountain river passing through. One side of it had a gentle slope where you could walk down to the river; the other side had a steep slope with many honey-carrying flowers growing on top of it. That's why bees did really well there. Sometimes youth came to our apiary – Valya, Anna, Lina, Slavik Muhin, Vanya Golotin, Vasya Kozubenko, Sergei Boguschenko and others. They played volleyball, hiked around the mountains, and then ate with a great appetite. They came on motorcycles. Guys didn't have cars back then. In the summer, we moved our beehives to Besh-Serki. We made two trips on the big "Kamaz." Back then Volodya helped us with the move – he was a great driver and was always available to help with the move, for a fee of course.



*Our children with neighbors near the house. In the arms of Nadia is Marinochka*

That year was filled with joy for us. Pavel got baptized. Vitalik Martinov proposed to Valya. Her heart was open to him. They prayed and received an answer that their union was indeed in accordance with God's will. Valya was cheerful and talkative, while Vitalik was serious and stopped her from saying anything extra. It brought us joy to see our children grow into their youthful years, and most importantly, dedicating these years to God. Young people often gathered in our house. Their joy was our joy. When Vitalik was baptized and became a member of the church, he proposed to Valya. Aunt Dina, grandmother, Yevgeny Petrovich, and Viktor Razumovsky were invited to the engagement as relatives of Vitalik. They sent a telegram to their parents. They gave their consent and blessing. Interestingly, everything was ready for the table. Aunt Dina and Aunt Katya came, while Evgeny Petrovich and Victor were still not there. Vitalik was sent on a bicycle after them. He came to Valya who said that they were currently working for some people, and she explained their approximate location. Vitalik went, found them, and they arrived. The engagement went well. All relatives agreed to this marriage. God helped in everything, even in finding Yevgeny Petrovich and Victor. When Vitalik was asked, "How did you find them?" He said, "I prayed to God to help me find them. And God answered my prayer!" Yes, God always helps whoever asks and believes in Him.

We began to prepare for the wedding. Lina and Anechka went on vacation this summer. They visited friends living by Black Sea and many other places. At this time our daughter Anya proposed Volodya Chekmarev. She said - «Yes». The weddings decided to have on the same day together on November 15th.

We had the reception in our backyard with many guests attending. Next year Valya and Vitaliy had baby boy Yurochka and Anya and Volodya baby boy Sasha.

Here is another interesting story. When Marinochka was born and we brought her to be blessed, Peter Timofeevich said in prayer, "Lord, bless this granddaughter," and Dad corrected, "daughter of Alexander



Kupriyanovich.» After that, everyone asked, “Whose child is this?” I told them, “ours,” but no one believed me because my pregnancy with this child was so unnoticeable.

The most interesting part about the year of 1983 was driving Pavlik to the army in autumn. They sent him to Novomoskovsk, in the construction battalion. That year, we harvested a lot of honey. In the spring, we drove the bees to Ak-Tash. The drive there is very far, and the road is very difficult. We were allowed to go there only when roads were fixed up, and pasturing sheep was also allowed. However, mountain rivers demolished bridges in some places, and we had to drive through a fast-moving river. The river dislodged and dragged large stones. To get through, I would run into the water, quickly check for large stones, or remove them, and Sasha would gun the engine to quickly cross the river. There was no honey to harvest there but we did grow our bee families, and we fed them constantly. Our older children were still studying. We set up our apiary, set up a tent, and settled into the area pretty well. Next to us, a Kyrgyz family put up a yurt. The family consisted of a husband, wife, and their child. The apiary of Shadman Usmanovich was far away from us. His partner was constantly there. The first time we left, we left our son Sasha alone to watch the apiary. The weather was bad. Shepherds often asked us to warm themselves inside our tent. This happened while we were away as well. There was rain and wind. It was very cold, and people were looking for a place to keep warm. In fact, they did only warm themselves and did nothing wrong. However, our son Sasha was afraid of them, so he closed the tent and ran away to the partner of Shadman Usmanovich. When we returned, I had taken a vacation and was able to stay at the apiary. So, our son Sasha and I continually worked in the apiary. Once, I sent him to bring some branches for the bee feeders. He went. The branches were on a hill not far away from us. Suddenly he screams, “Mom, snakes!” I told him to come back and ran towards him. He slowly crept back. The snakes did not crawl after him. I was horrified! A whole family of snakes was basking in the sun. There were so many of them! But the Lord kept us safe from bites, although we



*Valya and Anya's double wedding*





*Our family in 1983*



*Pavel's send off to the Army*

spent a lot of time in that exact spot, feeding the bees after dark when we could have easily stepped on a snake. We always wore rubber boots.

Finally, we left Ak-Tash. One Kamaz with beehives was taken to Kuva and placed in several yards of various owners. Another Kamaz was delivered to a veterinarian in Kuva – these were two-story beehives. That year the harvest of honey was plentiful. In some yards we took 2 flasks from each hive. The honey was brought home and poured into 200-liter waxed barrels. Then, we sold the honey in bulk and immediately received money. This money was divided according to what we needed. We bought sugar for feeding the bees in the fall and spring, we bought wax, and we bought whatever was needed for us and the children. We bought two furniture sets for the house. We placed the Czechoslovakian furniture set in the living room and the German set in Lina's room. We bought carpets for the living room. When everything was completed, I went to Pavlik. I went with Lily Saprunenko and Klara Miroshnichenko. When we arrived in Moscow, we were met by Nikolai Miroshnichenko - Klara's husband. The temperature was 17 degrees in Moscow. This was in early November. I went to Klara and stayed with them. The next day, Uncle Kolya and I went to Pavlik. We spent some time with him. Then Pavlik came to us for the night, and in the morning, he went back to his unit. I asked the deputy politician to let him go for a few days, but he did not allow it. He invited us into his cabinet, thanked us for raising a good son, but was unhappy that Pavlik refused to take the oath. He also said that if their unit was sent to Afghanistan and Pavlik refused to take up arms, then he would be shot. He said that he informed Pavlik of these terms and that Pavlik agreed to them. I brought Pavlik big melons, watermelon, honey, and much more. We had a good visit together. I had a lot of money and bought a lot of clothes and shoes in Moscow for the children. Vitalik's dad bought us a nice tape recorder for 700 rubles. I took the tape recorder with me and sent the clothing and shoes home by mail. All the children were extremely happy with all the gifts.

## Children

In the summer of 1985, Sasha turned 50 years old. We decided to invite friends of our age to rejoice together and thank God for all the blessings that He sent throughout his life, both his life and our family life together. I remember it was on a Sunday and his birthday also fell on another very important day. Our apiary (Bee Garden) that year was in Besh Serkah. Many other christian families kept their apiaries there. Three days prior Misha proposed to our daughter Lina. They decided to fast for three days. Three days of fasting in such heat. The fast ended right on Sunday, and Lina said yes to his proposal. Misha finally received the answer: "Yes!..» He was very happy and excited! He told his parents of the news Sunday evening. But his parents were not happy, they didn't say that they didn't agree, but said that Misha didn't approach this decision the correct way. He should have first discussed it with the parents and got their blessing before proposing to Lina. They said they would pray about it and then give an answer. August then September passed ... but there was still no answer. Then they asked to meet and we met in our house, we thought that finally we would get an answer. We were ready for anything as long as we got closure. However Misha's parents still didn't have an answer but said they would continue to pray. Ten years passed with no answer. There were other men who proposed to Lina but she said no to all of them. Instead she served in the church every way she could. She sang in the choir, sang with other singing groups, went to visit neighboring cities and visited all the sick and lonely. Once, Sasha and I were at Paul Stanislavskiy's Wedding and I sat next to the mother of the bride. We asked how the young couple met and the mother of the bride, with tears in her eyes, told us that she fasted for many years that God would send her daughter a good husband and He did. So I decided to follow her example, I fasted and prayed every Friday for 10 years and I asked the Lord to send Lina a husband after His heart. And God answered. The Lord saw her hard work and her love for God and sent her a great Christian husband in America and blessed her. They now have three beautiful boys. It took 10 years but I am pleased to hear when she tells her friends how she met Darell, how she loved him and realized that the Lord wanted them to be together.





*Vena's send off to the Army*

At the end of 1985, Pavlik was supposed to return from the army. But they were detained. They said they would let him go as soon as the replacement arrived, although the order for demobilization was issued in September. In October, Venya was due to join the army. We had a going away party and invited the youth. Tolik N. had just returned from the army and he wished for Venya to pray more, especially in difficult times. He said that only prayer helped him withstand difficult times and strengthened him. Others also gave good wishes. Sasha gave a particularly valuable wish "To remain faithful to God always and everywhere, even if it costs him life". All the youth came to the military enlistment office to see him off. They sang hymns along the way. At the station, the men were released for a short time to their friends and family to say goodbye. Venya also came to us. The youth surrounded him. They sang a lot of hymns. Many came to our group and listened to the singing, they were surprised at such unity, at such an interesting life, that so many young people came for one man. But then the enlisted men were called, counted and put in cars. The train started off and our son left. After Venya left Sasha again invited the youth to our house, again they ate, drank tea, sang, talked and prayed that the Lord would lead Venya in His way and help him in everything. A month later, we received a telegram from Venya from Dzhambul, asking that we come to him as he was very ill. Sasha and I immediately went to him. There were no flights available on the plane, so we took the bus to Tashkent. From Tashkent, we took a bus to Dzhambul and the next day were already in Dzhambul. The head of the medical unit informed us that Venya had contracted infectious meningitis and that he had been unconscious for three days, he has now improved and was being treated in the city's infectious diseases hospital. He said that no help was needed. He also offered to bring us to the hospital and arranged for us to see our son.

When we arrived in hospital ward Venya smiled, his smile lit up the whole room! He was thin, pale, all transparent, but his spirit was filled with joy. We were also filled with joy seeing him. For a few days me and Sasha went to the hospital together, then Sasha left to work, and I stayed back to look after Venya. I was due to retire in December but in Uzbekistan a woman with five or more children retires at 50. On December 14, 1985, I



turned 50, and I could rest ... But I legally quit in July, since I worked in one place for 20 years without a break. It was summer and I had to work in the apiary, so I decided to retire early. So Sasha went back to work and I stayed with Venya. I lived with Pavlik Kornilov - Sasha's cousin. Every morning I got up at 5am prepared fresh broth, took juices, fresh fruits and went to the hospital. I came to Venya in the morning before the doctors got there. In the evening I came when the doctors were already leaving home. I walked in and out of the hospital freely. I stayed for a month then Lina came to take care of him and I went home. He was supposed to be released to come home for aftercare before the new year. But the military unit the chief said that if he did not take the military oath, they would not let him go home. So Lina had to go home and Sasha went to Dzhabul to demand they let our son come home. He talked to a few military chiefs but they talked very rudely with him, pounded the table with their fists and said that they would leave him here at the hospital, he would clean up the territory or do some other work, since he did not want to take the military oath. On Friday Dad called saying that he would probably leave on Saturday alone, since they would not let Venya go, and he asked that the Church pray that Venya would be released. Friday the church prayed intensely that Venya would be allowed to go home for aftercare. And on Saturday morning dad called saying he was coming home with Venya! We were all excited and filled with happiness. It was before the New Year and all youth visited him. We tried to make him more comfortable at home. We had a neuropathologist from our clinics come see him and after some time, they arranged treatment for him in a military hospital in the neurological department. There he was treated by a neuropathologist, a wonderful woman, very kind and sensitive and on her recommendation he was released from further service in the Army. He had already grown stronger in the spring and returned home. We took him to the apiary so that some fresh air and good food would restore his strength. In 1986, Pavlik traveled with us to the apiary. We gave him 20 boxes with bees. In the spring the bees stayed in Iris. The commute was very long. However every day Pavlik would come home and still go to choir or youth meetings or Bible studies. Every evening there was something else. We asked him to stay at the apiary for at least a few days take care of the bees and then leave, to not travel as often. But it was useless. In the spring, we bought another house along Internatsionalnaya Street. Sasha and I really liked the



*Vena's return home*  
- 85 -

large property and the house was nice. We wanted the house to be a place where our sons could live so we put it under Pavlik and Venyas name's. We remodeled the house and put on a fresh coat of paint. In the spring of 1987, we planted a good garden in the house. Vitya Merkulov made us a beautiful facade, like in our house in Juidam. At first Pavlik lived there but then he accidentally poisoned himself with something and asked that we come get him. We immediately arrived and took him. Since then, no one has lived in the house. We closed it with a key and that's it. Nobody stole anything. The neighbors were good trustworthy people. In the same year, we bought the second half of a house from a Jewish family. Now the lot size increased, and the second part of the house was like a separate apartment. We designed it for Lina and she got everything in order there. She set the necessary atmosphere. In the spring we brought out the queen bees in this yard and then we would take them to the apiary. On the boy's half we added another room, changed the floor, covered it with slate, plastered it. Now the house has completely changed. The terrace was also made covered and warm. Pavlik left for Tashkent, and stayed there to live. At first he wanted to marry Natasha Garmasheva. We all prayed, and were not opposed. Pavlik Kornilov prayed with him as well. He went to propose but she refused, saying that she was still young. So he was unmarried and living in Tashkent. At this time, a church was getting built in the area. He rented a room with a sister in Christ who lived nearby. He did not work, he was completely busy helping build the church. He bought the necessary building materials, assisted in everything and fully participated in the life of the church. But as soon as the church was built it was taken away. The sister who owned the property of the church suddenly died, but they hadn't done any documents or paperwork yet, So the government frightened the daughter and she didn't allow them to gather at the church. Then they bought a house in another area and began to build a new church in the courtyard. In the basement they made a good room where parties and weddings are held. Now this church still exists in Tashkent, and the people of God have a good large house of worship. As for Venya he graduated from the boiler course and began working in the boiler room.

In 1988, Lina's friend, Lyubov Lapteva, got married to Michael Miroshnichenko. The newlywed asked to let them live in Lina's apartment. We allowed. They whitened and painted the walls again, and then moved in. But in the winter, when it became cold, they went to live with Lyubov's parents. In February 1989, Nadia received two marriage proposals from two Anatolys. One Anatoly sent a letter with a marriage proposal. It was Anatoly L. He lived in Fergana, but left home in the winter to stay with his parents in Georgievsk. He had a desire to marry, and he liked Nadia. God prompted him to write her a letter and propose. The second Anatoly lived in Ferghana. He also decided to get married. His mom and he liked our Nadia. He said this to pastor Alexander Semyonovich. The pastor, together with his wife, asked Nadia to stay after church service and told her that one brother is proposing to her and wants her to be his wife and that was Tolik N. Pray about it and give him an answer. And so she turned to me with the question: "Mom, what Anatoly would you advise me to marry? Anatoly L. or Anatoly N.?" Both young men were good Christians, both were healthy and handsome. I told her: "If you marry Anatoly L., it will be easy to live with him. He has a good character. He is simple and kind. If you marry Anatoly N., you will never be in need, but he is demanding. He wants his wife to be healthy and do everything. And everything can happen in life. Maybe you'll get sick, and he will be unhappy. Weigh everything and decide for yourself. Pray to whom God will set your heart." Nadia prayed and the Lord set her heart to give approval to Anatoly L. Soon Anatoly arrived. We made an engagement ceremony. We invited Anatoly's relatives and pastor Alexander Semenovich with his wife. They were disappointed that another Anatoly is becoming the groom of Nadia. But they agreed that this is the will of God.

The next day Nadia make a bridal party where she invited all of her girlfriends for tea. They didn't know anything yet. We did not invite Anatoly. When the guests ate a little, dad said: "Well, sisters, Nadia is getting married. Guess who the groom is?" Everyone was surprised at such news and began to call the names of unmarried brothers, but they couldn't think of Anatoly Lelyukh. Then dad showed them a photo of the groom. Everyone was surprised how it happened. How did the engagement happen without the groom around? Then Nadia told them her story with two Anatoly, how she received an answer from God, and how she knows the will of God. They began to prepare for the wedding, because for the time being Anatoly lived with his relatives, and there was no point in putting off the wedding for a later time. The wedding was in April. Anatoly's brothers and sisters, father





*Nadya and Tolik's wedding*

and mother all attended the wedding. We saw what a friendly family it was! Thirteen children, and all believers in Christ. Larisa was the last child and she was sixteen already. Everyone sang well, and some played instruments. Pavel, Anatoly's brother played and sang very well.

Everything was ready for the wedding. We baked a lot of cakes. Dismantled part of the neighbor's fence and received permission from them to use the yard and half of their house, pantries, plumbing and toilet. The neighbor was Katya who lived alone, her husband died, and the second neighbor was a husband and a wife who both passed away. And we were allowed to use their house. We placed the cakes there and cooked pilaf. Made a pot-boiler of stew, fried chickens. Cooked sausages, cheese. A lot of different pastries. A disaster happened at the wedding - the boiler burst, and part of the pilaf sank into the fire. The surviving part of the pilaf was transferred to another large boiler, which was borrowed from the neighbors. Everything was ready on the tables, we were only waiting for the pilaf. But soon enough the pilaf and stew was served, and almost no one noticed that we had such an accident.

The wedding went well. Anatoly's sisters and brothers worked very well together in the kitchen, and served the guests. Well done!

When the guests left and only relatives remained, Anatoly's parents talked with aunt Ulyasha. They told her: "We have another bridegroom, Pavel.» And Aunt Ulyasha says: "And the bride is busy cleaning" and pointed to Tanya. The parents really liked her. They advised to Pavel to consider our Tanya. After the wedding, we drove to Shakhimardan. The photographers, their friends, came to the wedding from Georgievsk. They took a lot of colored photographs, so the memory of the wedding was captured very nicely.

We settled Nadia and Anatoly in Lina's half of the house on International Street. Nadia cleaned up, and it was very nice and comfortable. It was April. We were limited on funds and could not buy everything new for her. We had to furnish the house with used furniture. But they did not complain, they lived very well together. Nadia



worked as a forest ranger which was next to us. So, she stopped by every day. Anatoly did not work for a company but was a beekeeper.

In 1989, terrible events took place in Ferghana where the Uzbek people began to burn down houses of Meskhetian-Turks. That was in early June. They burned down almost all of the homes, cars, many people died... At first they burned on Saturday at Vodstroy. Many Meskhetian-Turks lived there. Many of them were very rich. In general, the Turks are very hardworking people. They lived in Vodstroy, Yarmazar, Sadvinsovkhoz, in the farm lands of Lenin, in Ferghana, in Kuvasay and in some regions of Uzbekistan. Crowds of young brutal people holding hooks (with many nails on the stick) and a pitchfork, with sticks fled to their destination. They went into every house, took what they wanted, then they would throw a bottle with fire-chemical mixture and leave. They also took the cattle. Burnt at homes. If people were hiding there, then they burned alive. All burnt, adults and children. Children were killed in front of mothers.

On Sunday after church, Alex and I went to Kirgili to perform communion. There was an area on the way where many Turks lived. They worked at the vegetable state-owned farm called Leninabad. We saw how healthy powerful men blocked the roads with chains so that the crowds could not go into their streets. In the evening, these places were burning. Nothing could save them from this robbery. At the same time they burned the village of Yarmazar. The police did not take any actions against it. The military unit was contacted. But the soldiers stood with their shields, but no order was given to disperse this crowd. People tried to disperse the chaos with fire engines by pouring water on them, but they crashed the fire engines and there was no point. It was a huge chaos. On the third day, they burned the area near the Russian cemetery. I was on an errand this morning in the Regional Sanitary and Epidemiological Station and right before my eyes ran a brutal crowd of young Uzbeks. They ran to the place where the Turks lived. They had a leader who was in charge of the area that knew every house. They did no mistakes and did not cause any harm to either Russians or Uzbeks. If a Turk lived next to either an Uzbeks or a Russians, they did not burn those houses, they just robbed the house and damaged it by smashing windows and doors. The Turks who lived on the farms of Lenin, abandoned their homes and came to the Regional Executive Committee and asked to be taken out of the county. They were given buses and they safely drove out of Tashkent. Their homes weren't burnt but robbed of all the savings of goods. They had solid houses with basements where they stored bags of flour, sugar, grain, butter and many other produce. So these houses were emptied completely. No one was responsible for them, no security was assigned.

We took our children to the apiary, a place where many bee hives stood. This year our apiary was in Kok-Bel. There was many apiary near us with a good distance apart. Alex worked and I was with children and with Benjamin, Alex's brother.

After these events, many believers submitted applications to travel to America. They left on an Israeli visa, because they were stripped of their citizenship and they moved through Italy. They lived a long time in Rome. They wrote letters, and it was interesting to us to see how they would settle.

Soon Pavel Lelyukh arrived in Ferghana. We were at the apiary. He came with dad to the apiary to see us. All of the youth went to the mountains. Pavel caught a swarm in the mountains and brought it to us. Then we all went home leaving Ben, Alex's brother, at the apiary. In the evening, Pavel played the piano and we all sang. Pavel had a conversation with Tanya and proposed to her. We talked with Tanya, and agreed to fast and pray the next day so that God will reveal to her His will so that she will find favor towards Pavel, and this decision brought her joy. We prayed, Pavel and Tanya also prayed. In the morning we got up and prayed again. Tanya with Pavel went to the city. After a while they returned, both cheerful and joyful. Tanya said, "That's it, lets finish our fasting, I agreed to marry Pavel." We prayed and began to dine. They had an engagement on Saturday, and Sunday they were announced in church. Then Tanya flew to Georgievsk with Pavel. In Georgievsk they took pictures for wedding invitations. They rested and then talked about questions regarding their lives together. On Saturday evening service they were announced as the bride and groom. And in the morning Pavel escorted her home to Ferghana by plane. Many who were not in church on Saturday wanted to see Pavel's bride on Sunday, but she was gone. They decided to make the wedding in September.

Now it was necessary to find funds to get Tanya ready for departure. We decided to sell part of the bees. Pavel Kornilov arranged with one person from Siberia so that he bought bees from us. By the appointed time we had to bring bees to Jambul. We did not have empty beehives at home, but in Uch-Kurgan at Kyrgyz. They had to be brought home. So the girls, Lina, Nadia, Tanya went with Ben and the driver on a Kamaz to load the hives. After loading, the driver brought the hives to us. He knew where our apiary was, since he himself brought it there. The girls and Ben went home. On the apiary, we already unloaded the boxes and began to fill them with bee families, preparing them for transportation. After receiving all of the documents necessary for veterinary posts, we went at the appointed time. Vova and Ben, Alex's brother and I with the driver drove in the Kamaz. We drove non-stop to Jambul. The ropes turned out to be very bad, they often broke, we had to stop to re-strap. When driving in the day time, the bees swarm flew near the hives.

We thought that we would lose the bees on the way. At first we planned to make a few stops, but later decided to go straight to the place of meeting. I was worried that the bees would get tiered; I was very worried. But thank God we arrived well, and the bees were delivered as planned. We were greeted by Pavel Ivanovich in Dzhabul and he showed us where to unload the bees. It was evening but the bees had not yet calmed down, a swarm was flying over the car. But we still had to unload. How many bees have bitten us, we lost count. We stopped paying attention to the bee's stings, and concentrated on unload the hives, and to faster open the boxes. First we opened all the covers, and then the doors. All the bees arrived safe and alive. There were no dead bees. Some were weakened, but still there were a lot of bees.

The next day the buyer arrived. He began to check the bees. He instructed us to check the queens in order to quickly check and leave back home with the bees. There were many beekeepers in Dzhabul who wanted to sell their bees. They tried by all means to take our customer, by selling their bees cheaper and stronger than our bees. Pavel Ivanovich persuaded him to take our bees, since he agreed with us and we brought them from so far.



*Tanya and Pavel's wedding*

We lived through so much! And if he doesn't take the bees, what then? Well, we decided to give up a little by reducing the price, and the buyer took our bees. We helped him transport the bees into his crates and packed them, and then he left, and we left. We left our hives with Pavel Ivanovich, and later the same driver went with the guys and brought them back.

So now we have some money. Now we could buy something for Tanya. Everything that was necessary for the new couple, we bought it for her. Ordered a container. Bought her a piano, bedroom set, kitchen table with four seats, rugs, different utensils, warm blankets, pillows and much more. In general, the container was jam-packed.

Parents, Vova, Lina, and Ben, went to the wedding in Georgievsk. Alex stayed home with the kids. He also wanted to go, but we could not take him. Anna and Vladimir, Kolya Galotin, Misha Ermolov, and Tanya's girlfriends also arrived at the wedding.

The wedding was held at the morning service. And after the service we had the wedding; a wedding feast in the parents' yard. On Saturday everything was ready. The tables were covered with white tablecloths. We put up a tent in case of the rain. In the evening we had a heavy rain, which we took as a symbol of blessing! In the morning I had to change the wet tablecloths. I remember when there was Valya's and Anya's weddings, in the afternoon when the majority of guests were dining, it began to rain. Aunt Ulyasha always said: "Rain - a blessing of God." It seems that it was not going to rain, but it did...

After the wedding, Lina with Venya and Tanya Lelyukh went to travel. Vovchik also went to visit friends. Anya with Volodya and children went home to Apsheeronsk. And Sasha and I returned home. A year later, Nadia had a daughter Svetlana, and Tanya had a son Igor.

In 1990, they took our Vovchik to the army. He rode with Tolik Khomenko in one train. We escorted them from the Gorchakovo train station. To the very end, before the train departed, the Stanislavsky family, and Konovchenko, Tolik's parents, were with us. Where they were sent, we did not know. Then Vovchik sent us a letter from the city of Kalinin, which is now Tver. At first he was in the musical group, and played the clarinet. Later he was transferred as a driver. He brought bread, milk and other products to the army unit. He refused to take the oath.

In October 1990, Sasha's brother Venya passed away. He lived in his house near Valya. He often was with us, helped us in the apiary. When he wanted to drink liquor, he would leave to his house. So that's what happened this time. He left. Contacted some friends. And one day, late at night, he came home all beat up and undressed. Valya's daughter told us about it. She brought him something to eat. We thought that, as always, he would lie down a bit and get better. But soon Valya comes to us at 9 AM and says: "Come quickly, Venya is dead!" We could not believe it. After all, we did not even visit him when he was sick. When we arrived and went into his house, we saw that he was kneeled by the bed, with his head leaned on the bed. So he froze in this position. He was already cold. Along with sadness there was some joy, the hope that Venya prayed to God before death and repented for his sins. Maybe in the last minutes of his life, when he felt that life is at the end, he knelt down and asked God for forgiveness, like a robber on the cross from the Bible. Oh! If it were so! Maybe he is now in heaven together with his parents and relatives. Maybe we will see him when we come to heaven. I would like to believe that the prayers of father and mother and ours were heard and answered by the Lord. And he was able to receive forgiveness and salvation, like a robber on the cross.

