

Life as Immigrants

- Our Story -

By Rev. Paul M. and Gail P. Sheppard-Caprietta.

Chapter 1

How it all started

It all started on November 18 of 1996 while I was seeking my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through prayer and fasting for direction as the New Year 1997 was quickly approaching. What will He have for my family and me? Suddenly, the Lord spoke to me in a very clear and audible voice that He will like my wife and me to migrate to the USA to live permanently to accomplish the work and call of God on our lives. My wife's ministry is singing and teaching God's word. My ministry is preaching and teaching God's truth in a real and dynamic way declaring His will and purpose for man in a lost and dying world.

I wrestled with the Lord concerning this issue because it would require me leaving my beautiful country of birth, Trinidad and Tobago and my private teaching business. Also, working for an institution lecturing Computer Science with an excellent success rate of 92.3 percent over a 13 year period.

I obtained a number of Diplomas in Business Management & Trading, Economics & Commerce, Accounting and Computer Science with emphasis on Software methodology from a very reputable and recognized institution from London, England and several ordinary level subjects.

Another very difficult situation for me was giving up the rent free living in my parents 4 bedroom house. Also, the only other expenses Gail and I incurred was the utility bills and miscellaneous expenses which came to only about \$300.00 Trinidad dollars a month which is equivalent to about 45 United States Dollars this was comfortable living by any standard.

This housing arrangement was possible because my parents left Trinidad in March 1990 to secure their permanent residence status. Also, my siblings migrated to the USA in June 1995.

Gail and I met in March 1993 through my sister Carol; they were friends and still are to this day. Through her witness and sweetness I was drawn to the Lord. My sister Carol prayed for me for over 12 years that I would come to know Jesus Christ as my Lord and personal savior. Due to the fact that I was not yet a born-again Christian Gail would not consider me as her fiancé because she was very strict in this manner.

I commended her very much for her stand in this respect. The Bible teaches,

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?”

11 Corinthians 6:14

After a couple of weeks with my sister and Gail constantly harassing me to come to their church, I finally accepted their invitation to attend their church on 23 of September 1993 on the basis of just to “shut them up”. Suddenly, after about an hour in the church service. I felt the power of God upon me and I walked down to the altar and accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Personal savior.

Gail and I started dating a couple of months later and we got engaged on December 31 of 1994. We subsequently got married in 1995 and to date we will be celebrating our 11 year wedding anniversary in September 2006. And we still love each other. Isn't that a miracle!

My wife and I traveled to the USA in 1996 on vacation and realized it is a nice country to shop and just to have fun. We had no desire to live in the USA because we were living a very comfortable and rewarding life. We were serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I, as an assistant to my pastor in Victory, El Dorado, and my wife as the worship director and Church secretary doing His work in the kingdom of God in Trinidad & Tobago. Our annual salary was about \$65,000 Trinidad dollars.

Life for my wife and I was very nice indeed, so the Lord requiring us to move to another country was very challenging due to the reasons mentioned above. Another was fear of the unknown, not knowing where we were going and the lifestyle we were about to encounter.

We were leaving our comfort zone, “so to speak”, our country of birth, and going to a foreign land which reminded us of Abraham's life.

“Now the Lord had said to Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.”

Genesis 12:1

I distinctively remember asking the Lord a very silly question when He requested me to move to the USA to live; “are you sure Lord?” He said “yes, I am sure; I do not make mistakes.”

The reason I asked was not to question God but for me to solidify in my spirit that the Lord is speaking to me. I proceeded to tell my wife, what the Lord had told me she responded by saying “No, I am not leaving my mother, father and the rest of my family to move to the USA.”

She further stated the reason I wanted to go to the USA because all my family was currently living in the USA while her family was living in Trinidad. So the transition would be easy for me. Also, the fact that she was 3 months pregnant would be very difficult for her to travel because of constant nausea. She was contemplating where we would obtain the necessary finances to take care of the baby and ourselves.

So I went back to the Lord and told Him the opposition I was having with the woman He gave me, and the fact that we were only married for 16 months. It meant that we were still newly weds and were just getting to know each other.