

Why the Door to Share the Gospel in Russia May Be Quickly Closing

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the demise of Communism began in earnest in Eastern Europe. And with it, opportunities to share the gospel in the former Soviet Union became abundant.

John Bernbaum, who worked for the U.S. State Department from 1972 to 1976, saw the changing times as a chance to spread the gospel to a vast group of people who were hungry for something different from the oppression it had felt for decades—those who were hungry for Jesus. Bernbaum helped to plant Russia's first Christian liberal arts university, the Russian-American Christian University.

And although that school is now closed, and the door to the gospel may once again be closing again under now-Russian President Vladimir Putin, Bernbaum says the seeds of faith were planted in his students and the kingdom is firmly entrenched in that country.

"The relationships we built with Christians from a wide range of perspectives in Russia, it was a very extraordinary experience," Bernbaum told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of "Greenelines" on the Charisma Podcast Network. "We have much to learn from people who have lived through a very hostile environment. The relationship we built with those students was just a tremendous blessing for me to see.

"It was such a great joy to see the courage these students had, that they were so on fire for Christ. We've been working in Russia for 25 years now, and we have used our resources to support Christian educational programs and Christian ministries in Russia and Ukraine. The Lord has opened up all

kinds of opportunities for us to build networks there.”

Now, however, Bernbaum is considered a “foreign agent” by Russian law, and he is no longer working there. But he continues to do the work of the calling God put before him, if only from a distance.

For more of Bernbaum’s incredible story, listen to this podcast. {eoa}