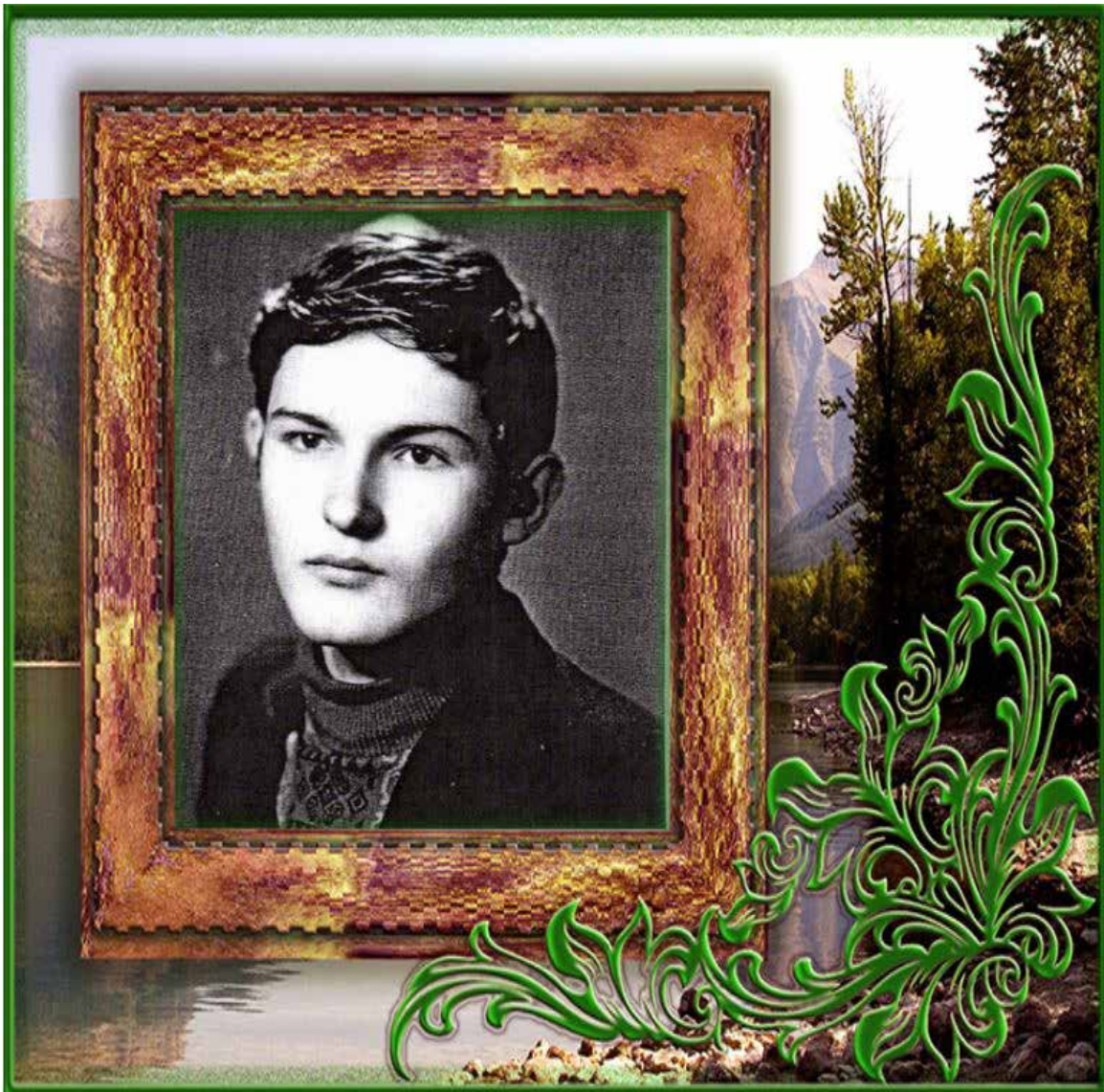
We did the funeral again. Relatives gathered and we made lunch. There are many graves that we have in Ferghana! First, Valya - Sasha's sister - went to eternity, then Kolya - Sasha's brother died. Thank God he repented two weeks before his death. Grace be to God that he received peace in his heart and assurance that he is a child of God and that all of his sins are forgiven to him. Now, dying, he went to his Savior. Then our Lyubochka died. Then my dad, Sasha's mom, Sasha's dad, in a week my mother died. Two months later they buried Volodya, Sasha's brother. A year later, Aunt Tanya. From 1979 to 1990, there were no deaths. All was safe. And then Venya was gone. Of our relatives also buried are uncle Vasya, the husband of aunt Ulyasha, and Valera, Anna's son, who died tragically. Valera already returned from the army, got married, and waiting for a baby. He was asked to work in a military unit. He agreed. That night he came home late from work and crashed into a tree on a motorcycle. People say that he was blinded by a car, and did not see the tree. The tree was not in the row of threes but stood near the



road. Poor Aunt Anya! How could someone live through such great sorrow?! There was a big funeral for Valera. The military unit participated, there was an orchestra that played a funeral march...

We were all grieving, but who will calm a mourning mother who lost her son?! Aunt Anya could not recover for a long time. Later, she was persuaded to go back to work, where she was a little bit distracted from her thoughts about her dead son. Yes, it is sung correctly in the song, "The wife will find herself another, and the mother will never a son!"

In September 18, 1991, at night Sasha had an extensive transmural episode myocardial attack. We called an ambulance. The medical group suspected a heart attack, so they used a special machine to confirm the diagnosis. Before they took Sasha to intensive care, they did some kind of injection, from which he became very ill. He turned blue and became gasping for air. He was brought to the intensive care unit. Vienna and I followed by car. I went into the emergency room. There, on a stroller bed, Sasha was completely blue. They filled the medical history, and asked me some questions and then took him to the intensive care unit. We were sent home. No one was allowed into the intensive care unit. We left home. And in the morning all adults gathered in the hospital. Valya arrived with Vitalik, Anechka with Volodya, Vienna and I. Pavel was in Tashkent, so we called him to come. Vovchik was informed in the military unit by a telegram certified by a doctor. He soon flew in. So the whole family gathered. Sasha survived. We saw him through the window. But he was not allowed to get up. He had to lie down for two weeks and not get up and not turn on his side. A week later, Sasha asked to be transferred to the general hospital



*Pavlik*

room. It was impossible to think about it. But he said that if they will not transfer him then he'll run away. So the doctors had to follow his lead and transfer him to the general hospital room. Now I was able to come to him in the evening, and to stay overnight, and early in the morning at 6 o'clock went home to catch the first bus. Coming home, I ran to the children's kitchen for milk. Every day we took a ten-liter can of milk. We drank the milk and also fed the piglets with the remaining milk. This can of milk was worth 5 rubles. Having dealt with piglets, I fed the children and went to work. Ten minutes I walked quickly to the trolley, rode to Saur-Bulak on the trolley. Then walked to my clinic. My job did not bore me. I worked with pleasure. I tried to work fast and well so that everyone was satisfied. I rushed home after work. At that time the pigs began to have little piglets. Vovchik made separate places for them, blocked them with boards, so that each pig could feed its piglets. In the evening I again went to Sasha's hospital for the night. At first I fed him and then rested. I often slept "dead sleep", and if Sasha needed something, he threw a newspaper at me or an apple. They tried to have someone else on duty instead of me, but nothing worked out. So I always went by myself. Soon after Sasha was transferred to the general hospital room, he received a cardiogram in the afternoon, which showed that his scar was healing very poorly. They gave him an intravenous injection, a lancor. None of us were near him at that time. There was only one patient lying on the bed next to him. He was deaf, lying also after a heart attack. An Uzbek nurse made this injection intravenously quickly and left the room. Sasha became very ill. His body began to pound, so that the bed was shaking. The deaf man heard and went to call the nurse. Doctors came running. Called resuscitation and made an electrocardiogram. The nurse who did the test told us in the evening that the device recorded a cardiac arrest. Sasha told me: "Tonight you could have found me cold..." Thank God that this was not the end of his life. Our Lord extended his life this time once again. God's willing, the resuscitators brought him out of this state.

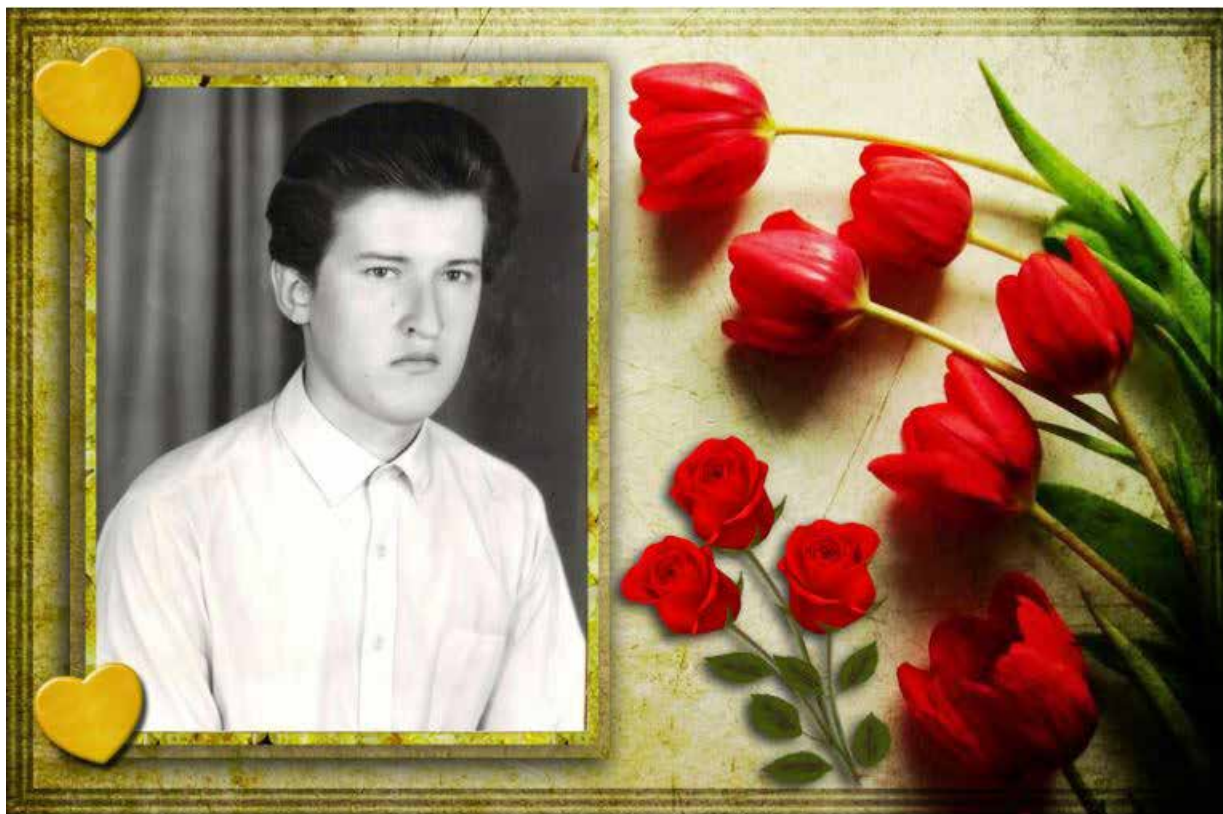
After that, Sasha's condition worsened. It became hard to breathe and not enough air. He felt like this until we moved to America where he had a heart surgery. He laid in the hospital for a month. After that, he was not allowed to work. He was labeled stage second heart condition. But Sasha did not want to fill out the forms. He was at home. Sometimes he was ill, and we called an ambulance. At that time I needed to go to Tashkent to buy an apartment for Pavel. He wanted to buy an inexpensive house but failed. We began to look for an apartment. I took 20,000 rubles with me. Sasha let me go, and began to take care of the house while I was away. He started a diet and felt much better. We stopped calling an ambulance. He cooked for the children, fed them, but didn't eat himself. I had to stay away for a longer time. We found an apartment in a common courtyard in the city center for 15,000 rubles. We really liked it. I left home only after I registered the apartment. Now Pavel was taken care of. He still did not work, they were building a second church in Tashkent.

After I arrived home, Sasha continued to starve. So he didn't eat 21 days and felt good. We introduced him to food carefully. First, he drank juice. Then he began to eat according to the instructions. This method helped him a lot. He also tried to starve here in America, but he couldn't do it, his heart didn't withstand. He had to leave everything and eat again. Vovchik stayed a little longer and went to the army.

## Vena

In the spring of 1992, Father, Vena, Tolik Lelyukh and one believer from our church worked in a boiler room in the airplane town. Everyone worked twenty-four hours and then rested for three days. One day Tolik Lelyukh had to go somewhere and asked Vena to work for him. While working during the day, Vena left the boiler room for fresh air. Two young Russian men were walking towards him. They stopped Vena and said: «What a nice hat you have!» Vena smiled and said: «Guys, go your own way.» Then one of the guys swung and hit Vena in the face. Vena wanted to run away from them into the boiler room, but they ran after him and did not let him close the door. They ran after him into the boiler room. Brother Volodya was passing by and saw what is happening. He





*Vena*

entered the boiler room and began to persuade the guys to leave. They were drunk and stoned and did not want to leave. One woman saw everything from the window of the house, which was opposite the boiler room, and called the police. By the time the police arrived, the guys had already left. The police saw that Vena was really beaten by these guys, but since they were not there, they said to call if they come again. There was a telephone in the boiler room. The police left. Brother Volodya suggested that Vena go home while he would be on duty for him. Vena did not agree. He thought that the guys would not come again. He stayed, took off his blood-soaked sweater, and remained in his shirt. Brother Volodya walked out to our house to tell us about the incident. While he reached us and told us, something terrible happened...

When we arrived - me, dad, and Sasha - there was no one in the boiler room. The window in the boiler room was broken, the light was off, the boiler room was not working. The door to the outside was closed. We were seized by horror: «Have they really killed?» Sasha climbed through the window and went to see what happened there. However, no one was in the boiler room. Sasha opened the door for us. We went everywhere, looked, there was really no one inside. Then the children appeared and reported that Vena had been taken by the police.

We went there. Indeed, we saw Vena there sitting on a bench. He was beaten all over, his face was all blue, only his teeth were white ... He told us that when Volodya left, he locked himself inside and sat down at the desk. Soon after, he heard voices near the door. He looked and saw that the guys had returned. He began to call the police. But he could not get through. These guys tore off the nailed iron on one window, which was directly in the boiler room. Due to the noise of the boilers, Vena did not hear that they had removed the window. Together they rushed to him, snatched out the telephone receiver and began to beat him... When they tore down the window, there were children playing on the asphalt next to the window. The guys told them: «We are going to kill him.» The children got scared and all ran home. The woman who was watching from the apartment called the police again. They came quickly and captured one guy; the second escaped through the window. The police forced this guy to say who was the second with him. He said the address of his friend. He lived nearby. They took the second guy as he was just home. They took Vena and went to the police. The police called the forensic medical examination, but the medical examiner was not there. He left to work somewhere in the district. They began to fill out the papers of what happened.



When we arrived, investigators asked us to follow them to the scene. They filled out all papers while Vena told them everything happened. It took a long time.

We saw that it was very difficult for Vena. He needed urgent medical assistance and began to ask the police to send him to an ambulance as soon as possible. At this time, the manager of the boiler room came to find out what happened. Seeing Vena, they apologized that it happened and promised to take all measures to punish those responsible. The police offered to make a forensic examination first. In order to do this, they returned to the police station. They called the forensic medical examination. The medical examiner was already there.

In the emergency room of the Regional Hospital, he had done an X-ray of his skull. All bones were intact. The neurosurgeon on duty was called. He examined him and sent him to the neurosurgical department for hospitalization. When we visited him next day in the hospital, he was all black; only his teeth were white. These criminals beat him so badly. He endured everything patiently and did not complain but smiled. A few days later, these guys came to his hospital and asked him for forgiveness and offered to help with treatment, but Vena said that he had an awfully bad headache and he cannot talk now. Also, he said that he has nothing against them. The mother of one of them came to our home, offered help, but we refused. Mother asked to close the case, but we said that we did not open any case and did not complain to anyone. The organization required to open the case since they destroyed a lot of electronic equipment.

The trial never took place. Once Vena went to court, but the trial did not take place because the guys escaped. That was the end of it. Vena's condition worsened every day. He developed constant headaches and increased blood pressure. He stayed in the Regional Hospital for a while. His attending physician offered to put him in the clinic of the Andijan Medical Institute. We took him to Andijan. He took money with him to buy some delicious food while we were away. We could rarely visit it. We had to go to the apiary. Luckily, the apiary was just on the road through Andijan, so we could stop by to see him. He was given injections from high blood pressure, but he could not handle them as he was fainting after these injections. On his birthday May 22, 1992, he was still in the hospital. We went to his hospital. Joseph, his friend, Tanya Stanislavskaya and Irina Kanovchenko went with us. We bought a cake, lemonade, flowers, etc... Medical personnel let him out to the garden. Therefore, we could celebrate his birthday in one of the alcoves. He turned twenty-five years old. Vienna was very pleased that friends and parents visited him.

The next time we spoke with the doctor, he said: "Take him home. Here, treatment is not good for him. After the injections, he loses consciousness. The blood pressure does not drop. His left kidney is deformed. He should be taken to Tashkent for urology. We will give documents so he can get a disability. He doesn't have to work. Create good conditions for him at home, and maybe he gets better sooner.» We spoke to Vena and he returned home with us. We created him a relaxing atmosphere, gave him good food, and he felt better. He was given a second group of disabilities, and he no longer worked.

In the winter of 1993, he had a very high fever, and we put him in a therapy department on the Frunzensky massif. He got a separate room, as he was seriously ill, and besides, he had a disability group. I was near him almost all the time. The fever rose several times during the day. They gave him antibiotics and I made the lytic mixture. I was bringing medicine and sterile syringes to make him injections. The X-ray results came back showing that he has fluid in his lungs. They tried to pump it out but could not because he lost consciousness. One medical professor decided to take care of Vena.

He very carefully checked the X-ray allocating the liquid and pumped it out himself. I was with Vena. They took him into the lab, turned on the device, but Vena again lost consciousness. The doctors were holding him, but the liquid remained. I took him to his room in a wheelchair. He again had a high fever above 40 degrees. We asked to be transferred to the Regional Hospital to see his doctor. His doctor was Jewish. She was very experienced and kind. Vena trusted her very much. This doctor has arranged with the lungs department to pump fluid out. They did it in her presence. Doctors prepared medicines to revive him and began to pump the fluid out. He lost consciousness again, but they tried and were able to pump out the liquid a little. Surprisingly, the body temperature dropped immediately. After that, he lay down a little longer in the hospital. He took a course of

treatment, and we took him home. The reason, where fibrinous pleurisy came from, has not been established. We went to other doctors for a consultation assuming that it was from the kidneys. Then little by little Vena recovered.

In the spring we took our bees to Kandova. Vienna sometimes went with us to the apiary. This year we gave twenty hives to Vienna, twenty to Pavlik and ten to Sasha. The rest of the hives were ours. Dad and I watched them. Pavlik still lived in Tashkent but came as a beekeeper. The bees have been strong this year. The mountains were good for the bees' development. Once Vovchik brought me and Vena to the apiary and left to work. We were supposed to be at the apiary for several days. We had to go through all the bees. We began to work. Vena also watched his bees. After lunch we started checking the bees. Vena began to feel bad, and I told him to go to lie down. He complained that his throat and head hurt. I looked; he had a high fever. I asked the hostess for medicine. She gave me sulfadimezine and pentalgin. I gave him medicine, hot milk and put him to bed. These owners, where we had our apiary, had good living conditions. We occupied a separate room, even two. There were several beds in the large room, and we slept on them. After the medication, Vena felt a little better and fell asleep. I went to work with the bees again. Close to the evening I thought that Vena would feel better, but at the evening his body temperature rose again. He was all burning as if on fire.

In the spring we took our bees to Kandova. Vienna sometimes went with us to the apiary. This year we gave twenty hives to Vienna, twenty to Pavlik and ten to Sasha. The rest of the hives were ours. Dad and I watched them. Pavlik still lived in Tashkent but came as a beekeeper. The bees have been strong this year. The mountains were good for the bees' development. Once Vovchik brought me and Vena to the apiary and left to work. We were supposed to be at the apiary for several days. We had to go through all the bees. We began to work. Vena also watched his bees. After lunch we started checking the bees. Vena began to feel bad, and I told him to go to lie down. He complained that his throat and head hurt. I looked; he had a high fever. I asked the hostess for medicine. She gave me sulfadimezine and pentalgin. I gave him medicine, hot milk and put him to bed. These owners, where we had our apiary, had good living conditions. We occupied a separate room, even two. There were several beds in the large room, and we slept on them. After the medication, Vena felt a little better and fell asleep. I went to work with the bees again. Close to the evening I thought that Vena would feel better, but at the evening his body temperature rose again. He was all burning as if on fire. He moaned from a headache. I gave him more medicine, but it did not help. Vitalik, our son-in-law, had to go home. I wrote on the gate: «Vitalik, come to us.» He just had to drive past us. It was already night, but Vitalik did not come... Vena had impulsive movements from a fever. I put a cold towel on his forehead ... I sat next to him and cried. I prayed that the Lord would ease his suffering. But no help came. I began to ask the Lord to get someone out of bed, so that this soul would pray with me for the relief of his suffering. I knew that sometimes the Lord encourages other souls to pray for someone in great need. I looked after Vena, prayed and cried expecting help. I was already exhausted from the worries, looking at his torment. By morning he felt better. The temperature dropped. He fell asleep. I also fell asleep with him. We woke up from the words of Vitalik. He was calling us to see if we were there. When Vena had a fever at the evening, I went to my neighbors beekeepers who were standing not far from us and asked if they were going home so Vena and I could leave with them. Vitalik, not seeing us in the apiary, drove to our neighbors to find out where we were. A neighbor said that Vena was very ill, and I was looking for someone to go home with. So he came in to find out if we had left. I was so glad he didn't pass by. He drove home alone and took me and Vena home. Vena was feeling better but he was very weak. I put down a pillow so he can lie down if he wants to. We got home. He felt a little better. The temperature did not rise anymore and he recovered.

We pumped a lot of honey in 1993. We also pumped in the mountains. Pavlik and I went to organizations selling honey. People took buying honey. After, we cleaned Pavlik's apartment. In the fall, Tanya and Pavlik (son-in-law) arrived. They already had three children - Igorok, Maxim and Irina. They took Irina with them. I went to Tashkent to meet them. I had to get them tickets to Fergana. Pavlik and I went to buy tickets. After, we went to meet Tanya with Pavlik and Irinochka.

We met them well. I remember, I carried Irina in my arms. She sang songs to my ear. We agreed with our relatives - Vitya and Mirra; they arrived by car and took us to Pavlik's home. We were supposed to spend the night

in Tashkent, and in the morning to fly to Fergana. Tanya and Pavlik left for America and came to say goodbye to us.

Pavlik had big apartment. His apartment consisted of three rooms: a kitchen, a living room room with adjusted dining room, and a big room overlooking the street. It was large and bright. He had a good setting and a good bed. The house was located at 59 Levanevskaya Street and had four owners. Everyone loved Pavlik very much. He often helped elder women by buying them groceries and bringing water. We rested overnight at Pavlik's place and, in the morning, we flew home to Fergana. Tanechka and Pavlik wanted to meet friends of their youth. They also wanted to visit their native places such as school, place of work, market, railway station and much more. They drove through many streets, stopped at school with Vienna in our red Zhiguli. They met with their teachers. Everyone was glad that Tanya had such a happy opportunity to move to the United States. Then we stopped at the pharmacy where Tanechka worked. She met her manager Rimma Sergeevna, who wished her a safe journey and a joyful life in America. Nadya and Tolik also arrived. Vovchik returned from the army. So everyone got together. And Vera and Zhenya also came.

It was a wonderful time for all of us. We were so happy to spend some time together. We chatted and enjoyed having our time together. We invited many friends and had a big party. Many friends were wishing to stay by God's side and follow the bible's rules and foundations. As well, friends wished to stay away from American freestyle churches to avoid adopting bad things. At that time it was believed that in America, believers are changing for the bad. Therefore, they wanted Tanechka to always wear a kerchief and have kneeled prayers. I cited Nadia as an example. When she got married, she always wore a kerchief. When there were difficult times with the Turks, Uzbek women from Saur-Bulak saw Nadya at the bazaar. They said: "Nadya, take off your kerchief, otherwise you will be mistaken for a Turkish woman, they all wear kerchiefs. And they can do something bad to you.» But Nadya did not take off her kerchief, although she could have suffered severely. Now in America, we see that some do not obey this commandment and married women come to services with their heads uncovered.

The time of Tanya's and Pavlik's stay quickly ended and everyone went home. Vova and Sasha went to see Tanya and Nadia off to Georgievsk. They were also in Kurganinsk. It was the time of a youth conference at which Sasha repented. How we rejoiced that while growing our children consciously come to the Lord. When they returned home, Sasha told the story about the son's repentance at his mother's grave. How glad I was. Once in my youth, I also told this story in Tashkent. Sasha began to communicate with young people, read the Bible, and prayed. Vovchik was a leader and everyone's favorite.

On his Zaporozhets, he drove so many people that a large car would not be able to fit. Often, after the church service, they went to the Portansky or Bogdanovs to the Literary group. Everyone who did not have transportation had a ride in his Zaporozhets.

In the fall, the apiary was transported from cotton to Kyrgyzstan for a winter camp. There was a lot of space. We arranged everything very well. We were glad that everything was fine. The bees were strong. We began to feed them for the winter, although they had honey. The hosts were truly kind. We often came to feed or check on bees. One day I noticed that the bees began to thin out. They got weaker and weaker. And by the spring, almost all of them had died. There was a lot of food, but the bees were gone... So, in 1994, we were left without bees. We took all the bee houses and these for frames. Wes old one bee house for a dollar. But we no longer regretted it. Tanya sent us a related affidavit, and we were given a number in February 1994. We prayed a lot to find out the will of God. And the whole family unanimously wanted to go to America. We especially wanted to go because our Vienna was extremely sick, and the doctor told me that kidneys are treated very well in America. Also, they cleanse the blood very easily and people with kidney problems even work. Listening to all this, we wanted to go faster. The interview was scheduled for May and June. Lina, Pavlik and Vienna had to be interviewed separately.

We wanted Vienna to have a medical treatment so that he would last to America. The doctor who treated him offered to do an ultrasound. We decided to make it in Kirgily. When the doctors looked, they could not find the left kidney. The manager herself looked very carefully and did not find it. My heart ached ... It did not foreshadow anything well. Although Vienna felt relatively good. He did not say a word. But I think that he was worried that it was bad. The re-examination was scheduled for the next day. And the next morning it snowed. Vovchik had



to go to Gorchakov to meet someone. He took us to the clinic in Kirgili, and we had to go back by bus. This time the kidney was found, but they said it was small and deformed. And the second is also deformed. With this conclusion, we went to the doctor, and on Monday we were offered a place in the urology department. It was Friday. By Monday, Vienna was unrecognizable: he was all swollen ... A sign that the kidneys failed... Dad and I were mentally killed... My heart sensed a bad and imminent end... Oh, God! How afraid I was of that! I thought that with compensated chronic nephritis, he could live for many years ... That very morning, he was admitted to the hospital. He began to receive intravenous infusions. We hardly left the hospital. Then Valya and Vitalik came, then Lina, then my dad and I, then friends... Valya and Vitalik came just as they poured soda into him. He was trembling all over. It was not a shiver from the cold, it was an inner shiver from the infusion. The attending physician realized that the situation was already hopeless. He suggested connecting an artificial kidney, purifying the blood. But he himself said that the equipment was unreliable, and there were no drugs. Vitalik offered to take him to Moscow for treatment. I phoned Ira Meshcherina. She agreed with the place. But before leaving, we decided it would be better to go to Novomoskovsk. Vitalika's sister Olga agreed to put him in her hospital. There were good doctors there. We took all the medical papers from the doctor with all the tests and flew to Moscow. The ticket was given to us without waiting. This was in March. We flew well. We got to Novomoskovsk well too. There, at the station, Vitalin's dad met us. Together we went to Lyuba Miroshnichenko. She lived on the fifth floor. There was no elevator. I had to stomp the steps. We had a lot of luggage. It was necessary to make gifts and we prepared them in advance. We had the money. Valya Skaeva also gave Vienna money for food so that I could buy him everything the doctors said.

Lyuba met us well. We ate and drank some tea. Vienna laid down to rest, and Misha Miroshnichenko took me to his mother because the family was supposed to call there from home to find out how was our flight there. It turns out Lina had already called, we were late. We have requested a conversation. We were only given a conversation for one o'clock in the morning. I had to stay overnight at aunt Clara's, and Misha went home. In the morning Olga had to come for me and together we had to come to Lyuba's and take Vienna to the hospital. When we came to Lyuba's place, we saw that Vienna was feeling very bad, he gasped for air and was white as a wall. Olga ran to call the ambulance. An ambulance arrived very quickly. A familiar doctor was on duty at the ambulance. Vienna was immediately taken to the hospital. In the car, the nurse gave Vienna oxygen, and he felt better. He thanked the nurse. At the hospital, all the tests were done immediately. An ultrasound machine was brought to the hospital room and he was fully examined. Then he was left in the room, and I was called into an office where many doctors gathered. They told me that we brought him very late ... His Hemoglobin was 30. With such hemoglobin people don't walk. They were surprised that he walks on his own. And they said that both kidneys are wrinkled, and he has very little to live... They also said: "We will take him to the hospital, and let him stay with us. We will do our best to ease his suffering. But people with such a disease die in full consciousness, and death may be very painful. We'll give him a private room and you can be with him constantly. There will be two bunks." I thanked them and left the office. I sat on the side so that Vienna would not see me and cried bitterly... How do I tell him that his days are numbered? How will I report this to the rest of the family? How will dad take it? After crying, I wiped my tears, brought myself into order and went to Vienna. Olga came. We put Vienna in a stroller and drove him to another department where he was supposed to be treated. There was a ready-made room with two bunks. Vienna slept on one, and I on the other. In the morning after breakfast I went to Lyuba's. I cooked lunch for Vienna, bought juices and fruits in the store and came back to him. I fed him. Then there was a quiet hour. We rested with him. After a quiet hour I fed him something and again went to Lyuba's. Again, I would cook something hot and go back to him. I had to return no later than seven o'clock. At 7:00 the hospital was closed and no one else was allowed. We dined with him and went to sleep. He was given IVs every day. He felt good fulfilled all the prescriptions of doctors. He was considered seriously ill, and the doctor on duty always came at night to examine him. I counted daily how much he drinks, how much urine, and gave him medicine.

On Sunday morning I went to a church service and asked the church members to pray for Vienna, so that the Lord would give him relief. Next Sunday I had to ask someone to donate blood, as Vienna needed to get a blood

transfusion. Two people offered to donate blood - one sister Tatiana Balashova and brother Valera. During this month while Vienna was in the hospital, he received two blood transfusions. Prepared erythrocytes were infused. The entire department knew that in our room laid a dying young man, and walked past our room on tiptoes. Each day they asked me: "How is your son?" I answered everyone: "Thank you, thanks to God, he's doing well». On the second Sunday, the youth did not go to the evening service, but came to visit Vienna. After a quiet hour, the brothers and sisters began to enter the room in white coats, 2-3 people at a time, until everyone came in. Vienna was very happy for this visit. Young brothers and sisters sang hymns, told poems, talked to Vienna. They brought him flowers. The time passed very well. A pastor also visited this week. I was sitting in the room with Vienna. In the conversation, the pastor asked Vienna a question: "Well, dear brother, and so if the Lord puts in His plan to take you to heaven, are you ready to meet with him?" And I saw him smile and, all shining, said: "Yes, I'm ready!" For all my sorrow and grief, I was comforted by the fact that he was ready to meet the Lord and death did not frighten him.

Of course, we would like God to do a miracle and heal him. Many in our Fergana church prayed for his healing. It's not difficult for the Lord, but He has plans for each one of us. I called Nadya and Anya so that they would come to see Vienna. Nadia lived in Georgievsk, and Anya lived in Apsheronsk. They wanted to come. I met Anya in Tula. She arrived with Yulechka. And I met Nadya, but I didn't make it on time. She came herself. Loaded with bags, with Svetlana, and she was pregnant. The trip was very difficult for her. And Anya, and Nadia, and I - we all stayed at Lyuba's. She showed us such great hospitality! She received us very well. I spent more time near Vienna, and Nadya and Anya would come together or separately with the children. Svetlana was so beautiful that people looked adoringly at her. I said jokingly to Nadya: "Take money from those who look at her." Anya sometimes gave me rest and she would stay near Vienna. And Nadia and I cooked something and went to visit. Vienna was often visited by one sister from Moscow and a brother. It was nice to see such love from brothers and sisters not from your church that cared. Although we were not knew, but when they heard that my brother was in the hospital, they found out where he was and came to visit. May the Lord reward them for their good deeds! How treasured it is - an expression of love for your neighbor!

Soon Anechka and Nadia left. And we continued to lay there with Ben. The time of life for him in Novomoskovsk was running out, and we began to hurry home. The doctors began to prepare Ben for departure. I asked the doctor if we could hurry to get him home while he was alive, so that we could bury him at home among friends. So on Monday we were supposed to be discharged, and on Tuesday we were supposed to leave by plane. All the brothers and sisters took an active part to help us. Vladimir Vasilyevich got us tickets. On the last Sunday, I asked the church to pray for us so that we would get home safely, and so that Ben would get through the journey well. I strongly asked that they continue to pray on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. We were supposed to arrive in Ferghana on Wednesday. Brother Viktor Pikalov offered to pick us up in his car from the hospital. He brought us to Tanya Pikalova's father. He lived close to Novomoskovsk station, where we had to take the train to Paveletsky railway station in Moscow, then go to the airport, and then home.

Tanya's dad met us and took care of us very nicely. He made us a bed in the living room and fed us. In the morning, he promised to help us walk to the train station. It was still dark when we got up in the morning. We loaded things on a cart and went on foot, since it was close. As the train was leaving, we were approached by another young brother who wanted to go with us to the airport. This was the Lord's way of sending us help. I was already a little calmer that I was not alone and would be helped if Ben would not feel well. Ben walked all on his own. We boarded the plane and arrived safely. However, the plane refueled on the way, and everyone was escorted off the plane, including Ben and I. We arrived in Ferghana safe and sound and were met by friends, relatives, and youth. After sitting on the plane for so long, Ben's feet became swollen, and he walked as if on wadded legs. Everyone saw how we got off the plane and how hard it was for him to walk, and they cried.

Finally we had arrived... Vova came to pick us up in a car, in addition to picking up some others. Everyone else also headed over to our house. Everyone sat together and drank tea. Some left, some stayed, some only came to stay near Ben. And so, every day he was visited by people we didn't even know, friends from other churches. Every day there was a gathering of people. Sometimes he slept when they came to visit him. But they were

glad that he had arrived alive and wished him well. Vovchik's birthday was April 20. He did not celebrate it on a weekday, but decided to celebrate it on Sunday between church services. He invited a neighbor to shoot his birthday on video, and to capture Ben just for memories.

During the 10 days that we lived in Fergana, since our arrival from Novomoskovsk, Venya had a lot of edema. I dreamt that he would recover. Friends tried to help by offering various advice. But in the last days, signs of poisoning began to appear, and Venya's health sharply deteriorated. Ulcers began to appear in his mouth, and his tongue began to hurt. I rinsed out his mouth with Novocain and baking soda. He drank all his medications. I began to visit his room several times during the night, which woke him up sometimes. At that point, we decided to transfer him to the family room, so that he slept closer to us, and so that we could watch over him. He agreed. That night - his last night - he slept with us. He complained of pain in his tongue and groaned... On Sunday morning, dad left for work. We began to clean because Vova invited the youth to his birthday party after our morning church service. Venya was moved back to his room. Valya Skaeva, Anfisa, and Nadia helped me prepare since they were not able to make it to church and decided to come visit us instead. It was perfect timing.

Our Valya began to cook pilaf. We were advised to cook pigeon soup for Venya. Joseph, Venya's friend, and his father bought two pigeons and made pigeon soup after church.

The youth gathered in the family room. Since dad was not there, they asked me to pray. After that, food was served on the table, and everyone began to eat it in simplicity and joy of heart. I brought the pigeon shurpa, and Joseph began to feed Venya. He ate a little and refused the rest. Then, he began to vomit. I removed his towel and carried him to the bathroom to rinse him off. Suddenly, Valya shouts, "Mama! Mama!«» I ran to Venya... Joseph was nearby, Venya was dead... I rushed to pull out his tongue to free his breathing. He was carried from his bed to the veranda. Joseph and Misha Ermolov began to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and an ambulance was called. Yura Portansky rushed to the children's hospital and brought the doctor from the intensive care unit, but the Lord had already taken Venya to Himself. Nothing helped. One doctor and other doctors testified that they



*Vena's funeral*



could no longer help him. He died. Venya was carried out into the yard on his bed. He was covered with tulle and overlaid with the flowers that were brought as gifts for Vova's birthday. The whole youth surrounded Venya. We sang several hymns, and Misha Ermolov recited a poem. Everyone was crying.

Other brothers and sisters in Christ began to drive up after church. We had to somehow notify dad. How would he bear this news? Someone volunteered to replace him at work, and Vitalik drove to get him. When they arrived and told dad that Venya had died, dad said, "I was just praying for him, for God to deliver Venya from his suffering, according to His will."

He saw how Venya suffered and suffered. « When dad arrived, everyone was silent ... What would happen? Dad walked up to Venya, looked at him and said, «Let's pray.» Although dad's health was very poor, God helped him endure this grief.

In the evening after church, many brothers and sisters in Christ came to share our grief. The funeral was scheduled for Monday, many people attended. Nikolai Vladimirovich with his brothers and sisters took care of everything themselves. If a person has to go through an experience like this and has friends who will not only share the sorrow with them, but also take all the cares on their shoulders, they are truly blessed. After the funeral, the house felt empty even though there were many of us.

Venya died on April 24. May 22 would have been his birthday he would have turned 27 years old. We understood that he was with the Lord and that it was better to be there than on this mournful land, but still, the separation was very difficult. When we went to the interview in Moscow and I saw the Paveletsky railway station my heart sank and my eyes filled with tears - I wanted to go to look at the corner where Venya and I were waiting for the train, where Irina Meshcherina visited us, talked to Venya, encouraged him and brought him a present. And at the airport, I went and saw the shops where we sat with him, when we arrived and flew away ... And to this day with tears, I watch the video of his last days, when he walked, drove, spoke, and how he was buried.

Now, when I think about my death, I hope no one cries! My feet have walked through beautiful places ... Indeed, a wonderful life has been lived, full of the Lord's mercies and His care for us. And now that my children have grown up, they don't need our help. Of course, the prayer of a father and mother protects children and grandchildren daily from all evil. But it will stop one day and our children will have to take this on themselves and with God's help, lead their children to the Heavenly Kingdom. There is no need for a magnificent funeral, there is no need for loud words ... Quietly and modestly go into eternal bliss - this is our dream with dad. Now we are praying day and night for the repentance of our children Vera, Zhenya, Sasha and Marina. We pray for our eldest grandchildren - Yurochka, Sasha, Andrey and Vovochka. We believe that the Lord hears these prayers and if during our life they do not come to the Lord, then hopefully after our death. May the Lord use His means that will lead them on the right path.

## Verochka

At church our Verochka was friends with Marina Polskoy. They used to attend youth group and church services together. Vera used to visit Marina's house often since she lived close to church. Her house was always full of joy and people on Sundays, in between the morning and evening services. Marina's mother, Nadezhda, was a very lively, outgoing, and sincere Christian. She often invited young soldiers serving in Fergana to visit their home and attend their church service. That is where Vera ended up meeting Eugene one day. He was a tall, strong, attractive young man, who was outgoing and joyful. It seemed as though he was always a part of their social circle. Soon, his mother arrived, and he went back to his hometown in Naberezhnye Chelny to finish off his military service. He had six more months left of service. Vera and Marina both went to see him off. Eugene's mother really liked Verochka, and so did he. They both agreed that she was wife material. Eugene took Verochka's image away in his heart. From that moment forward, his letters kept pouring in. Their infatuation quickly grew into true love. The phrase "I love..." often covered up half a page in their letters. When Eugene was discharged from service before New Year's Day, he flew to see Vera in Fergana. Imagine the shock we endured when we saw



*Zhenya and Verochka's wedding*

an unfamiliar young man appear on our doorsteps. Vera did warn us that Eugene was going to come visit her when he was discharged from military service, but we did not think it would happen so soon! Dad had a discussion with Eugene regarding his intentions. His intentions were to marry Verochka and take her to his hometown in Naberezhnye Chelny. Vera said yes, and we set a date for the wedding. We invited all of our friends and family to the wedding, and they moved away two weeks after the celebration.

They lived with his parents in his hometown. When Tanya filed a kindred Affidavit on us, she included Eugene in our case. Therefore, when we went to Moscow for an interview, we had no problems and we all received refugee status. In September 1994, God gifted them a precious baby girl. They named her Evelina. Such a wonderful, rare name! Surprisingly, Vera birthed her firstborn with great ease! Her midwife was a young Uzbek lady. She treated Vera with such attention and skill during the whole birthing process, that Vera's first childbirth did not seem so difficult. Vera chose Evelina's name herself. What a wonderful name – Evelina. It is interesting how every mother comes up with such wonderful names: Mark, Margarita, Irina, Oksana, Roman, Olga, Aleksey. Furthermore, each child is worthy of their own name. Eugene and Vera's second child was born in America. They had a baby boy named Daniel. Their third child was also a boy, and they named him Jason. Although life is difficult with small children, it is brightened with how cute and interesting they are! They grew up into smart, beautiful kids. Their only negative is that they do not go to church. This is because their parents do not want to go to church themselves. However, Sasha and I pray in every prayer for Vera to repent and turn back to God, especially since she had once expressed her desire to be baptized. She understands that life does not end with life on earth, but eternal life is determined by how you spend your life now, while there is still an opportunity to correct your path forward. It is necessary to see and admit that you are living a life of sin and repent. Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of all people. But not everyone wants to accept His wonderful, free gift of salvation. What

excuse can be found for such carelessness? And what good is life without God? Can it be possible to exchange eternal joy with Christ and all your relatives for eternal torment and suffering with the devil? It is scary to even think about. Good, sweet Verachaka! There is so much good in you! Dad and I were always happy and proud to see your positive energy and your ability to make a celebration out of any event! May the Lord grant that you, Eugene, and all your children come to God, go to church, always pray, and turn your home into a house of God. May God bless you!

## America

We went to Moscow by train for an interview. There was a lot of food to eat and we had time to rest. We were really happy. In Moscow, we settled down in Raisa Vladimirovna's home. We enjoyed our time there and she treated us like family. The interview went peacefully. We were immediately granted refugee status. Lina was interviewed separately, and she was also granted refugee status. The man at the embassy who conducted Pavel's interview kept pressing him, and asked: "Say we don't give you refugee status... What will you do then?" "The Lord will provide," Pavlik answered him. They granted him refugee status as well. But Pavlik decided to stay and did not leave with us. His refugee status has now expired, but life became difficult for Pavlik. How will the Lord provide? But we know that all things work together for the good for those who love the Lord, who were called according to His purpose.



*Farewell to those who can no longer go to America*





*The last photo near the blessed house in Fergana*

After the interview, Dad, Vera Zhenya and I went home. Everyone else went to family and friends to say goodbye before leaving to America. We began to slowly gather our belongings, but we didn't hurry. In fact, a certain amount of time needed to pass until a telegram would arrive, telling us that we can leave. We continued to pray...

We decided on one more condition that would need to be met so we could know that our move is in accordance with God's will. We were not used to going anywhere for any reason, not even for vacation, yet here we needed to go to an unknown country, where they speak a completely different language, have very different laws, and a different way of life. It was unknown territory. How would we ever adjust there? How would our children adjust? Our friends who had left earlier seemed to have adjusted well, but will the same happen to us? But, either way, it had become exceedingly difficult to live here. Having a large family, we had to constantly look for additional sources of income besides our main job. What had we not tried? We kept bees, chickens, pigs... But now it had become difficult to maintain bees. With customs, it became difficult to travel to Kyrgyzstan. It became practically impossible to keep pigs, as Muslims began to rebel against unclean animals. They sometimes didn't even allow us to sell pork meat at the market. Chickens were also hard to keep. Chicken feed was expensive, and chickens often got sick, so many died. We never dreamed about moving to a different place, especially to America. But the Lord made the way and eliminated all anxieties.

With light hearts, we were ready to leave places that had become dear and native to us. I lived in Ferghana since 1939, from the age of four. And now I was almost 60. Sasha also lived in Ferghana without leaving since 1952, that is, for more than forty years. And we rarely ever left anywhere, as it was an unusual luxury for us. We rejoiced when we could relax in the mountains at the apiary. Rest is necessary and useful for the family, as well as for the body and soul, so we made time for little moments, but most of our life we worked really hard. Even after I retired, I picked up more work, which continued almost until the interview. But I was loved and respected by many, and they rejoiced that our large family was so blessed. Now, after the interview, only two Sashas worked

– father and son. The father worked so that at least someone in the family had a source of income, and my son worked for an alternative service in the Army. The rest of us did not work. To have something to live off of, Zhenya, Vera and I sold things at the market. We sold at our markets, in Kirgilyah and Margilanye. Zhenya was always at the head of the wheel. We would bring bags full of items. People happily bought our things, as they were pretty and cheap, but even then, people did not have a lot of extra money to spend and so they didn't buy as much. All the money we made went towards food. We sold gas stoves, bricks, iron pipes, flasks, beehives. We slowly gathered dollars to have at least some money upon arrival in a new country. Father with his sons and sons-in-law used to make hives himself with new material and they served us for many years – more than 20 years, and some more than forty years. Now we were selling these hives for a dollar a piece!

Luckily, one person bought all of them at once. He needed them for new bee families since he multiplied bees and transported them by plane to Siberia for sale. We sold our wax as well. We removed the things from the attic that had been lying there for over ten years. Back in the good old days, we would remove gently used items from the rooms to the attic to clear up some space. But now, everything sold well at the market. We would wash and iron some items and we would make them presentable for the market, and little by little our items were being bought. With this money we were able to feed ourselves, and occasionally we would buy nice things that we really wanted to bring with us to America to start our new life with. We began to prepare our suitcases for the trip – only three bags were allowed per person: 2 32 kilogram bags and 1 10 kilogram hand bag. No one would be leaving empty handed – we each stuffed as much as we were allowed into the suitcases. Hauling and driving all of our heavy suitcases seemed to have been done in vain, as everything could have been bought at garage sales for so cheap, but still, we had have everything we could need when we arrived to America.



*Sasha and I. Goodbye Fergana!*

We gathered calmly, not in a rush. There was a man who wanted to buy our house from us. We made an agreement with him back in December. But now, March was here, and he was still not going through with the purchase. He kept saying that he didn't have the money, and kept stringing us along, saying, "I'm about to receive the money I need..." We kept waiting... Then, God sent us another serious person who came to our home and asked us to sell the house to him. We went with him to look at the house, and he really liked it, and he was okay with the price. That was on Sunday. On Wednesday we were supposed to fly out. On Monday, we told the first buyer that we were no longer selling the house. He came by and begged us to sell him the house. We told him he had to bring the money today. In the evening, we had to give an answer to the second buyer. The first buyer asked to extend his deadline to the next day. We told the second buyer that we felt uncomfortable refusing to sell the house to the first buyer, since he still wanted to buy it. But Wednesday came and there was still no money. So, we called the second buyer and told him that nothing worked out with the first one. He was delighted but said that he had already invested the money the day before into a product. However, he asked us to wait until dinner, so that he could collect the money and bring it. The first buyer also came by, without the money. We said: "Your time is up. We are selling to another person who will bring the money." He sat on the phone and called many different people to bring him money. He kept calling until five in the evening. At five o'clock the second buyer arrived and brought the money, so the first buyer had to leave. We don't know what this man wanted. Perhaps he wanted to trick us, keep putting things off till the very last minute, thinking that when we leave he could just occupy the house. But the Lord stood up for us and sent us a good man at the very last moment. And that was the answer to our second condition. Actually, we set one other condition: Tonya Brykova had to call us and say that she was waiting for us. Although it's hard to believe, the Lord sent us confirmation here, too. In the same moment, Tonya called us, asked us how our moving process was going and when we would arrive, insisting that she would meet us upon arrival. And now, after we received the answers to our conditions and the money, we felt a burden drop from our shoulders, and we took a deep breath.

We were leaving on Wednesday night in March of 1995. We went to Moscow by train, in a separate compartment. We bought the tickets in advance with great difficulty, as there were 10 of us traveling together. All those who moved away before us hosted a farewell evening. We had no time for an evening get-together, as we still had to finish packing everything. Besides, we did not have the finances to host something. Nevertheless, we decided to make some plov and prepare waffle cakes with cream. People came by all day to say goodbye. After church ended, even more brothers and sisters came by. Everyone was hungry, so we sat together, ate plov, and drank tea with some cake. Everyone wished for us to be blessed by the Lord at our new place. Of course, we did not know what awaited us, where we were going to live or how we would settle down. However, we were calm and confident that the Lord would bless us. The entire youth accompanied us to the station. The train was supposed to leave very early in the morning, and everyone was with us at the station. We sang a lot. It was difficult for the youth to part with us... Olga, Lina's friend, baked some rolls and buns so we'd have something for the road, and we drank tea with pleasure.

In Moscow, Vitalik met us with a car and loaded all our things. Kolya Stanislavsky – Vova's friend also met us, and Zhenya's mother with Andrey, Vera Spiridonova, and my sister with Lyudochka. As a family, we once again stayed with Raisa Vladimirovna. On March 21st we were flying out from Moscow to Sacramento. Vitalik accompanied us in Moscow and brought all our things to us. Zhenya's relatives and their relatives, Uncle Sasha with his wife, also came along. They brought us coffee and sandwiches, which gave us a good energy boost. After saying our goodbyes, we boarded the plane. Everything was so interesting, but it felt like we were in a dream... The plane was exceptionally large. We were very comfortable, and we were so carried away with everything that we hardly noticed that we were already landing in New York. We were accompanied by a doctor from Moscow, who took care of father, since his health was weak, and he had a weak heart. This doctor traveled with us all the way to Sacramento from New York, constantly keeping an eye on his condition.

In New York, we were greeted by special people who gave us their complete attention. First, we completed all the required documents. We handed them the forms that were given to us in Moscow. The line of those who flew to America for permanent residence was long. Then, they handed us our passports and all the documents, and



we went to collect our luggage. Many of our bags were torn. We had to pack our things back in and tie the bags. In New York, we checked our luggage in again, and we received it already in Sacramento. Thankfully, we received everything, and nothing was lost in travel. After we checked in the luggage, we were told of our next flights and on which airplanes we would fly.

The people who met us at the gate accompanied us for the rest of the time, making sure that we made it onto our next flight on time. In New York we were transported from one airport to another. Heavy rain was falling. Airports in the United States are very rich and beautiful. But to buy food there, we had to start using dollar bills. Vova bought us sandwiches with water to have as a snack. Everything was delicious but didn't seem like enough. We then flew on two more planes, and they fed us there.

We arrived in Sacramento after dark, around 10 pm. We were all tired, exhausted from the long flights. To our surprise and amazement, we were greeted by a lot of Christians, our Ferghana friends, and our sponsor – Volodya Perevertailo. Tonya Brykova organized everything and invited all the Ferghana residents living in Sacramento to greet us, and they arranged an evening for us so that everyone could greet us. First, everyone greeted us at the airport. Then everyone went to the house of our sponsor, Volodya, because he had a big enough living room to host everyone. Many of our Ferghana friends were there: Leonid Abramovich Fayer with his wife Liza, Nikolai Shevchenko with Tanya, Kolya Martynov with Tanechka, the Litvinovs, Zhirkovs... There was a lot of youth there as well... There was so much joy! When we entered the airport lounge, dad said a prayer, thanked God for the fact that we had arrived safely, that our friends had greeted us so warmly, and asked for the Lord to bless our stay on this new land. When we came to Volodya Perevertailo's house and sat down at the table, father said another prayer and we began to eat with grateful and joyful hearts. We never even dreamed of so much beauty on the tables before us: beautiful large apples, bananas, oranges, strawberries, various types of baked goods, cutlets, chickens, mushrooms, fish, and so much more. The phone rang – it was our Tanya calling to welcome us to the new land. Dad was handed the phone, and he talked, and everyone at the table was able to hear their conversation...

It was all new and interesting for us. We were asked a lot of questions: how was the homeland? How do people live there? How was the church there? We sang and listened to many wishes. The doctor who accompanied us was also with us at the evening. She asked to stay the night at someone's place, because the next day she was flying back. She said this was her first time at such an evening. She really enjoyed being around believers. Tonya took her in for the night, and in the morning took her to the airport. We, too, went to sleep after the guests, since we were all really tired. Our kids were taken in by Tonya, and Vera and Zhenya were taken in by Kolya and Tanya Martynov.

The next day and the following days, our sponsor, Vladimir Perevertaylo, began to take us to all of the places we needed to go to obtain certain government documents. First, we went to the welfare office, then we went to the social security office. At World Relief, we were given a check for our family of 200 dollars per person. So, we immediately received significant help with all of this. We then began to ride with Vladimir and look for a place for housing. We looked at several houses and we liked them all. Then the Litvinovs called and said that not far from them in a good area their landlord had a second house, and we could go take a look at it. We arrived there with Vladimir and checked it out. It was perfect for our family: there was an entryway corridor, to the right was a living room, to the left were three bedrooms, and going straight there was another room. Further, there was a nice kitchen and a large dining room, a separate laundry room, and a two-car garage. Rent was \$750 a month. This was feasible for our family, since Sasha, Marina, and I were receiving a welfare allowance. And our kids, Lina, Vova, Sasha and Natasha, were receiving their allowances separately. They were each given an allowance for 7 months, while they were supposed to learn English and go to school. Marina also went to school and started 9th grade, but Sasha and I did not study English. We filed for pensions. We soon received our social security and medical cards. Our friends were teaching us all the ins and outs for what we needed to do.

We started going to the doctor, and he immediately referred Sasha to a cardiologist for an appointment. The cardiologist sent Sasha to take one test, which did not go so well. He became covered in a cold sweat and passed out. Multiple doctors rushed in to help him. We were at the Methodist Hospital and Sasha was immediately taken



*Our first house in America*



*Our first car in America*



by an ambulance to Mercy Hospital. On the same day, April 20, 1995, Sasha underwent a procedure that was supposed to unclog the blood vessels of the heart. They started at 7.30 pm and finished at 9 o'clock. The procedure did nothing for him, and on April 21, 1995, Sasha underwent a coronary artery bypass grafting operation – 5 shunts were performed. The operation began at 7 a.m. When they took him in for the surgery, a nurse called me and offered for me to give him a kiss goodbye. Usually the operation goes well, but just in case, they wanted me to have a chance to say my farewells. Sasha was taken away, and I was left alone. I was very worried thinking about how the operation would go. As I sat in the hall waiting, I was so happy to see Lenya Litvinov with Vera and Tonechka Brykova, who came to sit and pray with me. They asked about Sasha's condition, prayed with me, and we waited for the surgery to end. The surgery took a long time – 5 hours. At times the doctor came out and reported that the operation was going well.



*By the White House in Sacramento*

That day, Darrell was supposed to come visit us for the first time, and the kids invited Olga Brykova to be a translator. They gathered at home, but when Darrell found out that Sasha had surgery, he invited everyone to go together to visit him. When they arrived, Sasha was already in his room after the operation. I stayed near him as he laid there with many tubes and machines and slept after the anesthesia. The doctor allowed all the youth to come into the room. They stayed for a while and were getting ready to leave. I wanted to stay with Sasha, but the nurse said that he would still be asleep for another 5 hours, so there was nothing for me to do there. She encouraged me to go with the kids. Darrell promised to bring me back after 5 hours, so we left together. First, Darell drove to a cafe with us and treated us to ice cream, coffee, and whatever else anyone wanted. Then we went back to the house. The kids had already prepared dinner ahead of time, so we sat down at the table. It turned out to be a friendly family gathering. During dinner, Darrell began to meet everyone. When it came to Lina's turn, he asked how old she was. She said: «32.» She caught his eye, so he asked her again: «32?» Having received a positive answer, he began to get acquainted with the others. We had a good time together, and then Darrell suggested going to the White House. There we walked around a bit and explored, and then headed back to the hospital.



Sasha was still sleeping. Everyone stayed a little and went home, but I stayed with him. A nurse came and said that it was time for Sasha to wake up, so I began to wake him. However, all my efforts were in vain. He continued to sleep... 7 hours had passed, and he was still sleeping. I called to him: "Sasha, Sasha! Open your eyes!" I stroked his hand in an attempt to wake him up, and when I asked him to move his fingers, to my joy, he moved his hand! Thank God! He heard me! That meant he'd wake up soon! I was so afraid that he wouldn't wake up from an overdose of anesthesia. Slowly, he opened his eyes. He could not talk, because his mouth was sealed with 2 tubes sticking out of it, one from the stomach, and the other from the lungs. There were wires everywhere and machines in the room... He was getting blood from a plastic bag. An artificial heart and artificial respirator were connected to a machine as well. The nurse came by often and kept an eye on him. She said that everything was going well so far.



*Newspaper with the message that the Maltsevs arrived in Sacramento*

The next day, a male doctor came and began to remove the tubes from his mouth. Through the tube that was in the stomach, he sucked liquid out from the stomach with a syringe and then pulled out the tube. Now a very difficult procedure was about to happen. Sasha had to fill his lungs with air and then the doctor would remove the tube from his mouth and turn off the artificial respirator. It was terrible... They put a mask on Sasha's mouth and forced him to breathe in air. He inhaled again and again. His eyes were already bulging out, but only a small amount of air had gotten into his lungs. The doctor then removed the mask and left his mouth sealed with the breathing tube still in there. He said that he would come back soon. About an hour later he came back. I was praying, "Lord, help him get enough air." This time the doctor explained to him how to breathe better by opening the lungs so that they can get filled with air. Sasha began to breathe in again through the mask. He quickly became

very tense and his eyes were already rolling and looking like they were about to burst. The doctor kept saying, «More, more!» and I begged him as well, saying, «Sasha, more! Sasha! Keep trying!» Then the doctor yanked out the tube and took the seal off his mouth. Sasha began to breathe on his own! Oh, praise God! Finally, the torment was over. It's a good thing that a person doesn't really know in advance what he has to endure and doesn't worry about it ahead of time but simply follows the instructions of the doctor. If I were offered the operation right now on my heart, even if it was deemed necessary, I would not agree to it. To endure such torment, I would rather take as long as I am given to live instead.

On the third day, the nurse wrote on the blackboard: wake up at 3 o'clock in the morning, wash, shave and go to a different room. Sasha couldn't believe it, saying, "Are they in their right minds? They expect me to get up on the third day after such an intense operation?" But it really did happen. The nurse came and said, "Alex, get up!" He said: "I can't. There's wires all around me." She replied, "That's alright, they won't interfere. I'll help you». And the strong nurse came up to him and picked him up. First, she sat him up, then she helped him stand up. They then put him in a wheelchair and moved all the devices to the cart and drove him to another room. In this way, on April 24th, Sasha was transferred to a separate room in Mercy Hospital. Every day they forced him to walk around the hall there. First with a nurse, then with me. On April 25th they brought us some real flowers in a pot. They were very big and fluffy. Darell ordered these for dad and brought them to the hospital. I was with Sasha in the hospital all the time. Good thing I knew a little bit of the English language. I understood some of what the doctors were saying. Tonya gave me a Russian-English dictionary. If I didn't understand what they were trying to tell me, they translated through this dictionary. Everything was interesting to us: we were in a new country, the hospitals were very equipped and had comfortable rooms, each patient had a separate room with a toilet and shower, they brought food to eat on time, and they brought a menu and asked what you wanted to order.



*Sasha after surgery and I*

We were discharged on Monday. We invited Fyodor Petrovich Karpets to help us, and he translated the doctor's advice for us on how to behave after the operation, regarding which medications to take and how much of them. Before the operation, the translator was also Fedor Petrovich Karpets. He had told us that Sasha's heart needed surgery and told us how the operation would go and how it would help us. So, from the very beginning of our arrival in America, we met Fedor Petrovich Karpets. He knows us well and is always interested in Sasha's health.

Now Sasha and I were at home together all the time. Every day we went on walks. The weather had calmed down, and it stopped raining and became warm here. The kids went to school. Sometimes the kids went on adventures with Darrell, and Sasha and I were left alone. We read the Bible, prayed, and rested. Vera often came with Zhenya and Evelinokha. Life had become completely different. I finally had the opportunity to just relax. There were comforts everywhere. Washing clothes took almost no time. Our landlords installed a new washing machine, a new dryer, and a new refrigerator. Everything was clean and spacious. Sasha felt much better after the surgery. Gradually, we began to go to church again, and Kostya Zhirkov often drove us. We visited the church where Kostya Zhirkov was the pastor. We often hosted youth gatherings, men's leadership gatherings, and other events at our home.

I remember how one time the youth had gathered at our house. It was a holiday – Halloween. The children who were trick or treating began knocking on our door, so I had to sit by the garage, watch for those who came and tell them to keep going, so that they would not interfere. Good thing it was raining, so the trick or treating quickly stopped.

One time in Sacramento there was a youth gathering, and our youth met with some other church youth from Salt Lake City. Since then, Igor Mayurov started to come to Sacramento more often and meet with Natasha. They both fell in love and couldn't wait to see each other every time. This did not last long. Pretty soon his sisters arrived with him and his father, and Igor and Natasha got engaged. The wedding was scheduled for January. For Christmas, Natasha went to Salt Lake City. She and Igor rented an apartment and began to decorate and furnish their new home. Lina and Darell also started to develop a close relationship. In October, Darrell proposed to Lina, and they were engaged! His parents and sisters arrived for an engagement dinner, and we invited Kostya Zhirkov, as well Victor Fayer and his wife. The dinner was very interesting. The wedding was scheduled for May.

## Pavlik

A big event for our family was Pavlik's decision to marry. One day, Valya called us from Ferghana and said, "Pavlik is getting married!"

We immediately called Pavlik. He said he had traveled to Frunze and proposed to Lyuba Shumkova, a girl from a large Christian family. Their family has 16 children. Lyuba is the second oldest. Pavlik liked her for a long time but had a hard time making up his mind about proposing to her. We knew about this family and about his wish to be married to Lyuba. We approved of his decision and gave our consent. We gave him \$500 as a wedding gift. Pavlik was very pleased.

The wedding took place in Frunze. The ceremony was held in a church. The reception took place in the courtyard of the church. There were many guests. Although a video was not recorded, many photos were taken. Everybody in Ferghana liked Lyubochka. She began to sing in the choir. They moved to our family home in Fergana and keep it in good order. Pavlik remodels annually. During the seven years that we lived in America, 4 grandchildren were born in Ferghana, two boys and two girls: Roman, Olga, Alexey, and Galina. The kids are precious. We can say that Lyuba is a good wife, a loving mother, and a good housekeeper.





*Pavel and Lyuba's wedding in Frunze*

# Wedding

In January of 1996, our whole family and our friends went to our Natasha's wedding. Luda Krichun, one of our new friends in America, agreed to dress up Natasha. We met the Krichun family through the Brykovs, when Vovchik invited those from Ferghana over – the Brykovs, Litvinovs, and Balatskys – for his first birthday in America. Their close friends were invited together with them, among whom was the Krichun family – Luda, Larisa, Vladimir, Tanya, Irina and Eugene. They were a very nice, hospitable, and kind Christian family.



*Daniel was born to Zhenya's and Vera in America*

Luda was supposed to arrive late in the evening the day before the wedding, in order to help Natasha get dressed and ready in the morning. Our family drove to Salt Lake City on Darrell's bus. Darrell was also supposed to fly in before the wedding. Vovchik already knew the road well, and he knew the house in the city we were supposed to arrive at. The weather was cold the whole way, and a cold wind was blowing. On the road, our front tire went flat at full speed. Vovchik managed to hold the steering wheel steady. The car pulled over to the side and safely stopped. Vovchik and Sasha began to put a spare tire on, and we would sometimes get out of the car. It was terribly cold... but then everything was fixed, and we kept driving. Before entering Salt Lake City, heavy snow began to fall and road signs were unreadable. But Vovchik remembered the road well, and soon we safely arrived at the place. We were fed really well and put to bed. We stayed at Natasha's and Sasha's, Igor's sister. In the morning, everyone headed to the American church, where the ceremony was supposed to take place. Since the church was still closed, we went into Valentin Subbotin's house. He attended that church, was a deacon there,



and they arranged to have the wedding ceremony there. The Subbotins already had our Natasha in the house, all beautiful and dressed up. She was already ready for the wedding. Then Lyudochka examined us all, made some corrections to our clothes, and styled our hair very well. A lot of snow had already fallen, so the sidewalks had to be cleaned with a tractor. By the appointed time, everyone was already in place. The wedding was conducted by dad. The choir sang. Our Sasha and Petya Gurlov were Igor's groomsmen. Natasha's bridesmaids were Olga Reimer and Lena Subbotina. There were a lot of visitors, and the youth came from our church, as well as Vera with Zhenya, Evelinochka, Danik and Zhenya's dad.



*Natasha's and Igor's wedding*

The wedding ceremony was lively and interesting. After the wedding ceremony, everyone congratulated the young couple and took pictures. Then we went to the wedding feast — it was at a different place. It was at a military unit club and was decorated by Olga Brykova and her friends. The tables were overflowing with rich and delicious food. The wedding was proceeding calmly. Wedding songs were sung and many gave their best wishes to the young couple — Darrell sang in English and played the clarinet. We finally left our Natasha in Salt Lake City. Now they already have their own house and two beautiful kids — a boy, Vitaliy, and a girl, Tanya.

In the month of March, we moved to a new house. It was a three-bedroom house, with a garage and a fenced yard. It was not far from church. And despite the fact that it was possible to arrive there in 5 minutes by walking, we drove by car. Dad easily drove the car. We didn't have to drive on the freeway, and dad was not afraid to drive through the streets. We lived in this house for 6 months. It was also a blessing for us, just like the first one. From this house, Lina and Darrell, with their friends, went to the marital registry office. From this house, Lina got married. The wedding was celebrated on May 4 in Chester. The first time we went to Chester was before the wedding. Tonya Brykova and Mrs. Zina Borodaeva came with us. They agreed to help us with the food preparations. The road to Chester was very beautiful. We were delighted by this beauty — the mighty



forests, the river, and mountains covered with trees. In Chester itself, there is a beautiful lake. Tanya, with Pavlik and their children, Nadia, with Tolik and their children, Victor, with his wife and children, Larisa, and Natasha, all came to Lina's and Darrel's wedding. They all sang very well. Lina invited Vena Portansky to be a translator at the wedding.

The pastor of the church that Darell attended was the first to give a sermon. The sermon was very interesting. He talked about the providence of God — Lina had to come to America and meet Darrell. Oh, how the Lord takes care of His children! His paths are mysterious! The Lord directed them to each other, and they saw the will of God in this. The pastor said that he is happy for his friend Darrell and blesses him. After that, the choir sang. The young couple was already waiting at the entrance... When they gave a sign to go, the first to go were the children — Igor and Svetlana. Then came Angelina and Darrell, and after them the bridesmaids and groomsmen. Dad officiated the wedding ceremony. Vena Portansky translated. There were many Americans, so the translation services were very necessary. Everyone was very pleased. There were four pastors at the wedding, and they all really liked how dad officiated the wedding ceremony. I really liked that the young couple greeted their parents and called them “dad and mom” — this is very good. Even now, Darrell keeps calling us «Dad, “Daddy”, and “Mom.» How awesome is that! I know families where the spouses did not want to call the parents of the other “dad and mom”, despite the fact that both were from good Christian families. The ceremony was followed by the singing of a choir. Strong, experienced voices sang. After the ceremony, everyone congratulated and welcomed the young couple.

Then we went to the wedding reception. It was in another church. Everything was all ready and decorated there, but a lot of running around had to be done for the food preparations on the tables. The plov was prepared by Kolya Martynov in advance. But the mashed potatoes were prepared on the spot. They did not put anyone in charge of serving the food. So, whoever agreed at that time were the ones who helped. Nevertheless, they quickly served the tables, and the reception went very well. There was a lot of participation — both Americans, Russians,



*Second house in America*



*Darrell's and Lina's wedding*

and children participated. Lina and her husband began to live in the new home of their parents — a large three-bedroom house, very comfortable and warm. Now they live in their house in Chico, CA. They're raising three wonderful sons: Andrey, Venochka and Jordan. We sometimes visit them. We're met with very warm hospitality and care for us from their side. They really want us to live with them. We really like being there with them, but we can't be without the Russian church.

After the wedding, our children and grandchildren who came from Minnesota stayed with us for a few more days. They traveled to interesting places and had a good vacation. When the children stayed at home, we went with them to the river near our house. There was a tree that had fallen from one side of the river to the other, and we crossed it with the children. We also walked along our streets and looked at beautiful houses. The children behaved well. Soon they left. We were very glad to see our children and grandchildren. After Lina got married, dad and I were often the only two at home. Vovchik worked in Chester, and Sasha would also leave. American Avenue 2323 — it was a blessing for us, especially since our Sasha repented during the Easter holidays. Dad and I were so happy! Sasha really changed then and became a new man. He read the Bible daily and for long periods of time. He prayed, and we'd often would pray with him. Oh, how nice it was! But this joy lasted only until the New Year. Sasha didn't come to the New Year's Eve night because of resentment and celebrated the New Year with a new company of friends that took him on the path of sin, on the path of destruction. One group of friends was replaced by another, but it was even worse. Dad and I pray daily for his repentance. If he made a Friend, the best Friend and Savior Jesus Christ, he would be rewarded in this world. The Lord takes care of his children and would've taken care of him too. What could be more important in this life?

In the summer, we welcomed Valya and Vitalik, with Yurochka and Vovik — they stayed with us. Kolya quickly found an apartment for them, and they moved to their nest. They lived close to the Minnikov church and began to attend it. At this same time, my brother Benjamin came to visit us. He was able to travel around America. He was in Minnesota with our children, and Darrell took him with along. They drove in a van and he saw a lot of beautiful nature. We were even with him at the San Francisco Zoo. We also visited the planetarium and went to the ocean. And although it was cold, Benjamin swam in the ocean. When we were in stores, he was surprised, and tears flowed down his cheeks. He said, «I thought that America was rich, living in abundance, but I could



have never imagined such abundance... I am happy for you, Lina, that you live in this beautiful country.» In this same house, when we were moving out, and were supposed to vacate this house by agreement, Sergey Bogdanov also visited us. Vovchik drove him to Chester and to Salt Lake City.

In the month of September, we moved to live in a cheap apartment on 24 Street. There we lived a year and a half. In the beginning of 1997, I underwent a surgery where they removed varicose veins from my right leg. In February, we went to visit Lina — she was about to give birth. Zhenya and I, Darrel's mother and father, the pastor of their church, and Darrell's sister gathered in the Chester hospital, where Darrell worked, and prayed that Lina would give birth safely. The pastor invited us all to join hands, so we stood in a circle, joined hands, and the pastor said a prayer. Soon we heard the long-awaited cry of a baby — Andrey was born. Dad and I spent the first few days with Lina. Interestingly, on the second day, Darrell put naked Andrey by the window so the sun rays could reach him. We were afraid that the child would get sick, but everything went well. Andrey grew up well and never

got sick. In the summer, Lina and Darrell went to travel, and Dad and I watched Andrey. Lina and her husband visited Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, England and safely arrived at home. Andrey was already with Darrell's mother, since he was supposed to get vaccinated.

In August of 1997, I received a pension. We decided to buy a house. We found a suitable house but did not agree on the price. Then, dad and I decided to go to Minnesota to our children, Tanya and Nadia, to see how they live, and relax with them in the «North». Our flight and arrival went well. The children met us with Pavlik, and soon we arrived at Tanya's and Pavlik's house. The children greeted us very well. Everyone already grew up a good amount. They became smart and intelligent. Grandma gave them their presents — they were simple but given with love. The children were happy. Nadya and her children also came to Tanya's, so we immediately met everyone. We went with Pavlik to church. On Sunday, Nadia and Tolik decided to bring Vladimir and Mark to church for a blessing. The daughter of Vladimir Subbotin, with her husband, also brought their daughter for a blessing. So, there were three children, and three ministers prayed over the children. It was so reverent! The whole church service was very good. The theme was: «As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.» There were many poems and songs. Burtseva Nina was asked to share how they prayed for their children, who were far from the Lord, and how they returned and now stood on the path of truth. She told the story with tears in her eyes, saying that they attended a prayer group and prayed for 5 years, until an awakening among the youth began. And now, her sons and daughters are serving the Lord... The whole church thanked the Lord for His wonderful deeds! When we returned home, we were offered to purchase the house, the one that we wanted. So, we bought it, and



*Nikolai Martinov cooking national Uzbek dish-Plov*





*Sasha giving blessing to Andrew, Lina and Darrell's firstborn*

now we've been living in it for 4 years. The house has become beautiful. Many fruit trees have grown, and there was already a harvest — delicious apricots, peaches, oranges, apples, plums, grapes...

In the first years, we planted tomatoes, cucumbers, and bell peppers... The crop was good. In June of 1998, Spiridonov Vera, Sasha, and their 14 children, arrived. Their family is big and friendly. Darrell and Lina took in the older girls, but the parents, with Lena and the younger children, stayed with us. We often took walks around our neighborhood with the children. We looked for houses for rent — often traveling long distances. Lina and Darrell found a home for them. One Chinese woman decided to rent out her house to this big family. They told her that there were 10 people and she agreed. We thought some of the children would stay with us temporarily and some with Lina. But when the older girls were washing the windows and cleaning the house, the landlord asked Lina, "How many children do they have?" Lina did not want to tell her. The landlord said, "Everyone can live here. Just add another \$30 to the \$800 monthly bill, but they all need to behave and treat everything respectfully." After living in the landlord's house for 2 years, they got an opportunity to buy their own house. It was very nice, comfortable and big, perfect for their family. While they lived with us, we had a lot of fun with them. They were a friendly and cheerful family. We set up 2 tables in our living room, and the family was very friendly and had great manners while sitting at the table. They ate everything we served them without hesitation. Well done! Lenochka served a lot as well, like a second mother. She's a good girl.

Soon after they left, our Anechka and her family arrived. First, they were living in the apartment where Valya lived. Soon after, they were offered to live in another place and began to live in a house not far from ours. They began to attend our church as well. Next to them was a college. They attended the college and worked, and it suited them well. Then the Lord sent them another child, Eduard. They had little space for another child, but the Lord gave them the opportunity to buy their own house. The house they purchased was nice, interesting, and just right for their family. We are very pleased that the Lord blessed them.

For a long time, it was quiet at our place since only a few people lived there. But then Lina and Darell suggested that they live with us and decided to help us pay off the debt that we owed for our house. Sasha and I are very grateful to the Lord that Darrell takes care of us, looks into our needs, and helps us out. He always tries to do something good, and not only to us but to everyone with whom he comes in contact with. Venochka was born in our house. Often his grandfather rocked him to sleep. So, he grew up in our house. We soon paid off our debts, and now sleep peacefully. How nice it is to live without debt! But we lived in debt for so long! In Ferghana when we bought our first house, we had to get credit. And when we bought the second house, we were 9 thousand in debt. The house we bought on Internatsionalnaya Street, both the first and the second, we were in even more debt ... Oh how this debt tormented us ... it did not give us any rest. It's good that we at least left the country without debt.

In June of 2000, we celebrated 40 years of marriage with our kids and their families. Nadia and Tolik arrived with their children, Tanya and Pavlik came with their children, Natasha came with Igor and their children, Vera with her kids, Lina and Darell with their children, Vova, and Marina. We decided to celebrate in surrounded by nature at a park where we grilled shishkabobs. The kids swam in the lake and rode on the boat. Tonya Brykova came to celebrate with us as well. The grandchildren told us their wishes in poems, and Tanya's children sang us a very good hymn with the words which Pavlik composed himself. Oh, how beautiful they sang! Well done! Near the lake, a breeze was blowing under the trees, and it was cool. We were very pleased with this anniversary celebration, surrounded by our children and grandchildren.

In September, Pavlik came to visit us. After his arrival, we learned that his status had lost force and that he could no longer come here on refugee status. It was September 15, but the status had ended on August 31. We wrote a petition to restore the status, but to no avail. Pavlik America liked it here in America, but it was too late. He stayed with us until December and left.

This year, Sasha, Vova, Marina and I all passed our citizenship test. Now we have applied for Pavlik to come to America. We have to wait until the case is looked over, which usually takes about 810-825 days. What will happen in the meantime?

July 21st was Marina's wedding day. Tanya and Pavlik arrived, along with Natasha and Igor. The wedding was on Saturday in the groom's yard. Brandon's mom put in a lot of time and care into the preparation for the wedding. We met Brandon's parents, and the wedding went very well in general. A pastor officiated the wedding, and everything was well thought out in advance and completed on schedule. There were invited guests from both sides of the family. Daniel carried the rings, and Evelina gently tossed flowers on the path for the bride. It was a grand moment when the long-awaited bride came out, with beautiful music playing in the background... Everything was so perfect! Before and after the ceremony, the Spiridonov girls sang 2 song, «May the sun shine brightly on your life...» After the ceremony, we took



*Son Sasha*





*Marina and Brandon's wedding*

pictures and the photos looked amazing. Now, Marina and Brandon live in their own comfortable home with Mika, their dog, and Vaska, their cat.

My birthday is coming up on December 14th. I will be 66 years old. Whether we live to see it or not, God alone knows. His coming is very soon! And the day of our departure to be with our Father could be even sooner. I would like our whole family to meet again in heaven at the White Throne and spend the rest of our days together with the Lord!



*I am 66 years old*

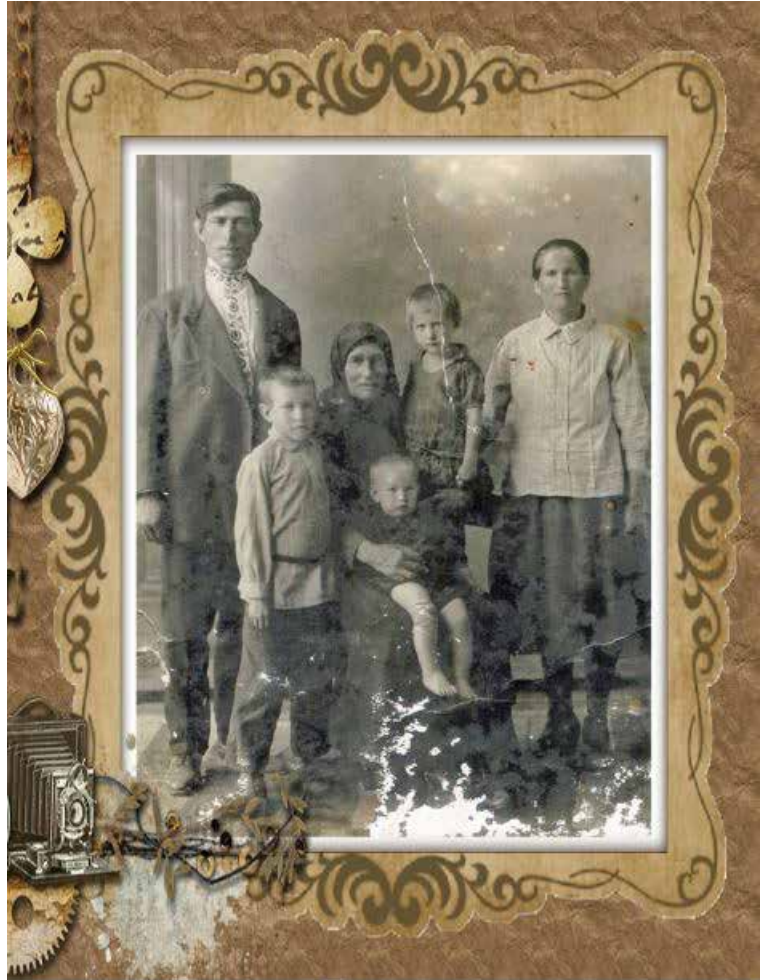


# Maltsev Family

Sasha's parents lived in the city of Kamen-on-Ob. His dad was a tall, slender guy. Everything his hands touched turned to gold. He could fix anything. Everyone loved him because he didn't wait for someone to tell who to help but he looked for ways to help people on his own. His parents were Orthodox Christians. His mom was short but she was truly beautiful. During his parents' wedding ceremony in the Orthodox Church, everyone exclaimed, "What a beautiful bride!" His mom and dad lived peacefully while his dad worked and his mom stayed home with the kids.

In all they had 9 children in their family. Two children died while they were still infants and the other seven grew up and had their own families. Sasha was the seventh child in the family, and he spent his childhood in the city of Kamen-na-Obi. It was a big, beautiful city on the left bank of Ob. Ob is a big river, more than a kilometer wide, which had large steamers passing through it. Huge barges transported timber on huge rafts. In winter the river freezes over and large tractors and cars drive along it. The people make ice holes to reach the water, which was brought home on sleds in tubs. These tubs usually stood in the entryway with ice floating in them, and the people had to bathe in this freezing cold water. In the summer, children and adults bathed in the river on specially designated beaches. The Ob River is longer than the Volga and the town Kamen-na-Obi is located between Novosibirsk and Barnaul.

The house that Sasha spent his childhood in consisted of two large rooms and a canopy. The canopy was not small, reaching the length of the entire house. In the first room there was a Russian stove with a stove bench along with a table where the whole family gathered. The second room had three windows and it was known as the bright room where many guests gathered. Sasha's mom and dad repented and received water baptism when they already had a family. When the war began, dad and their eldest son Nicholas were taken to the army. Kolya served in the labor army, and dad was taken to the front. During the battle on the Kursk Bulge, Dad was injured with seven fragments that hit him. One fragment was in the lung close to the heart, so they did not take it out. Therefore, he had to carry it for the rest of his life. Dad was treated in the hospital, and when he recovered he was sent to a labor camp in the city of Chkalov, present day Orenburg. There he worked until the end of the war which was 1945, and then he returned home. Sasha went to school during the war in 1943. When the war ended, he finished second grade. Sasha studied well at school. He was very smart, had a good memory and his teachers often praised him for his interesting compositions. He read a lot of interesting books and easily remembered what he read. This ability helped him to always be a compelling conversationalist. Even now he could surprise any person with his knowledge. I was often amazed when I was present during his



*Maltsev family*

conversations with other people. He knows so much and correctly understands everything in politics, literature, geography and in history! He knew many texts of the Holy Scripture by heart, and he knew the places where certain Bible ideas were written.

When he repented he was a seventeen-year-old boy in Ferghana and the whole family already moved from Kamen-on-Ob to Ferghana in 1952. At first they lived in an apartment at the Brusnikovs family. Then they were allocated a plot of land for building a house, and they started building it themselves brick by brick. Sasha threw together clay in the morning before work, and Volodya and Venya formed two bricks in two molds. By fall the house was ready. It was large and comfortable and a veranda, a corridor and five rooms. Church meetings in Ferghana took place along Krupskaya Street, where they are still taking place today.

In 1952 when Sasha's family arrived in Ferghana, Peter Ivanovich Chekmarev who was respected by all and a beloved brother, was still a teacher of the Church. He often invited youth over to his house and hosted many discussions with them. Many came to the Lord through these conversations including Sasha, and he repented right in his home. After his repentance, he began to study the Holy Scriptures along with his friend Sasha Panibrattsev. They often went out into the field and there they read the gospel together and exchanged thoughts about what they read. They were good friends and understood each other perfectly.

In July of 1954, Sasha was taken into the army, and he returned in December 1957. He immediately joined the youth group, zealously visiting neighboring towns with the youth and sometimes even alone. In the army he served in Turkmenistan, where he also attended church gatherings whenever possible. He had a really good time in Ashgabat. I came to Fergana in the summer of 1958, and there for the first time met Sasha. I remember that after the morning church service we gathered at aunt Katya Burtseva's apartment, opposite of the market.

Sasha invited two brothers to speak about the Word, then they sang some hymns, and after he walked up in front of youth with his hat for an offering, and everyone put in as much money as they could. We bought fruits at the bazaar and went to visit the sick. This happened often. In the evening we gathered at Peter Ivanovich Chekmarev's house and we started going through a book called, «On Grace» which was a very serious and necessary book. The youth knew the Word of God well and was well instructed. There was love instilled for the Word of God. We were constantly reading and studying the Word of God, and we preferred that over everything else. Knowing the Word of God, we easily solved even the most difficult riddles. They learned the Golden Verses by heart, and knew the places where they were written.

In February of 1959, I again arrived in Ferghana for the winter holidays where my first serious meeting with Sasha took place, a conversation about a friend of life and about the will of God. Subsequently, I joined this large Maltsev family. Now the Maltsevs - Pavlik, Vovchik and Sasha became the successors of our name. Pavlik has four children, and two of them are boys - Maltsev Roma and Maltsev Alexey. Vovchik and Sasha have not yet met with their bride to be. But our beautiful daughters, eight in all, changed the name of Maltsevs to the names of their husbands: Martynov, Chekmarev, Lelyukh, Dorozhin, Mayurov, Daugherty, Sullivan. They brought into the world beautiful sons and daughters for their husbands; now Sasha and I have 43 wonderful grandchildren. It is very interesting that God allowed such miracles in our life that we now have something that never even crossed our minds - God moved us to another country, the richest and most powerful country on earth. Did we ever think that we would live on Uncle Sam's land and not be slaves, but instead be full-fledged citizens of this country and enjoy all the benefits of it? We thank God with all of our hearts for His providence, that living here we can help the poor in our country from where we came from. Moreover, there are good churches here where the soul could rest and enjoy communion with God and our brothers and sisters. Praise God that we spent at least a small segment of our lives living in this country, resting and not having worries about tomorrow. What a wonderful country with so many interesting things and beauty in it!!!

Life is so interesting and diverse. Looking at this beauty, I would like to mentally imagine the beauty of Heavenly Jerusalem ... How many wonderful hymns we hear here on the radio about Jerusalem ... And now nothing on Earth is holding back Dad and I from walking into the heavenly city. This is our desire. Do not cry when we leave the earth. Rather sing joyful songs - after all, it is the dream of every Christian to go to the Lord in

Eternal Joy! We will meet there with Jesus and with all the saints, among whom are our parents and our children, who left before us - Venochka and Lyubochka ... Sing this hymn at our funeral:

Your city is not here, in the middle of the dead desert. The kingdom of sinful passions,  
Where the hearts of those darkened by disbelief are dirty in the embrace of crafty nets.  
Oh no! You are only a stranger to that heavenly city, the Builder of which is God,  
He is your rest and a holy joy in the sad valley of troubles!

## The Years Are Passing By

### *Года уходят*

*О, милые мои года!  
Вы мчитесь быстро, как вода,  
Вас не остановить никак,  
И не вернуть деньки назад.*

*Вам Бог черёд установил,  
Могучей силой наделил —  
Всё вдаль с собою уносить.  
Да... я хотел бы вас просить:*

*Несите вы с собою вдаль  
Невзгоды, горе и печаль,  
Обиды, горечь, суету  
И сердца жгучую тоску.*

*(Poems by Pavel Lelyukh)*

In 2002, all of the kids planned a reunion in Sacramento, in July, for Papa's birthday...and here is the long-awaited gathering...

17 people flew in from Minnesota- Tanya's and Nadya's families. Natasha and Igor's family came from Utah. All of the Californian relatives also gathered. Here comes Zhenya with the guests on Vovchik's bus...papa greets the guests on the patio...so much surreal joy!!! The gathering, embraces, kisses, presents...And, finally, a big family dinner...

We planned the entire stay ahead of time: visiting the bay in San Francisco, seeing the planetarium, going to 6 Flags, swimming in a pool, visiting reserves, and most importantly attending papa's birthday on July 25th! We bought a huge cake and lit 67 candles...The grandkids all gave their wishes and everyone gifted him a single red rose. As a result, there was one impressive bouquet. The adults also rejoiced, remembering the years that passed, the blessings and hardships, victories and losses, and wished the birthday boy spiritual and physical vigor. We took family pictures for memory: everyone together, a separate one with children only, and a separate one with our grandkids... After a good visit, the kids flew and drove back to their homes.

An important part of this year was seeing Vovchik and Zhannochka. Beautiful, poised, smart, passionate, and God-fearing...she immediately turned her attention to Vovchik. She was the type of spouse he asked God for. There was one thing that concerned him- their age difference. He was a lot older than her. Yet, he saw that she was drawn to him and he prayed a lot, awaiting a response from God. He finally decided to propose. She agreed. Papa





*Our Family. 2002. Meeting all kids for dad's birthday 67 years*



*Grandma and Grandpa with the Grandkids*



was able to attend their engagement party. I really liked when Zhanna's dad prayed. His reverent prayer brought me to tears. I was happy that Zhannochka was raised in such a God-fearing family.

They scheduled the wedding for January 21, 2003. Paul came to the wedding. The day of the wedding was sunny and warm. Papa and I were able to attend the ceremony and reception. During the ceremony, Pastor Konstantin Ivanovich Zhirkov noted that a wife is a gift from God and she must be cherished and valued! The choir sang remarkably! All the attendees shared in the joy of the bride and groom! After the ceremony, the newlyweds and youth went to the White House (California State Capitol Museum) to take photographs.

Then came the reception. The guests take their seats. The music is playing. The newlyweds walk in on the white aisle runner. The host asks the groom to pray a blessing over the reception and food. There were a lot of guests but there was plenty of room for everyone. There was so much participation: wishes, singing, poetry reading, and the orchestra played. They even had a slideshow about the bride and groom's childhood and youth. Late into the evening, everyone left home happy and content. Vovchik returned home—no longer alone but with his wife. He prepared the “bell-tower” room for himself on the second floor with a separate living room and kitchen which his friends and relatives helped prepare!



*Vovchik and Zhannochka's Wedding Ceremony*

Zhannochka turned out to be social and skillful. When we had guests visiting Papa, she always set the table. On May 19th, my sister Mila came to visit from Spokane with her husband and daughter Liliya. They visited us with my sister Vera along with my nephew (my brother Veniamin's son) and his wife. We had some heartfelt fellowship. Papa sat with us and participated in our discussion. He was happy that he was able to attend Vovchik's wedding. We started watching the wedding video. Papa noted that Zhannochka is a wonderful homemaker and



*Vovchik and Zhanna's wedding*

that was obvious with the food and setup on the table. The following day, Lina picked us up to take to her place. Papa had long promised Darrell that when Paul would leave home, we would visit.

It was the tenth day since Paul left, so we decided to visit Lina. Papa took the road well. Darrell greeted us and helped papa get up to the patio. We talked a bit and then Darrell went to work. Lina prepared manti for dinner and Papa ate them with great pleasure. He felt good. We were all happy. In the evening, we all wanted to sit in Lina's room. We brought a chair to her room and I led papa to it. Papa wanted to sit down. As he turned to sit, he tripped over the chair's foot and fell. I couldn't keep him from falling and fell with him. Papa got up on his knees but couldn't stand on his feet. He put in all his strength.... Lina tried to help...but it was all pointless. We called the neighbor with her son for help but they couldn't help either. I offered to call the ambulance. They would've helped at once but Papa didn't let. Then we called Darrell. He came home with a nurse, a healthy and strong woman, and the six of us picked Papa up and sat him down on that chair. Darrell brought oxygen from the neighbors and gave it to Papa. He felt better. I gave him some medicine and he felt well...But I was very concerned about him. He used to say, "If I fall, I will never get up again." And it happened. His blood pressure wasn't high but his heart pounded very fast while his pulse was slow.

Night came and we all went to sleep...Darrell returned from work and checked on us asking how papa felt. Papa responded that he felt fine. But we couldn't sleep...Papa's condition was poor even though he tried not to show it. I sat next to him on a chair and was ready to do whatever he wanted...My longing to sleep took over and I lay next to him. I hugged him. I really wanted morning to come hoping that he would feel better. But he wasn't feeling better. At 7a.m., I offered to call the ambulance and go to the hospital. He wanted me to ask Darrell if I would be allowed in the hospital with him. We called Darrell and asked him. He answered that I could obviously stay with him at the hospital. That is when Sasha allowed us to call the ambulance. Five minutes hadn't passed when the room was filled with healthy and strong men. They checked Papa's blood pressure, listened to his heart,



and automatically called in a special transportation car. They performed an EKG and said, “We must go to the hospital.” Papa agreed.

And so we ended up in the hospital. The charge cardiologist examined Papa and ran the needed tests...I was next to Sasha while Lina was in the hallway.

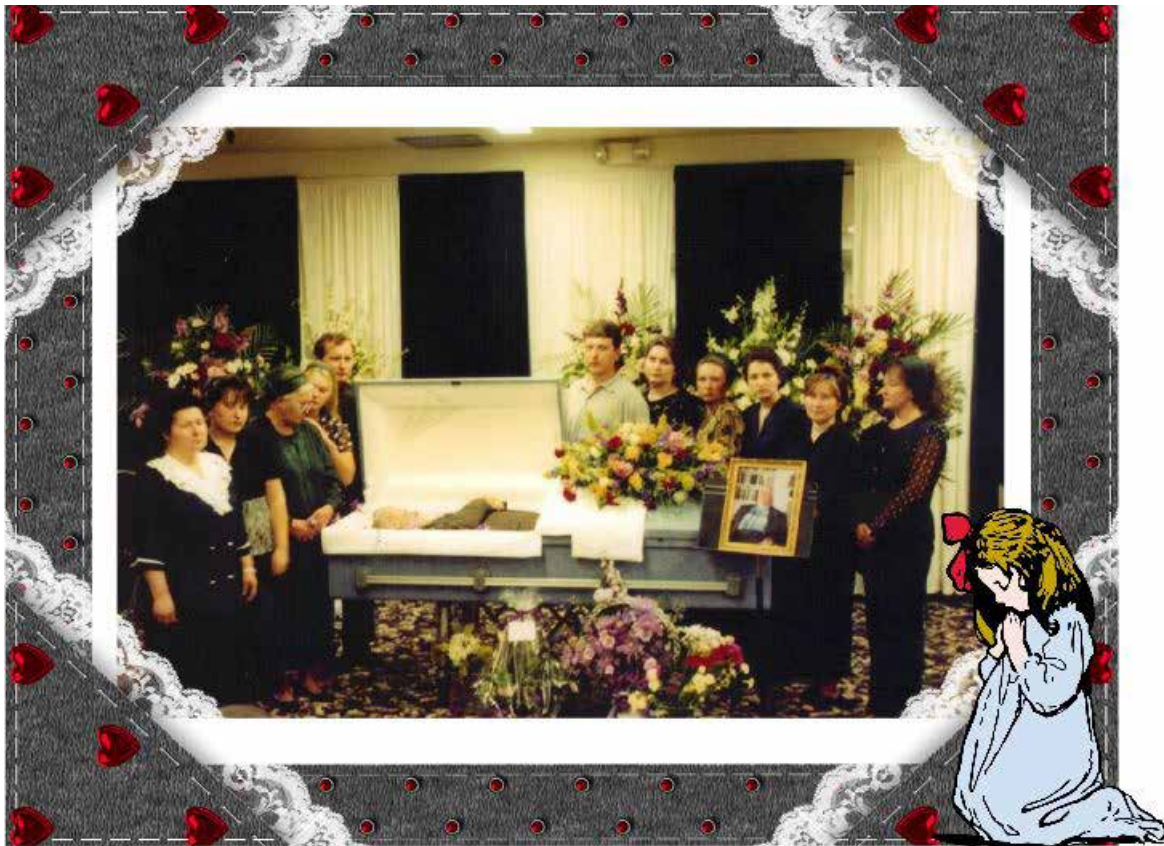
I saw the doctor come up to Lina and tell her something. She cried and walked away. We were transferred to a different room. Different doctors came in for second opinion consultations. Then came the cardiologist and asked Papa, “If your heart stops, would you like us to resuscitate you back to life?” Sasha started asking me and I answered, “Of course, I want you to be alive.” Then Sasha asked them to resuscitate him...They connected different systems to his body. They put tubes into his mouth and taped his mouth. Now he couldn’t talk to me. After some time, he showed me that he wanted to write something to me. I gave him a paper and pencil. He wrote, “I know what I will die.” I responded, “Everything will be okay, don’t worry.” Despite his difficult state, I couldn’t let the thought of him dying come to me...He’s been in difficult stages so many times and always survived...And now he was in a hospital with wonderful doctors watching him...And his note was like loud thunder that defeated me...I hid the note somewhere in confusion...and when he actually passed away, I couldn’t find the note anywhere to show the kids or keep it for memory...

The kids started coming shortly after...and entered the room with their families... It turned out that the doctor told Lina, when I saw them in the hallway, that Papa wouldn’t survive so that she’d call the family to say their goodbyes...All the kids from Sacramento came. The ones in Minnesota were waiting for the call and searching for plane tickets...the ones in Utah were ready to drive out...The kids surrounded dad from all around... Each one wanted to somehow help, say something...Some of them were asking for forgiveness...Papa couldn’t speak with his mouth full of tubes, but he could see...And I held his hand in my hand. He would squeeze my hand with joy...Sometimes we asked him something and he would respond by squeezing my hand or by speaking with his eyes...

I think that after he wrote me the note, he had a lot to think over...His entire life flashed before his eyes... And although we would often sit together and analyze our life, asking God for forgiveness, I think that in this particular critical moment, he analyzed everything once again and was now ready to meet the Lord...

Then the doctor came and checked the computer screen. He listened to his heart and said, “Oh, things are looking better. The heart is working better...Three more days and he can go home in good condition.” We all rejoiced...Some said their “goodbyes” and the family started to return home. Valya and Sasha left...Everyone else didn’t want to leave with all the happiness and continued to peacefully talk in the waiting room. The last ones who came to visit were Lina and Marina but I needed to stay behind with him...Suddenly Lina ran out and started calling Darrell. She told me, “Papa is getting worse. Call everyone!” Everyone gathered around him once again. The ones who already left, drove back...His blood pressure started falling...His pulse started rising and beating chaotically...Paroxysmal arrhythmia...The doctor said, “He is going to die soon, say your farewells.” Papa wanted to tell us something. He started showing us to take away the tubes...while the specialist came, the oxygen was brought, some time passed...When the doctor took out the tubes and connected the oxygen, Papa took two breaths and stopped breathing...His blood pressure started showing 0 and the pulse showed a straight horizontal line...His body lay before us without his spirit...Papa was near but he was gone...The angels were already carrying him to an eternal presence with God...Everyone stood next to his body in silence...Nobody said a single word. Our joyous hopes were not justified...Death!!!

What is death??? According to the dictionary it is the parting of spirit and body... According to the Word of God, it is a transition from our timely life into an eternal life- eternal blessing or eternal suffering. The believer goes to God and the unbeliever goes to the Devil. Many don’t think about eternity. They just go with the flow while following the wide path with a crowd straight into doom...And happy are they who don’t make it to doom but come to their senses before. They stop and open their eyes seeing what lies ahead...In horror, they start looking for their path to salvation and many find it through Christ because Christ said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” (John 14:6). A person analyzes their life and their actions. They understand that they are a lost sinner...Their conscience does not let them rest... They look for a way out of this critical situation...They call out to God and



*Sasha's funeral*

God always comes to help..."Call out to Me, and I will answer you," says God! And the person grasps at Jesus Christ's helping hand with hope. Jesus Christ takes all the person's sins on Himself and casting them behind no longer recalls them...The burden of sin leaves the sinner and they feel freedom! They start feeling light, joyous, and free! What a joy and blessing! What a wonderful moment-the second birth! A new life in Jesus Christ! Life by His teaching! To have a clean heart and holiness...to see God...

Yes, Papa was an example to us...He knew the Word of God and tried to live according to it. And certainly, he is now praising the Lord in heaven awaiting us.

The funeral service was a blessing...Brothers Markevich and Antoniuk preached. So many friends came to part with him on his last path! Yet, this was only his body, his flesh, a person with no spirit. His spirit was already with the Lord. And his actions followed him...

There are so many spiritual corpses around us! Some know everything about God but love sin, don't want to part with sin, not realizing that they are on their way to doom- eternal suffering. Their remorse conscience sometimes haunts them since they left God and chose to follow Satan. It's especially hard for parents to watch their children's spiritual death when they don't want to listen to their father and mother's admonition...Having experienced salvation, parents want their children to live eternally happy. They pray for them and counsel them... But kids don't wish to listen. And in spite of this, the parents pray till they die, in hopes, that their children will someday respond to Christ's call, "I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with the person and they with me."

How great is the Father's love who did not pity His Son and gave Him as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity so that the sinner would not die but have eternal life. And Christ loved the sinner even to the death on a cross. He died for the sinner and took the sins of humanity on Himself. This is why it was so difficult for Him at that time when God left Him and He took away all our sins. He died, bringing Himself as a sacrifice, but we thank God, the Father, that He raised Him from the dead with the Spirit and took Him back to heaven. And we will also rise from the dead and experience eternal joy...



After the funeral service, Sasha helped me rent out a new house near our church. I couldn't stay at the house where everything reminded me of Papa. I had some money left after the funeral service that I could use to my discretion. Shortly after the funeral service, Lina and Darrell took me on a trip across the United States and Canada. I was under their constant supervision and they gave me their undivided attention...And still, I couldn't stop thinking about Sasha...I was counting the days since we parted...Who could understand me? To live together 43 years and be left alone...Yes, the kids gave me their love but it could not replace the love of my beloved. He was always on my mind...Of course, the things I saw on my trip brought me happiness too...



*Loading the Ferry*

Beautiful waterfalls, natural reserves, parks, the ocean...Before I could not go anywhere since I was always with Sasha and he needed constant care; frankly, we never parted...Now I was free and could afford to travel...

And so my new life began...The house that we rented was quite comfortable. Sasha had a separate room and the room next to it. I had my own room and the living room. We had a decent kitchen with a dining room which I used as a storage closet for care packages. We had a decent backyard where we kept our doggy that Brandon bought and brought for Papa from some ranch. Sasha worked. He had a car that he left outside the house. It was convenient for me to attend church...I would simply cross the street and I would be at church. This is how I was able to attend the third choir at our church. This choir was full of singers who used to sing but were all retired and didn't fit in the main choir due to their age. We also had a separate youth choir. Church services took place in tents since

the church building was still under construction...We often had childrens' services in our home. Vovchik would bring me free food: bread, cakes, pastries, milk, kefir, sour cream, yogurt, flour, sugar, potatoes, onions, different herbs, watermelon...I would call the poor families and they would stop by and pick up whatever they needed. Oftentimes, we had cookies and candy at our house. I would treat the children who would visit us for their childrens' service. I was planning to go to Fergana, a city in Uzbekistan, and so, I mailed packages ahead of



*Lunch at the Beach*



time so that I would have something to give people when I'd arrive. Meanwhile, I was invited to Minnesota so I flew there.

Marina was supposed to take me to the airport. I wanted to take some rope from the storage closet. I placed a chair to stand on and reached for the rope. But I fell and landed on the chair with my ribs...I felt a horrendous pain...What should I do? Not fly? I felt like I hurt my ribs in front of my chest...I tightly bandaged myself...I asked Marina for advice and decided to go regardless...Marina turned in my baggage at the airport so I only flew with my purse containing all my documents. When I was greeted at the airport, I warned everyone that they were not allowed to hug me. The kids weren't happy to hear that...They wanted to hug their grandma! I visited Tanechka and then Nadia. Toward the end of my trip, I could already pick up light loads.

## Blessings fervently prayed for

When I returned home, I started to prepare for my trip to Fergana. I took the very best from what I had to gift my friends and neighbors...I prepared a lot of toys and put batteries in them so they all moved, sang, and laughed. My kids brought most of the toys since their kids were already bored with these toys but they were like new. I bought some items at yard sales. I also bought beautiful head coverings for gifts. I was allowed to bring two bags with myself each weighing 70.5 pounds. I took three bags and had to pay \$145 for the third bag. But I needed to bring it because I also wanted to take a lot for the orphanage. I took the most expensive toys in my carry on baggage. In October, I flew to Tashkent where Paul greeted me. We rented a car to visit friends. A young Uzbek drove us on his Moskvitch. He had three children. Aside from the money, I gave him candy and some toys for his children. He proclaimed so much thanksgiving and joy!! We slept over at my friend's house. I had a lot of friends in Tashkent along with one of my dearest friends from my youth. I called her and she visited me. I laid out the presents and offered everyone to pick whatever they liked...There was so much happiness!!! Then we took a taxi to Fergana. The road took us through a mountain pass...It used to be a very dangerous road...Now it was made into the main road since trains no longer rode in that area due to too many custom controls...So now you had to take the mountain pass or a plane...There was snow in some spots...

Life changed. Many Russians left back to Russia. They left their jobs and houses. Factories stopped working. High-rise apartment complexes were left standing tall without windows or doors...It was sad to see such a sight...Somewhere along the road, our driver stopped the car, got out, laid out a mat and started praying...He was a retired man, an Uzbek, who followed the prayer hours. After he brought us home, he rushed to the mosque in Fergana. The kids were happy when I came...They got lots of presents. I got a separate room. Lina's old room. There were already 11 care packages there that I mailed earlier before arriving. Yes, and I brought even more things. I tried to remember the Uzbek language. But it would intertwine with my English. I was not in Uzbekistan for eight years...

There were many changes in the city. They built a lot of new beautiful buildings. The "New Uzbeks" built two story mansions for themselves. They brought down Lenin's monument. Instead, they put up a monument for an Uzbek scholar Al-Fargoni.

They made beautiful alleys, a ferris wheel, a restaurant, and many benches for rest. There were plenty of products at the supermarket. You could buy whatever you wanted but the prices were very high. There was a wonderful selection of different candies. The price was actually half cheaper than in the Russian stores in America. For the "Khait" holiday, I bought a full bag of chocolate candy and left to Saur-Bulak to visit my friends where I worked for almost 30 years. As soon as I got off the trolley, I stopped to see where to go, when I heard someone yelling from across in the teahouse. "Linapa!" They recognized me right away! I had to follow the voice. There was a new teahouse and a meat stall. This wasn't there before. There was a restaurant near the store. All the people were celebrating dressed in their beautiful festive clothing.

I drank tea, treated them with candy, and asked how people were doing. The state farm still exists and provides the town with vegetables. All the factories closed down. There was no work. People mostly worked in sales. They also kept livestock for meat and milk and baked Uzbek bread.

I entered my house. It was looked after in its own little Uzbek manner but the owners left on vacation. The Kyrgyz neighbors invited me...I had to go, eat their plov, and drink tea. After that, I walked on the Saur-Bulaku trail. There were many children I've never seen since they were born after my time. I treated them with candy but they refused to take any. It turned out that they don't take anything from strangers...Then the folks who recognized me came running, "That's Lipana!!!" Then the children took the treats. I also had the chance to meet many old folks.

It's remarkable how I was able to fully remember the Uzbek language and I could easily communicate with them. People asked how we live in the United States and how we manage everything, what our children do... Everything was interesting to them...Everyone tried to give me something but I declined all presents...Although, I wasn't able to resist sitting down at some festive tables in some homes...Life was passing. Children were building their own homes on their parents' properties and lived with their own families. And they lived friendly with one another.

I was also able to visit my neighbors. I gave everyone something for memory...Everyone was very happy. We went to church. Despite many moving to America or Russia, the house of prayer was full. There were many new members- beautiful Russian women who came to God from this world. There were many new brothers and children. The choir did get a bit smaller but sang well nonetheless. I was also able to look at the location where they were planning to build a new house of prayer. Time flew by way too fast. On my way back, I was able to visit the church service in Tashkent. I saw my Tashkent friends. I went to a five-star hotel with my sister Clara to attend a party dedicated to the National Day of the Disabled. The folk choir "Silk Route" sang. Some children from an orphanage put on a play and the government gifted them with helium filled balloons. Tickets for this event were sold for \$100, \$50 and \$10 dollars- all proceeds went to the disabled children. I saw how the parents brought their children on their hands. They didn't even have strollers or wheelchairs for them...And these children did not receive any presents. We prepared 18 presents- a plush toy and chocolate bar in pretty packaging and handed them out to the kids who participated in the play. Sister Clara gave out the presents. When we were leaving and the kids were sitting on the bus, they thanked sister Clara and invited her to visit their orphanage.

On the following day, I left back to America... We lived in that house for a little longer until the owner decided to sell it. We then moved to apartments. Sometime in March, I got a check from my dad's insurance for \$21,000 and a letter that I would receive \$1500 every month for the next three years. I gave up my retirement pension since it was almost two times less and I had to give up one or the other. I decided to buy myself a house with this money used as a down payment while paying out the rest through mortgage. This was the time when houses were very

pricey in Sacramento. I couldn't even buy a condominium.

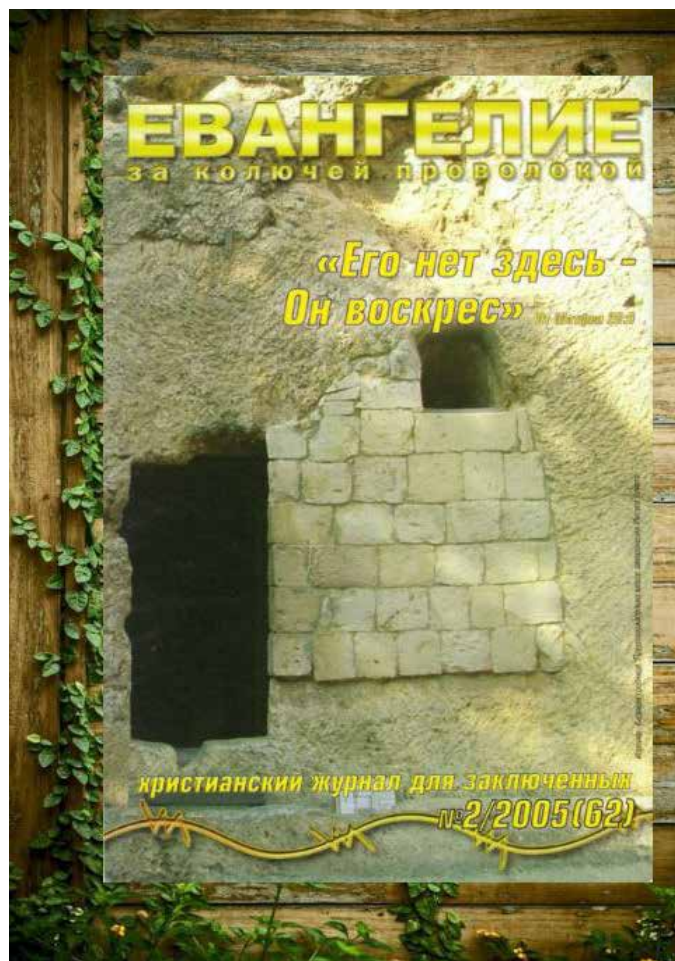
After asking my kids for advice, I left for Utah where Natasha helped me buy a two story house for \$133,400. That's how I moved to Utah. I gave the bank a \$16,000 down-payment and still had some money left for furniture.

I started going to a church that I really liked. There were other believers who lived four houses away and they would give me rides to church. Lyubachka was a fiery believer who even went to church in the middle of the week so I'd go along with her. Sometimes I would help lead the childrens' services. I



*Blessed home on 5507 Aristada Ave, Salt Lake City*

really enjoyed my new house. There were many storms in the winter. I would often hear the moaning of the wind. This was my favorite storm! Salt Lake City is surrounded by mountains all around. It was so interesting to watch them! Once, a sister brought a “The Gospel Behind Barbed- Wire” magazine to the mid-week prayer service. I asked her to lend it to me for a day. When I came home, I couldn’t stop reading it. I didn’t go to sleep until I read it from cover to cover.



*Blessed journal «Gospel behind bars»*

The following day, I copied all the addresses of the inmates into my notebook. I planned to send them Easter greeting cards. I returned the magazine since there were many others who wished to read it. And since Easter 2005, I started to write letters to inmates!!! This was what I needed for my comfort! Until this, I tried everything to somehow numb my loneliness...I subscribed different Christian magazines and books. I even ordered audio cassettes from Vera Kushnir...I would make copies and give them out in church for others to listen to her poetry with other brothers and sisters. During the evenings, I would turn on Sashunya’s funeral service and weep...I had his smiling portrait hanging across my bed...I hung a beautiful card of a lonely woman near it... with flowers...

I don’t know how many letters I wrote, but I wrote a lot. I didn’t know what awaited me... Very soon, I started to receive responses from prisons. It turned out that many of the inmates were serving life sentences... These letters were from brothers who completed five or six private Bible schools...I did not expect such letters and became afraid...Will I have enough wisdom to respond to such letters???

So during the mid-week prayer meetings, I would ask for others to pray for God to give me wisdom and bless me with my responses. Everyone prayed for me and blessed me. The pastor’s wife also attended these prayer meetings. She offered to help in case I would need any. At

first the inmates didn’t ask for anything. They just wanted to talk to someone. After we got to know one another, they brought up their needs. They asked if I could mail them vitamins, envelopes, paper, underwear. The pastor’s wife sent some care packages. Then I left for Minnesota. That’s where I prepared care packages for the inmates: vitamins, hygiene products, and canned food. I asked the pastor for five minutes to tell the congregation about the inmates, the “Gospel Behind Barbed- Wire,” the revival among the inmates, their needs, and asked if they could take my presents and mail them.

After church, many came up to me asking for the address to subscribe to the magazine. They took all the presents away to cover the shipping expenses. When I returned to Utah, I received a lot of letters. One of the letters disappointed and hurt me. One young brother, who was in prison, rebuked me that I did not respond to his need and that he was very ill and I did not care about him. This was also a brother who seemed to be spiritually “higher” than the others. He was the one I mailed a package to with another sister. I cried all night and later forgave him. After some time, he finally received the package and asked me for forgiveness for his previous letter. This is how we became more than friends. He became my son since his mom was no longer alive...The second letter that stood out from all the ones I received was from another inmate. I once wrote to him how my son, Sasha, would tell me, “Mamachka, I love you!” This is how this Sasha wrote to me too, “Mamachka, I love you!”





*Making care packages*

This phrase turned my life around! I was so happy that I was loved by inmates. That I was needed! That I could pass a part of my love and Christ's love to someone...My life changed. I fully gave myself to these letters. I lived the life of these inmates and did whatever I could for them. I also tried to send care packages to the poor. My kids would bring different items that I put into the care packages. I would just sort everything, pay for the expenses, and mail them. When my monthly checks came to an end, I sold my house in Utah and moved back to Sacramento. God also blessed me in this phase of my life...I lived for a full year all alone since I could afford rent. My kids and grandkids would visit

me...I was very grateful to God that He blessed me in such abundance!!! I had the opportunity to collect holiday packages with spiritual literature and items that I mailed to the inmates with the help of other brothers and sisters. My son Volodya would take me to different churches where the pastors gave me permission to spread the word about my ministry. They even helped mail the packages. This year we also had the opportunity to meet with brother Sergey Yakovlevichem Yakimenkovim in Sacramento. He is responsible for Russian Christian radio. He gave a radio interview about the prison ministry in Russia and preached in two large churches.

I am now on my retirement pension. I live in a senior living apartment complex. It is a very cozy, comfortable, and quiet apartment. There are many flowers, trees...I became a member in a church nearby and I really like it.

Since January, there is now a website for prison ministry [www.uznik.net](http://www.uznik.net): through which I met many wonderful brothers and sisters and prison ministers. I thank God for giving me such a wonderful life! God stopped my life twice already. Once my left side gave out but it already recovered...The second time it was worse, I had my gallbladder removed but my body weakened. I am not almost completely back to my normal self. All this just reminds me that I am not far from transitioning to an eternity and I must be prepared for my time to meet with the Lord and also the family with friends who were already in the Heavenly Country!!!

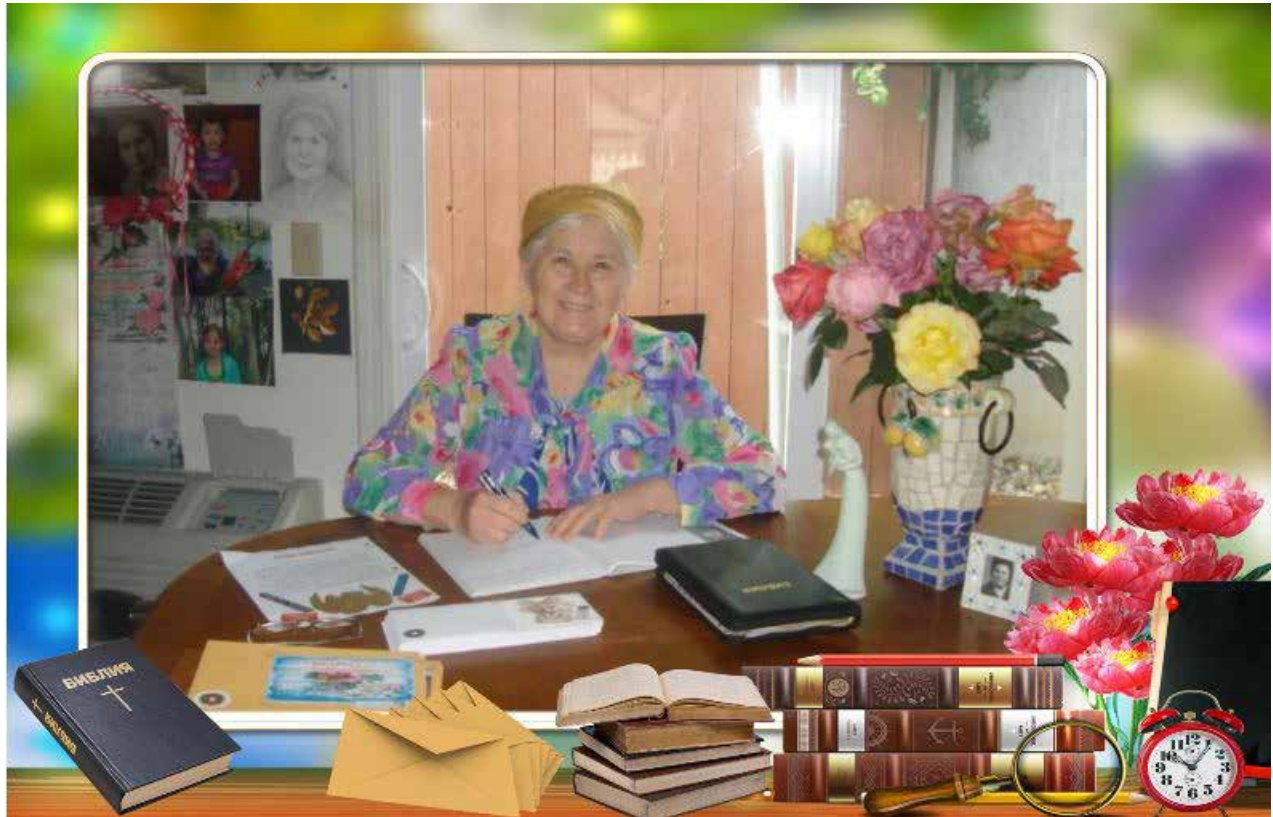
I have an abundance and fullness of days and God's blessings and would like to say with great joy along with Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing."



*Goodbye, Utah, 2006*

# Waiting for eternity

*«I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of His name. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.» - 1 John 2:12-13*



*Correspondance with prisoners*

*“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.” - Psalm 90:10, KJV.*

The Lord gave me the chance to live to the greater strength of life! 80 years!!! This is only by the grace of God. He prolonged my days for such a long period of time. Everyone in our big family gathered to celebrate my anniversary at Pavlik's house... Svetlanochka baked an enormous cake.

My daughters and daughters-in-law also baked various cakes. Zhenya, my son-in-law, prepared delicious Uzbek plov. There was also a variety of salads. The first part of the celebration was quite festive. The kids and grandkids wished me a happy birthday. They gave me wishes, sang, played musical instruments. They wished for their grandma to live for many more years.

They surprised me with a huge photo album where every family, from my eleven children, filled out a few scrapbook pages. They decorated the pages nicely with colorful wishes, greetings, photographs, and illustrations. After this, we had some fellowship. Then we prayed and everyone started eating.

Our table was set-up in the American-fashion. The food was placed on one table and everyone would come up to the table and take what they liked. After that, they would either sit at the table, sofa, chair, or wherever they





*My 80's birthday*



*Wonderful album gifted to me by children and grandchildren*





*Christmas 2016*

wished to sit. Familiar faces were all around. It was such a pleasant experience to see the faces of my loved ones. These were the people I enjoyed communicating with. As the party drew to an end, we took a group picture for memory.

The Lord also gave me good health and the opportunity to spend a blessed Christmas and New Years-2016!!

From the very beginning of the year, the kids and grandkids had the desire to fellowship together with our big family! By majority vote, we decided to have a ten day vacation at Natasha's place in Utah. So we visited our eleventh daughter from July 1st- July 10th. Everyone was either working or studying in school; but, everyone was eagerly awaiting the joyful reunion. And Praise the Lord! We all lived to fulfil our dream of getting together. We had so much joy when the kids and grandkids would arrive...

Some came by car. Others arrived by plane. Marina, her kids, and I arrived on a train. We had fellowship, rejoiced, and walked around town. On Sunday morning we went to church! It was so nice to see familiar faces, participate in the service, hear and sing the congregational songs, pray together!!! How wonderful that our faith in salvation and Jesus Christ's redemptive sacrifice can unite us all! I am so happy that all my kids and grandkids know the Good News and many already have an invitation for the Lamb's Wedding in heaven... There are a few who are postponing or hesitating to make that decisive step to accept Jesus Christ into their heart to have that peace of God in their hearts and be written in the Book of Life in heaven... I continually pray about this. I pray about my kids, my grandkids, my great grand kids even though they are still very little, but the seed of love and faith sown in a child's early age, brings a fruit in its due time! The Lord blesses those who love Him to thousands of generations! After having fellowship in church, we had a festive lunch with the entire family at home. We



*Family reunion 2016 Utah*

started taking photographs so that we would have a memory from when the entire family was together. We also took separate pictures with each family.

The following week was planned for different trips to beautiful places like forests, mountains, lakes, and parks. We rode on boats, traveled through forests, drove to Hot Springs, celebrated The United State's Independence Day, watched the fireworks in downtown Salt Lake City, and we visited so many parks. Everyone was happy. Almost everyone fit to stay at Natasha's house since there was a lot of room.

Almost all of the young fellows slept in the basement on inflatable mattresses. They'd stay up late having friendly conversations! Almost all of the ladies got situated on the second floor. The families were given separate rooms. Time flew by way too fast and it was very hard to part ways...I really wanted to prolong this wonderful time of fellowship and joy! We didn't have a reunion like this for 14 years!

The last time we gathered was in Sacramento back in 2002. That's when our head of the family was still alive - our Papachka and Dedushka, and my husband- Alexander Kupriyanovich Maltsev- my favorite and irreplaceable human! He gifted me with the joys of love and thirteen wonderful children! I praise and thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that He gave me Christian parents who raised me in the fear of the Lord. I also praise and thank Him that in my time, I married a wonderful Christian, my Сашуня!

I am brought to tears of joy and thanksgiving when I think of him, my life with him and our union with the Lord! He is rejoicing in heaven and awaiting us. I have so little time till my 81st birthday...

We celebrated Thanksgiving with the whole family at Annechka's house. At first, all the kids played at a park! Then we prayed our Thanksgiving prayer thanking God for protecting our family. We finished by praying for the food. Many shared the blessings that were bestowed upon them and gave thanks to God! My Birthday 81 we celebrated at Vovchik's house. There were separate tables for kids, teens, and adults...There was an abundance of food on the tables...The shashlik was a big hit! All the grandkids and kids congratulated their mom and grandma... the kids played musical instruments...



I rejoice in every day of life that God gifts me with...And I ask the Lord to give me some more days so that I could fulfill my to-do list...And so that I could say, "Lord, now I am ready! Take me..." Now, I only ask for Him to protect me in perfect peace, in purity and holiness. Every day is in His hands! May the Heavenly Father's will be in everything!

*Angelina Maltseva, 2016*

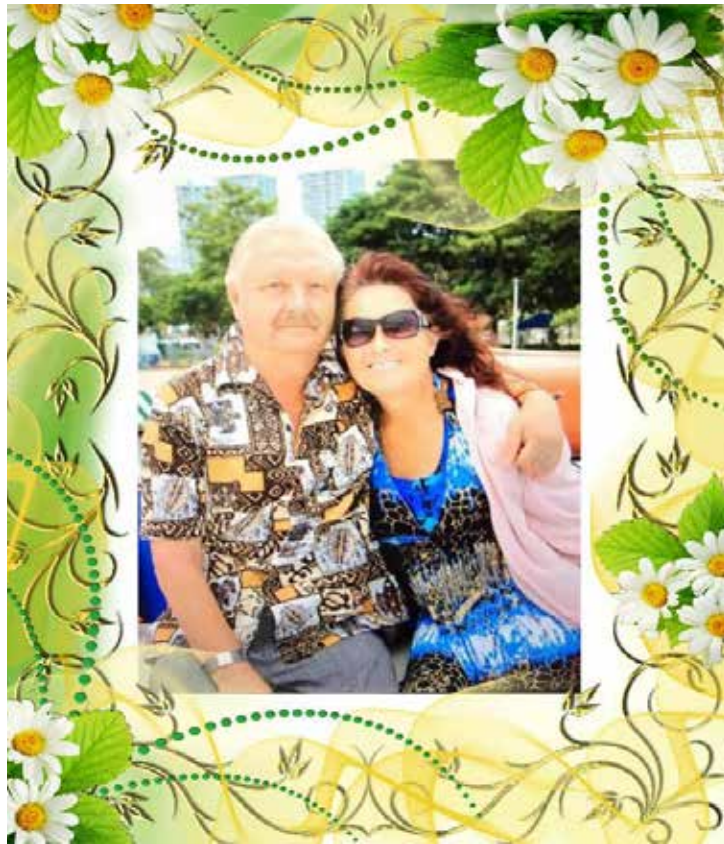


*I'm 81 years old*





# Children



*Valya and Vitali*

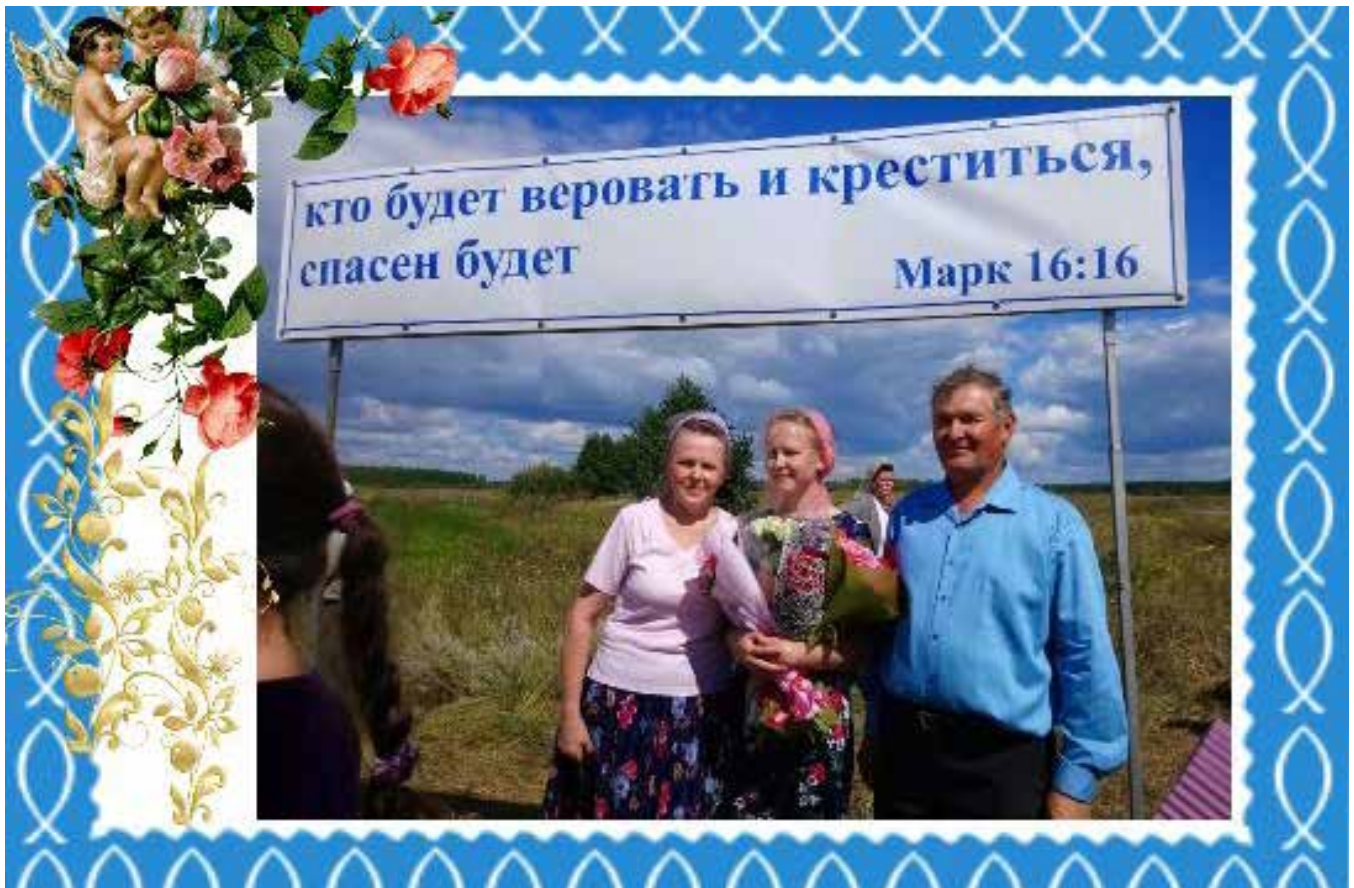


*Anna and Vladimir*





*Angelina and Darrell*



*Pavel and Lyuba*





*Nadya and Tolik*



*Tanya and Pavlik*





*Vova and Zhanna*



*Vera and Zhenya*



*Sasha*





*Natasha and Igor*



*Marina*





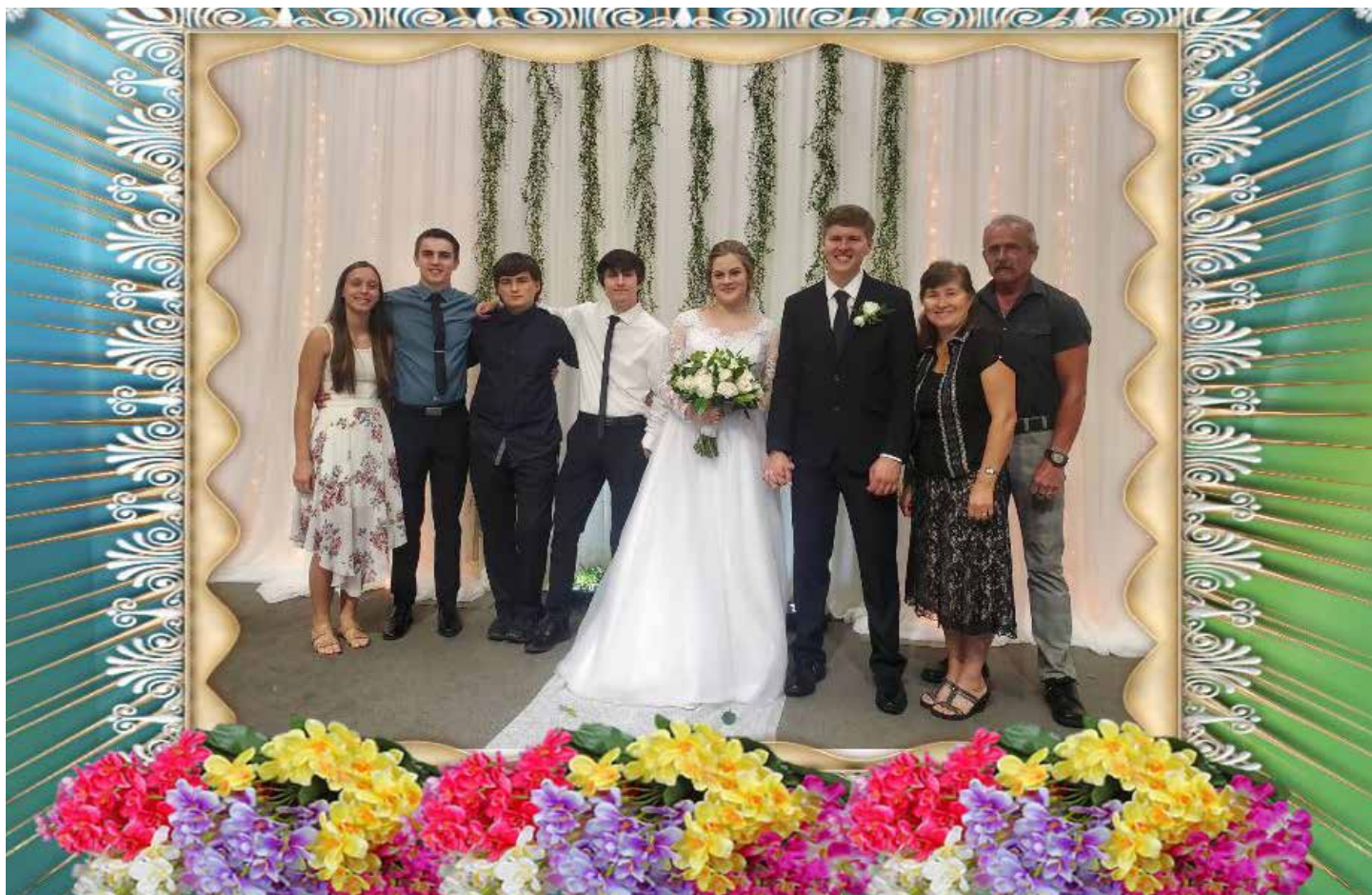


*Martinov Family*



*Chekmarev Family*





*Daughterty Family*



*Pavel Maltsev's Family*





*Anatoliy Lelyukh Family*



*Pavel Lelyukh Family*





*Vladimir Maltsev Family*





*Alexandr Maltsev family*



*Dorozhin Family*





*Mayurov family*



*Marina Sullivan Family*





# **Grandchildren**



*Andrew, Edik and Sasha Chekmarev with his son Vova*



*At the park*





*Ben, Jordan and Andrew with Darrell*



*Yulia*





*Brothers and cousins*



*Chekmarev Family*





*Dining at a restaurant*



*Eduard and Natalie at Marina and Dara's wedding 2020*



*Evelina. 2020*



*Gingerbread making*





*Grandchildren with Grandpa and Grandma*



*Grandkids at Vova's*





*Grandma and Maggie*



*Jason with his horse*





*Abigail*



*Jason*





*Kids selling prizes at family Easter Egg hunt at Belle Coolidge park*



*Kids visiting grandma*





*Lena*



*Lina and Marina*



*Little Andrew in Grandma's kitchen*



*Extended family*





*Mama with Sasha, Nadya and Lena*



*Marina and Zhanna's kids annual tradition of ginger bread house building. 2020*



*Nadya and Svetochka*



*Natasha and Tanya*





*Olya and Galya*



*Pavel with kids*



*Thanksgiving Day*



*The Mayurov's and I*





*The Mayurov's*



*Trampoline fun*





*Vova with his daughter Angelina*



*Yana and Jack*





*Yana, Marina and Jack*



*Yasha and Magdalena with puppies*

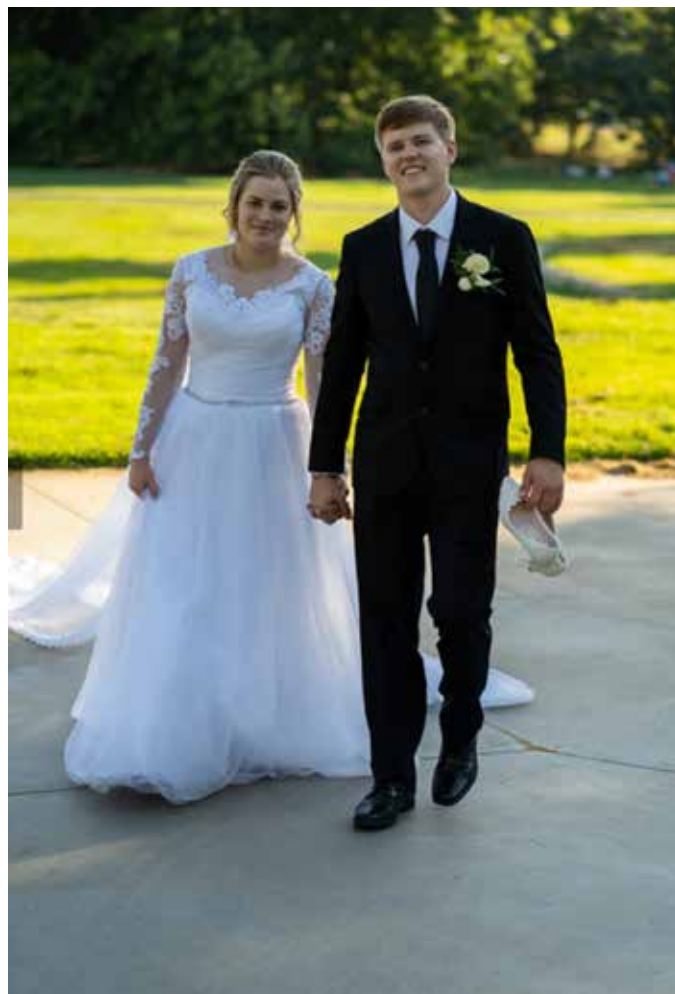


# **Grandchildren wedding**





*Daniel and Bethany's wedding*



*Roma and Vera's wedding*



*Sasha and Christina Chekmarev wedding*

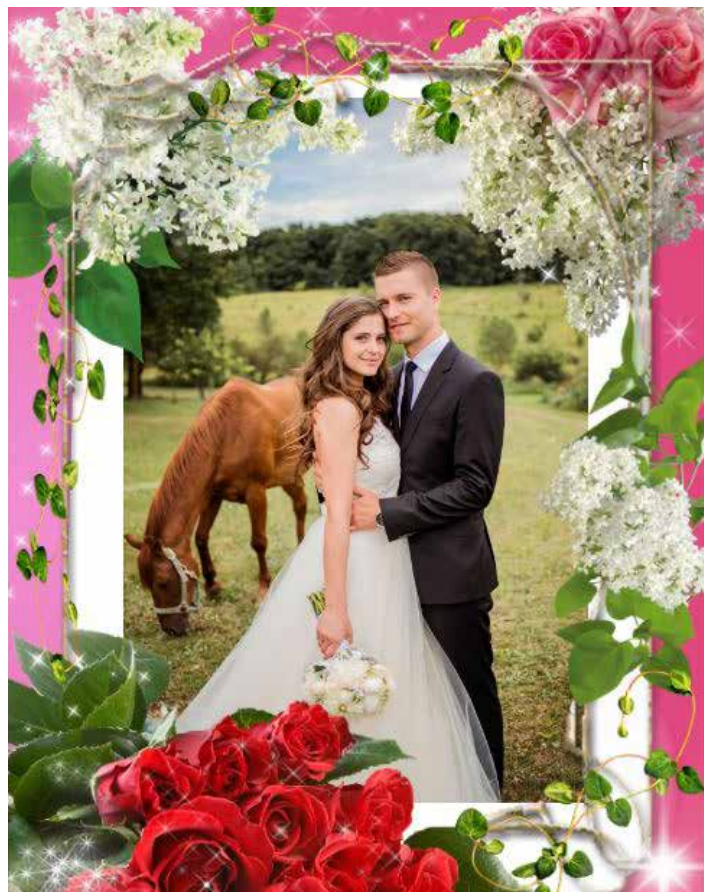




*Yuri and Sveta Martinov wedding*



*Vitaliy and Irina*



*Volodya and Marina's wedding*





*Wedding of Marina and Dara*



*Wedding of Dmitriy and Margarita*

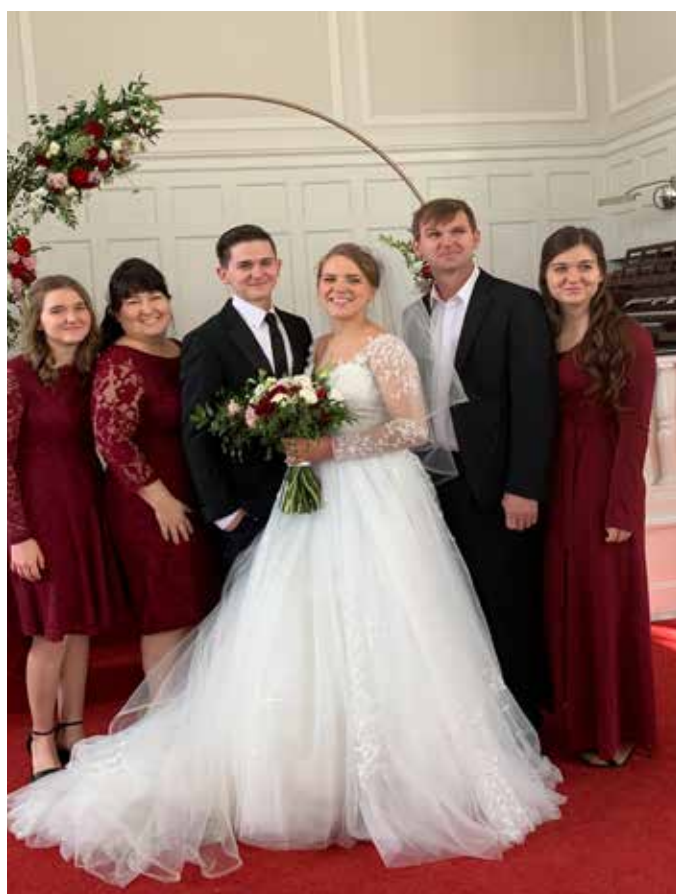


*Wedding of Maxim and Katya*





*Wedding of Vitaliy and Irina*



*Wedding of Vitaliy and Yulia*



*Wedding of Alexandr and Oksana*





**Great  
grandchildren**



*Alora. Elise. Lilliana Kirilyuk. Aiden. Ezekiel. Viviana Nedashkovskiy*



*Angelina Martynova*





*Ashton and Andrey Leluykh*

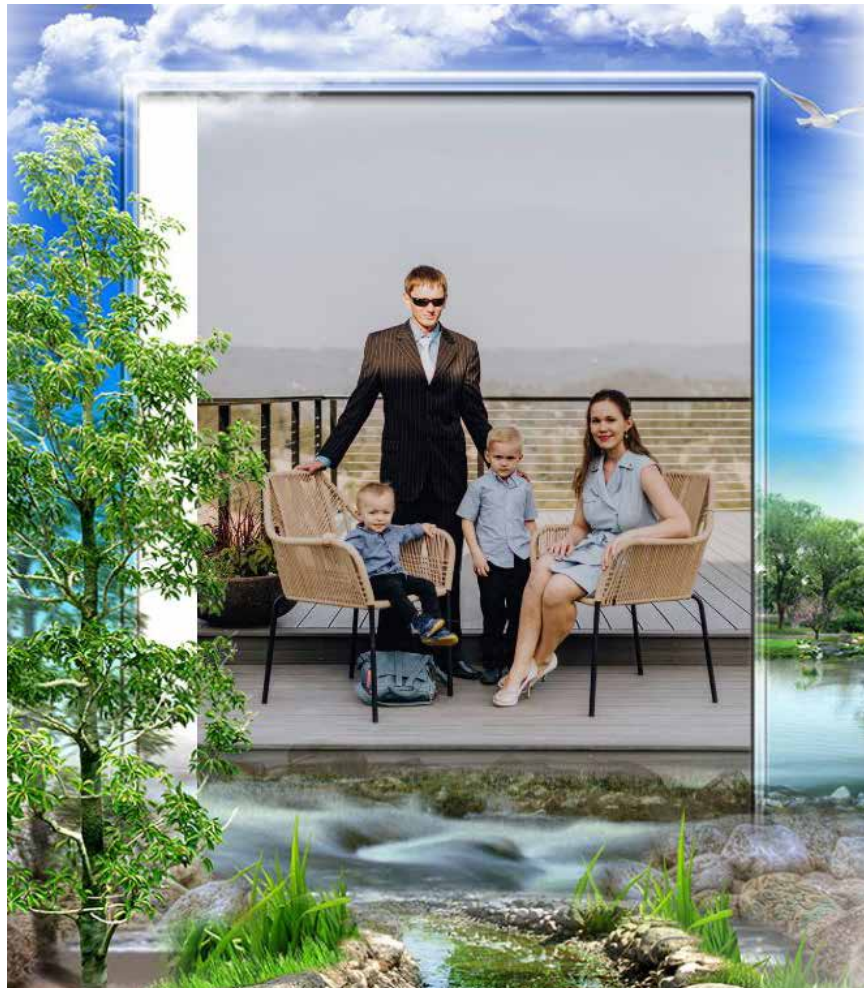


*Matthew. Benjamin. Emma. Lukas Martynov*



*Sophia Maretskiy*





*Vladimir and Slavik Chekmarev*



*Lilliana and Alora Kirilyluk*

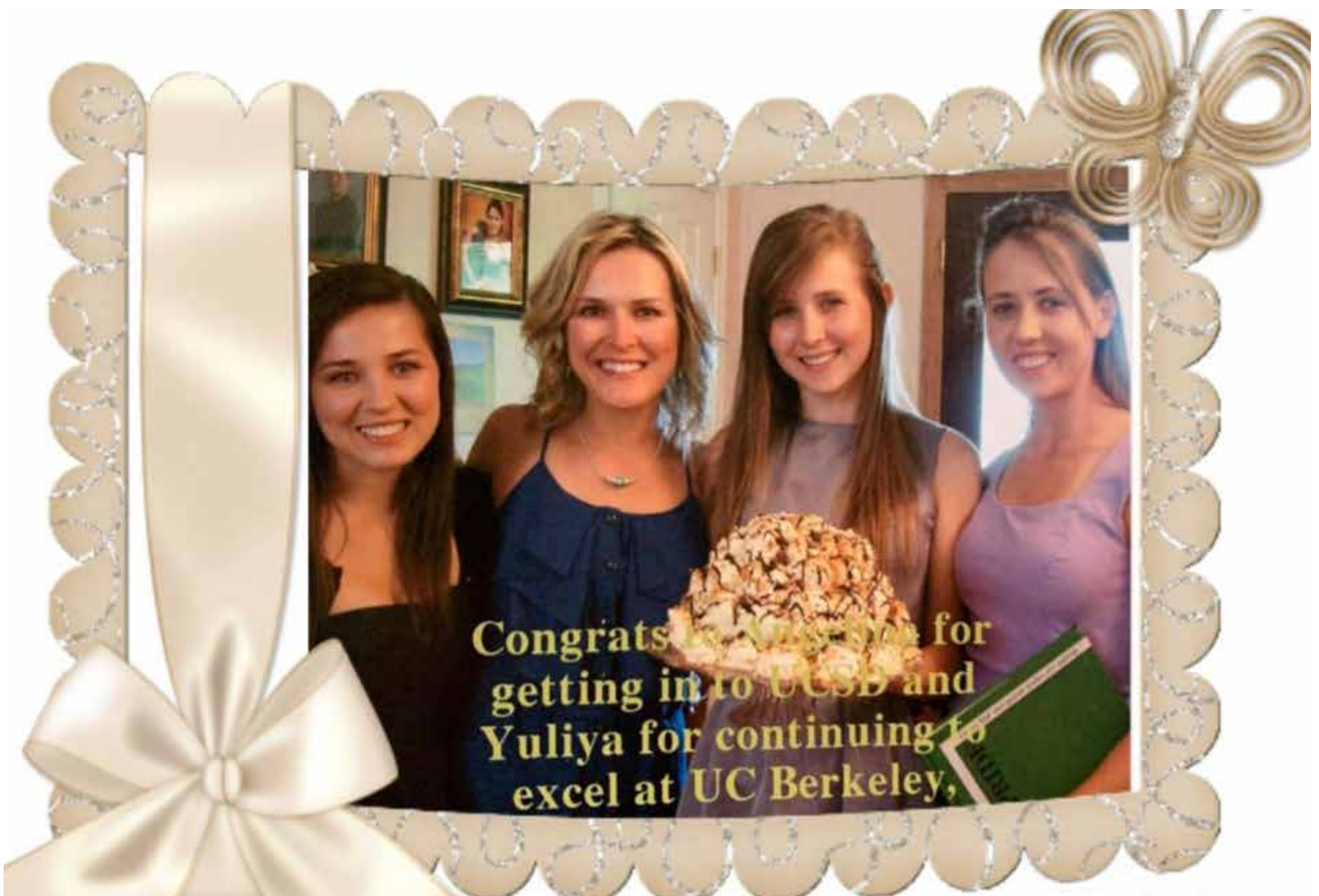


**Congratulations  
on graduation**





*David's graduated russian school*



*Angelina got accepted to UC San Diego*



*Evelina and Daniel graduated High School*



*David's Russian School graduation*





*Jack's promotion to middle school*



*Jason receiving his horse training certificate*



*Jason's high school graduation*



*Tanya finished college with her nursing degree*





*Jordan high school graduation*



*Jason served in the army*



*Yulia is graduating from UC Berkeley*



**Happy birthday!**





*Angelina turns 1*



*Angelina's first birthday*





*Babushka is 80*



*Babushka is 75*





*Elise is born*



*Elise's birthday*



*Evelina's birthday*





*Five Angelina's, eldest is 75*



*Grandma is 75 years old*





*Jack's birthday*



*Jack's birthday*





*Juliana's birthday*



*Juliana's birthday*





*Aleksey turns 20*



*Magdalena's birthday*



*Magdalena is born*





*Vera's 47th birthday*



*Sophia is born*



*Vova is 48*





*Marina's birthday*



*Tanya turns 50!*



*Vovchik is 48 years old*





## **Meetings, travel, communication**



*Meeting in Minnesota*



*Hawaii trip*





*Downtown stroll with Marina and kids*



*Harvest Day*





*Visiting Vovchik's house*



*Brugger's family visit at Marina's house*





*Morning after youth celebration*



*Hawaiian birds*





*Restaurant dining*



*Visiting with my nephew Vladimir Lobkov*

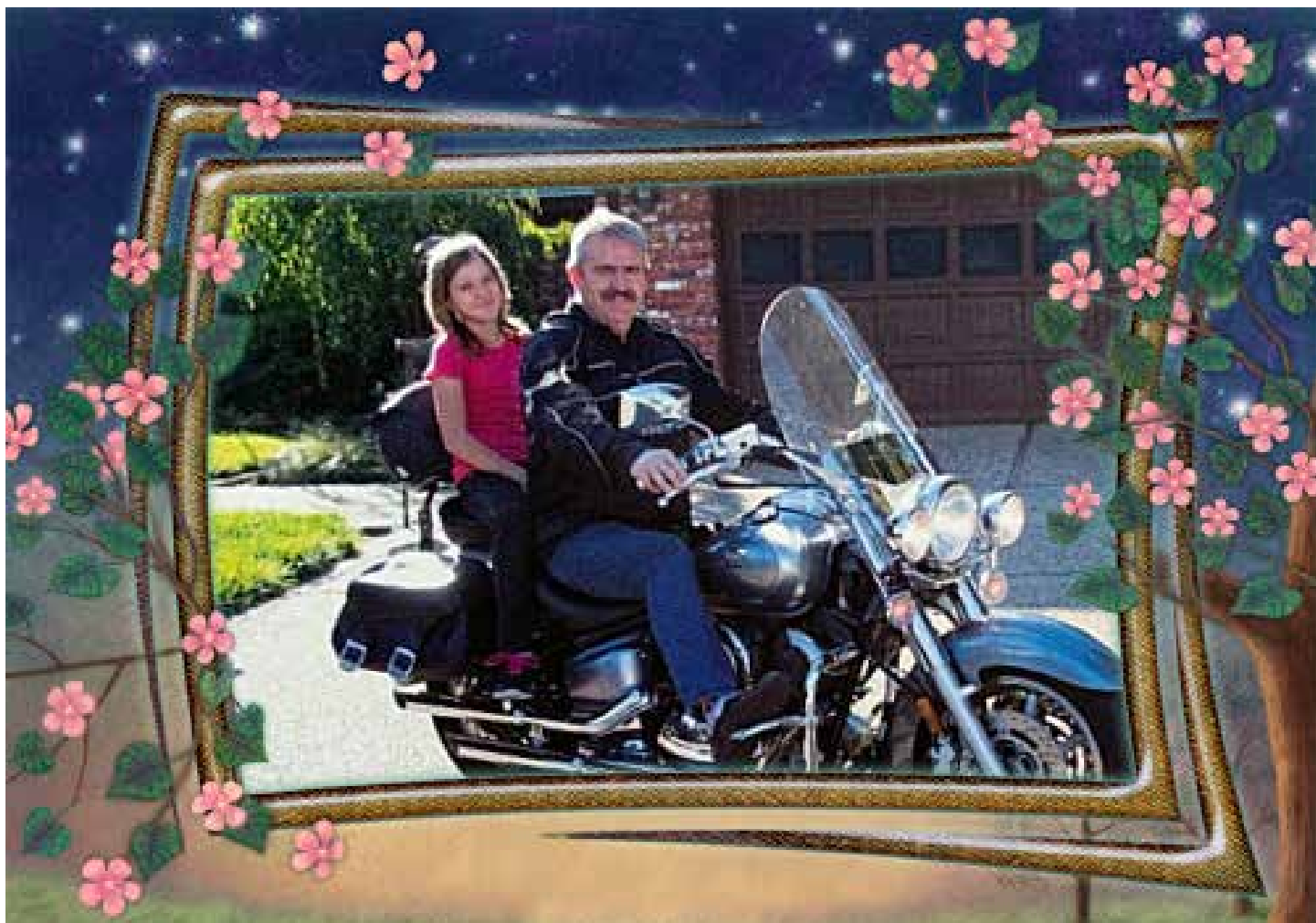




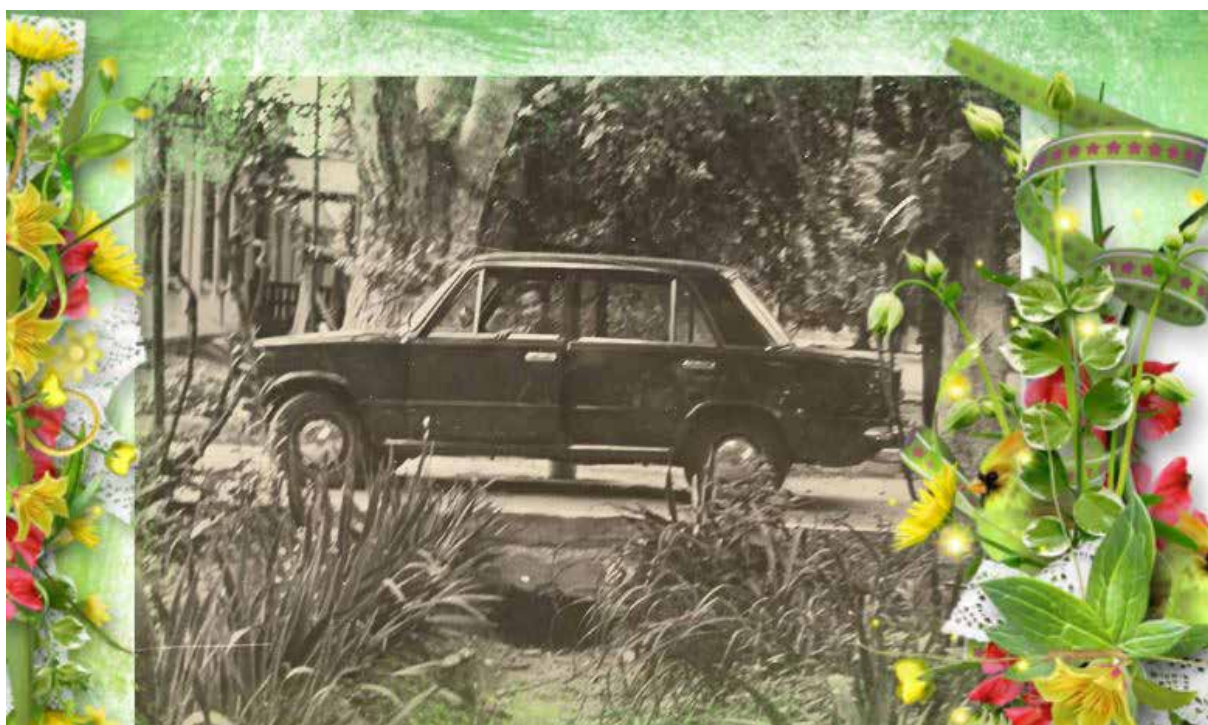
*Our home while beekeeping*



*Marina and Dara's wedding*



*Oksana and Darrell*



*Lina with our family car in Fergana*





*My nephew Vladimir Lobkov*



*Visiting Marina's house*





*Visiting family from Russia*

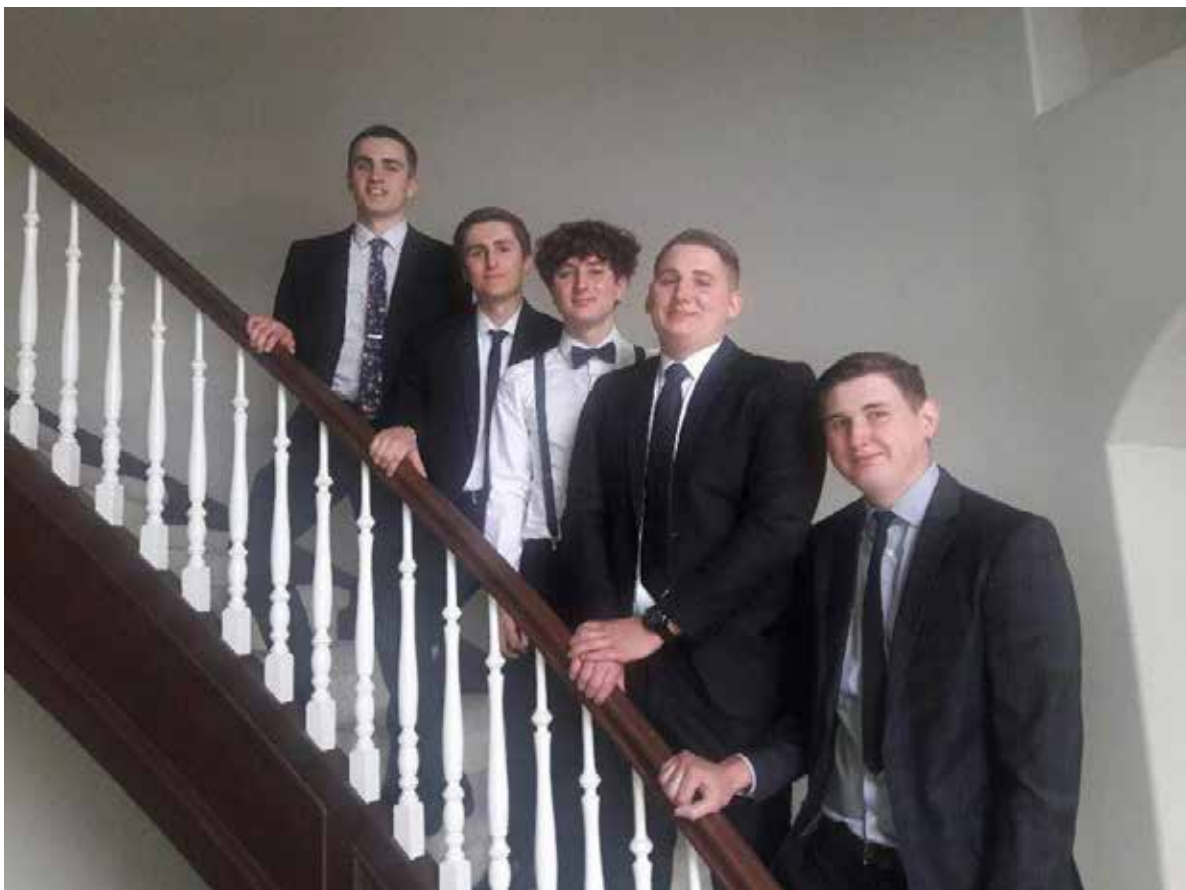


*At Yulia Spiridonova's wedding*





*Church men's meeting in Fergana*



*Brothers*





*Valya turns 50*



*Nadya and Tolik's family*





*Visiting Marina's house*



*Sasha loved his motorcycle*





*Visit with Sergei Yakimenkov*



*Christmas play*





**Remembering  
those who have  
gone to Heaven**



*Gravestone of the Lelyukh matriarch*



*Gravestone of Pavel Lelyukh*





*I visited dad*



*Vera and Zhenya at the gravestone*



*Showing love to grandpa*





*Visit in 2010*

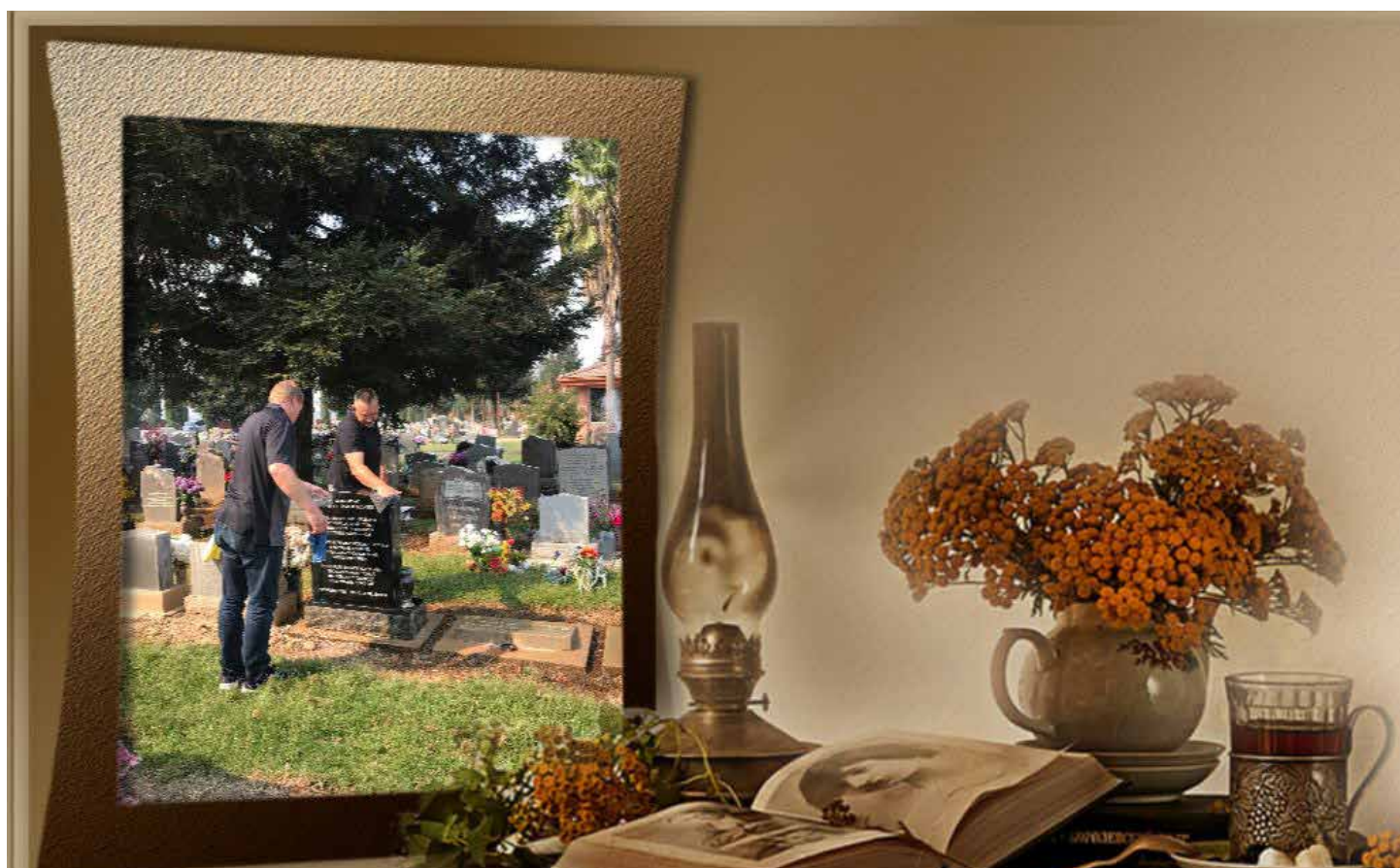


*Visit with Irina Lelyukh*





*Visit with guests from Minnesota*



*Visit in 2020*



# Baptism





*Alex Maltsev*



*Church*





*Olya Maltseva*

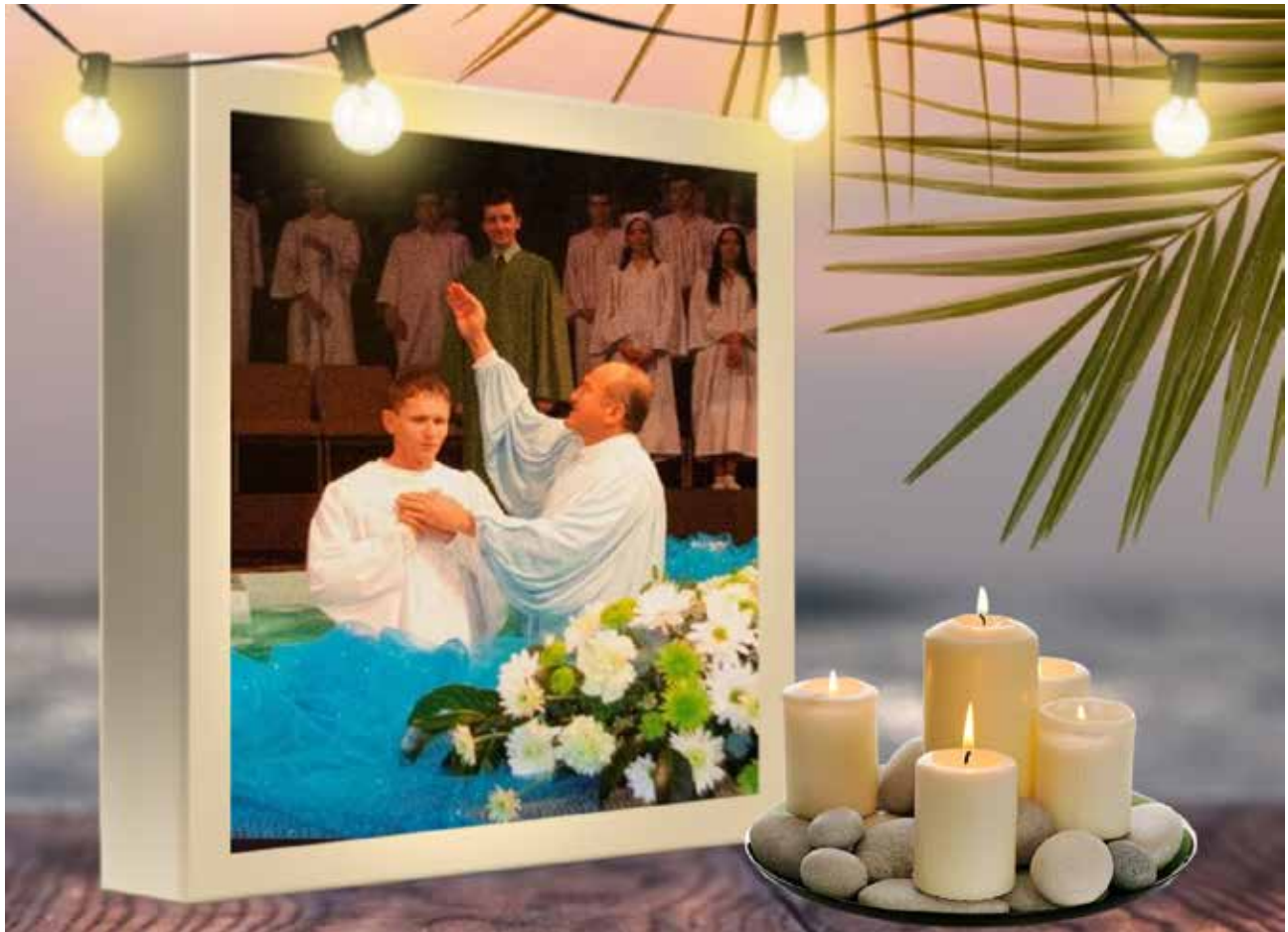


*Lena Maltseva*



*Marina Chekmareva*





*Sasha Chekmarev*



*Our family*



*Tanya Mayurov*





# Ministry



*"Be faithful until death"*



*A boy is praying at the church on Dry Creek*





*Lilia Bar (Germany) designed photos for this book*



*Blessing prayer for newlyweds*



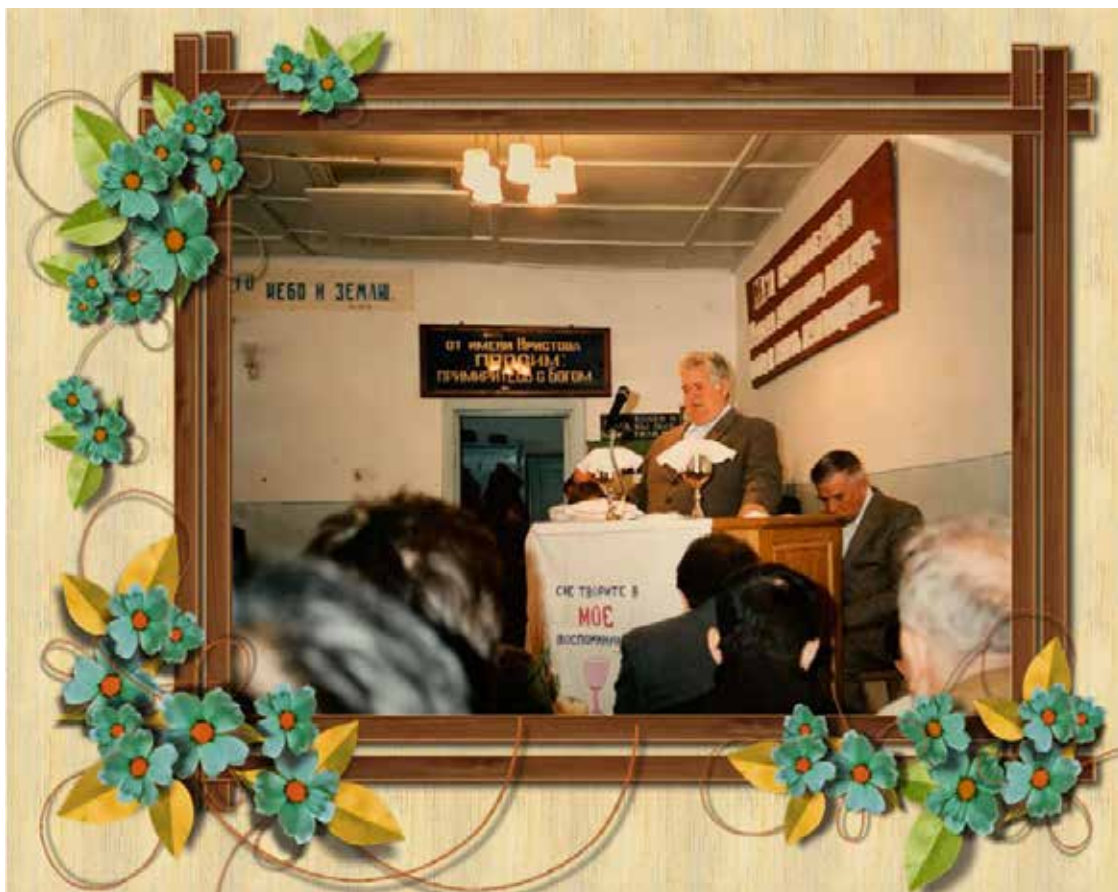


*Boxes of care packages for prisoners*



*Care packages to the needy*





*Church Communion. Fergana*



*Church service in Africa*



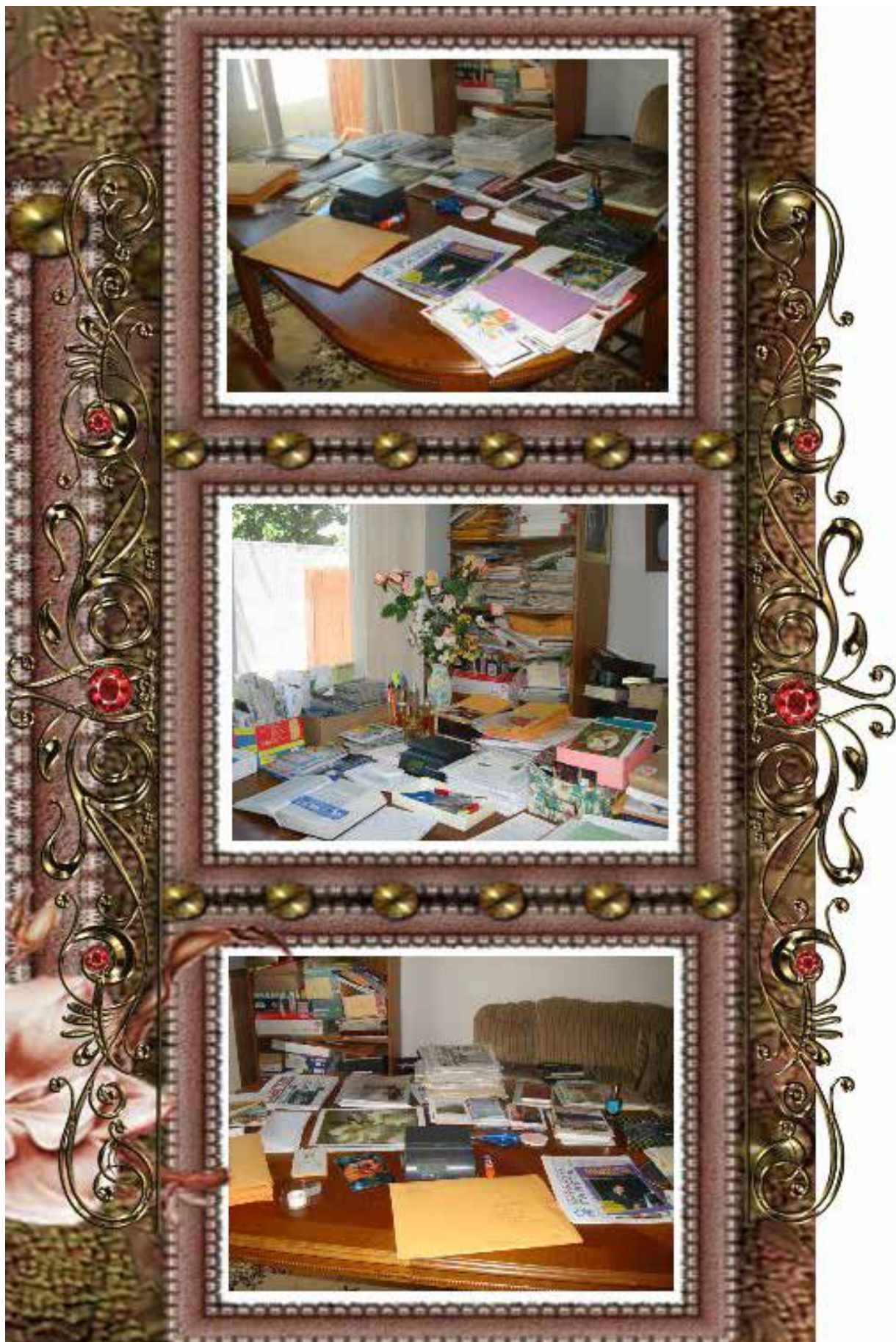


*Contents of care packages*



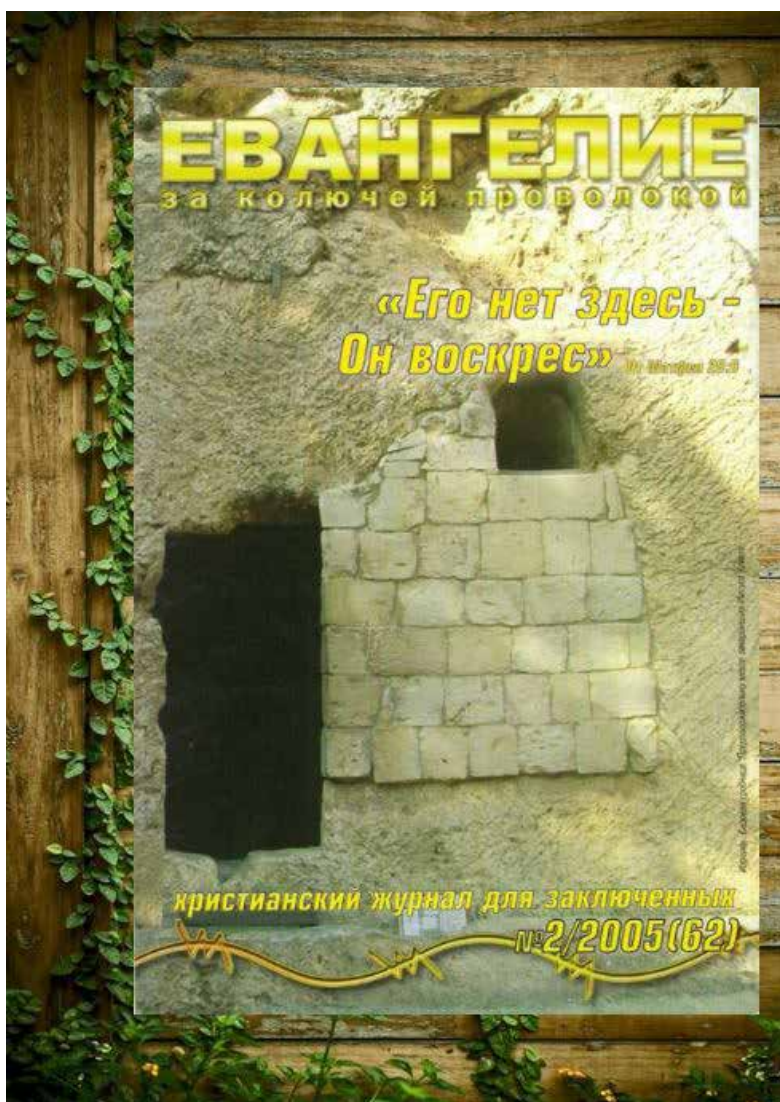
*Fergana Choir*





*Correspondence with prisoners*





*Journal "Gospel behind bars"*





*Making care packages*



*My favorite thing to do*



*Prayer on the river*



*Prayer for blessing of newlyweds Roma and Vera*





*Prayer*



*Preparing Christmas packages for prisoners containing gospel materials*



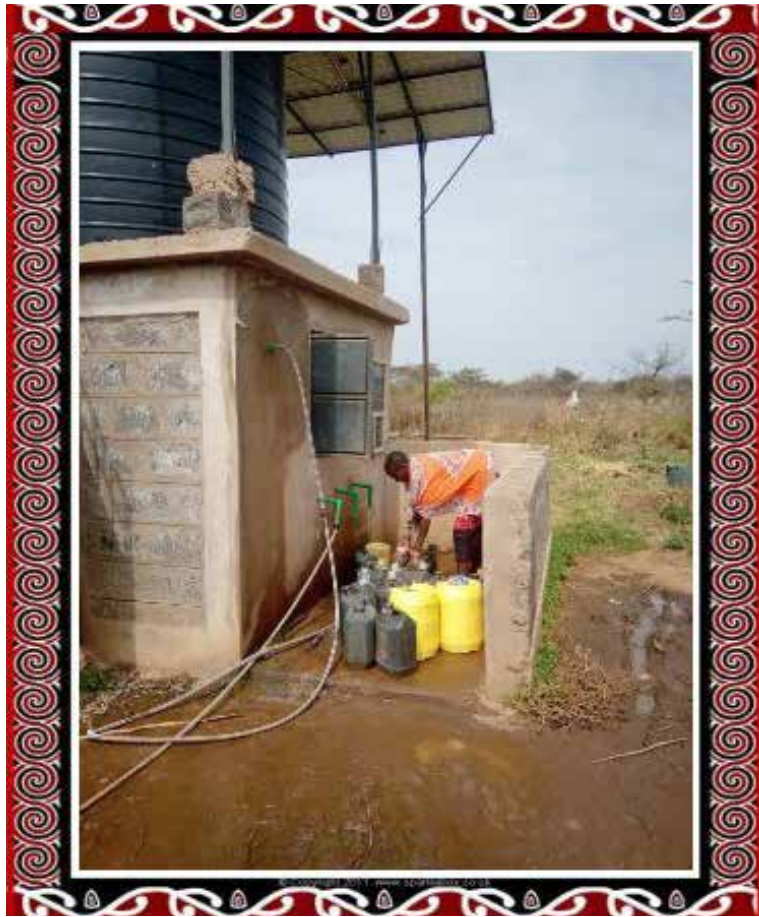


*Sweets and other essentials to include in care packages*



*Vova is a great piano player and Andrew is a great singer!*



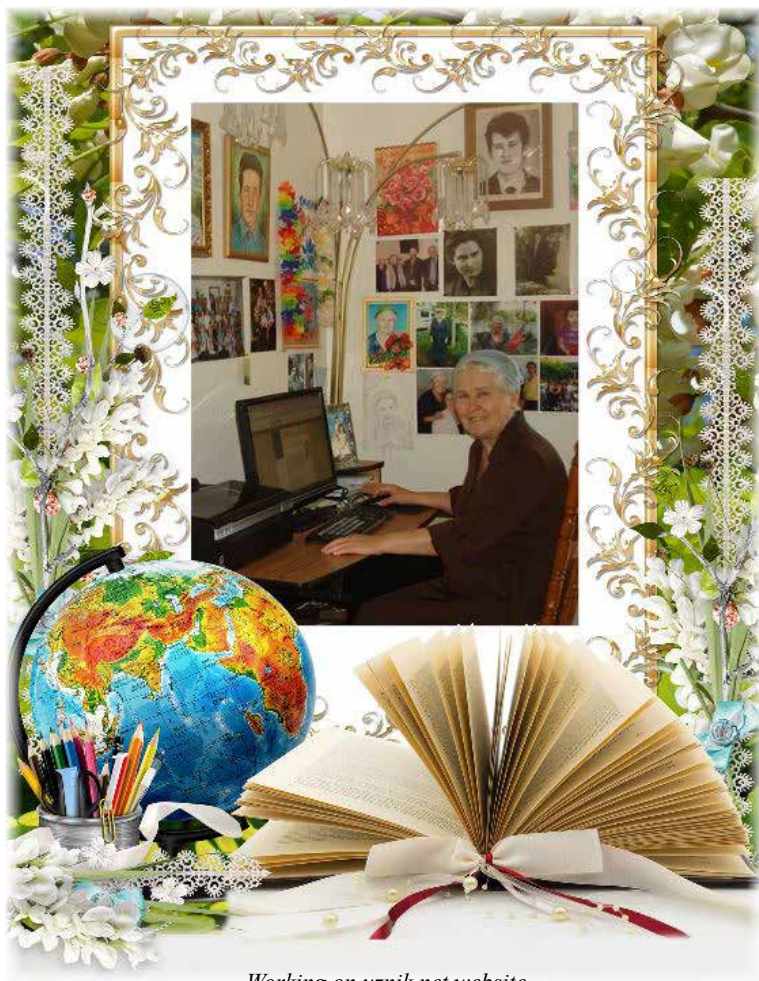


*Water being delivered to homes in Africa*



*Water well in Africa*



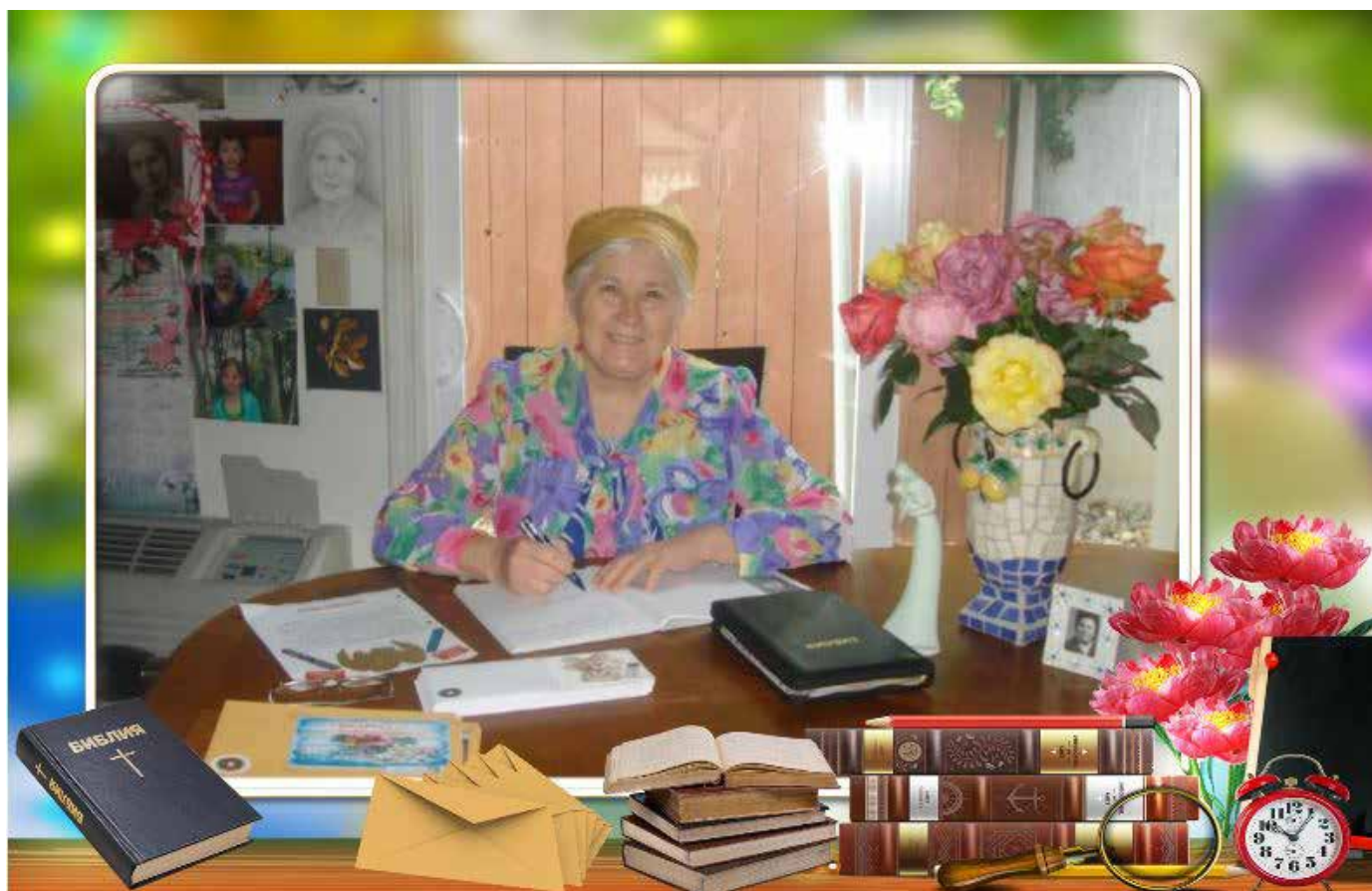


*Working on uznik.net website*



*Writing letters for prisoners*





*Writing to you, my children*



*Yanochka is playing on the ukulele*




## My Wish

Dear children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and everyone who will read my life story, I can tell you with confidence that it was the Lord who helped me live till I'm 85 years old! A loving God took care of my childhood and through my parents, grandmother and wonderful friends taught me to love the Scripture.

From the age of 12 I had my own Bible and read it and wrote the verses in my notebook. My youth was even richer spiritually, because at that time we were taught to love the Lord by brothers in Christ who had spent many years in prison for preaching the Word of God. I am grateful Lord sent me a Christian husband who truly loved God and served Him with all his heart! God gave us 13 children, two of whom are already praising God in Heaven - the Venya and Lyubochka! I rejoice looking at 46 grandchildren, so wonderful, beautiful, and talented! Some have already made a promise to God to **SERVE HIM WITH ALL THEIR HEARTS!** They serve the Lord with different talents: musicians, singers, preachers, missionaries...

I pray that Lord bless everyone in every aspect of their lives, and everyone will accept Jesus Christ into their hearts, so that in Eternity we can be **TOGETHER** in the Glory of God!

With love, your mama, grandmother and great-grandmother.





# Contents

Childhood .....	3
Dad .....	10
Youth .....	23
Fate .....	36
Mom .....	47
Our house .....	52
Saur-Bulak .....	55
Juidam .....	57
Family .....	61
Lyubochka .....	63
God's Will or Destiny .....	68
The New House .....	73
Children .....	83
Vena .....	92
Verochka .....	100
America .....	102
Pavlik .....	111
Wedding .....	113
Maltsev Family .....	121
The Years Are Passing By .....	123
Blessings fervently prayed for .....	130
Waiting for eternity .....	134
Children .....	139
Families .....	145
Grandchildren .....	152
Grandchildren wedding .....	171
Great grandchildren .....	176
Congratulations on graduation .....	181
Happy birthday! .....	187
Meetings, travel, communication .....	198
Remembering those who have gone to Heaven .....	212
Baptism .....	217
Ministry .....	222
My Wish .....	237