

# **Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East**

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## **CONTENTS**

1. Sadr Ul Hofaz, the Crazy Memorizer 7
2. Victories of Prayer in Egypt 13
3. The Greatest Treasure in Baghdad 20
4. The Assiout Miracle of Prayer 25
5. Jameel, the Camel Boy 31
6. Abba Musa Bows 37
7. Asaad Shidiak, the Syrian Martyr 47
8. Alya, the Healed Leper 50
9. Sarifa the Unwanted Baby 55
10. The Miracle of the Book at Seistan 61
11. Hranoush Faces Martyrdom 67
12. The Plight of Middle East Refugees 77
13. Niko Fouad, Trans-Jordan Pilgrim to the Heavenly City 84
14. An Entire Night of Prayer on Mount Olive 90
15. The Empty Grave on the Persian Plain 97
16. Christmas in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia 103
17. The Sheikh of Qatar Opens a Hospital 114
18. Prayer Delivers Ibrahim Shehda Maloof from Death 119
19. Hasan Reads the Book 123

## **ONE...**

### **Sadr Ul Hojaz**

#### **The Crazy Memorizer**

The grasp of Mohammedanism is great upon the Middle East. No stronger, however, are the tentacles of Islam wrapped around the lives of the people than in Iran, the ancient empire of Persia. From Arabia the long arm of Islam reached like a creeping snake across the desert until it took all the Near East into its fingers. The holy city of Mecca is the pivotal focus which all good Moslem pilgrims wish to visit. The Koran, sacred book of Islam, has been carried by Bedouin across the desert into the lands where Mohammedanism has rooted itself.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Great is the persecution of any Moslem who turns his back upon his own religion and becomes a Christian. Throughout the Middle East missionaries have heralded the story of Christ, the Light of the World. Here and there in Iran, Arabia, Iraq, Trans-Jordan, in the republic of Lebanon, in Syria, and throughout those countries where Mohammedanism is dominant, there are secret believers. They have accepted salvation through Christ, yet because of the great persecution they are oftentimes slow in proclaiming their faith publicly.

Missionary G. F. Zoekler, laboring in an Iranian village, was surprised one evening, when he returned home from the school where he had taught that day, as a tall, slender young man with an intelligent and eager face approached him. The Iranian was wearing a white turban, with a white flowing robe beneath his fawn-colored aba, which indicated that he was a mullah, or a religious teacher.

The mullah stepped forward and in formal Persian greeted the missionary. He extended his hand, which Zoekler grasped. The missionary thought this strange, since mullahs are not in the habit of offering their hands to Christian teachers.

“Are you looking for the return of Christ?” asked the Persian. And when the missionary said he was, the mullah added, “So am I.”

“And how did it come about that you, a mullah, are looking for the return of Christ?” asked the missionary.

Then the young mullah told the story of a search for satisfaction which he could not find in his native religion. The Koran left him blank. After he had mastered it he had found that it had no power to change his life.

A few days later the missionary met the mullah again, and during a long conversation the Iranian told the story of his life.

“I am known as the Sadr ul Hofaz, which means ‘the highest of the memorizers.’ This title was given me by the Shah of Iran when I appeared before him, and in the presence of a number of mullahs, repeated from memory the entire Koran in Arabic without a single mistake. Naturally I was very proud of the new title, for it was no small task I had performed. However, I had done more than just memorize the Koran. I had made a careful study of Arabic so that I was able to understand the Koran, and was not like so many who had memorized it or parts of it, but who do not know its meaning.”

When the missionary asked him to continue his story of the study of the Koran, the Christian mullah said that by nature he was a religious person, and the more he read the Koran, the more the fountain of spiritual thirst bubbled up within his heart. He sought guidance in his sacred book.

“But I did not find it in the Koran itself. I was greatly surprised at the things that came to my notice as I made my search; things which, though I had frequently read them, had

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

made no special impression upon me. The first of this was the evident lack of spiritual guidance in the Koran itself. Then I was impressed with the references made to Jesus Christ. This seemed strange to me, for Islam claims to be superior to Christianity.”

The more the mullah, or memorizer, thought upon this, the deeper he studied the Koran. He was struck by a statement in the book which said that those who were in doubt about things in the Koran are to refer to “the people of the book.” All Moslems, according to the mullah, know that “the people of the book” are Jews and Christians. While this seemed strange to the mullah, coming from the Koran itself, which claimed to supercede the Bible, still he wondered if he should not obtain the Word of God and study it.

“So I determined to secure a Bible, read and compare it with the Koran. This I did at the first opportunity, and I read and studied it quite as faithfully as I had the Koran.”

The mullah in his confession of faith to the missionary said at first he was disappointed, for “I had the usual Moslem ideas of what a book claiming to be a revelation from God would be like,” and had “been intrigued by the rhythm of the Arabic in the Koran.”

“However, as I began reading the Bible and comparing it with the Koran, I began to appreciate how the Bible reveals God's sympathy with man. His love as shown in Christ gripped me until there was nothing left for me to do but accept Christ as my Saviour and endeavor to follow and to serve Him.”

When the mullah had at length been led of the Holy Spirit to reach the conclusion that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world, he bowed before the Master of men and submitted his heart to His incoming.

Missionary Zoekler was amazed, and when the mullah finished his narrative, he asked, “How is it then that you still wear the garb of a Moslem mullah?”

The young man smiled, the light of Christ shining through his countenance, and quoted from the Bible, saying, “ ‘Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.’ ”

He explained that it was customary for him to wear the garments of a mullah, not to hide the fact that he was a Christian, as so many secret Christian believers did, but that he might have access to all classes of Moslems. Wearing the garb of the religious teacher in Iran opened the doors of the peoples’ homes to him. He was free to go into their homes, to meet them at their social gatherings, to converse with them in their gardens. Wherever they assembled, there he could freely tell them about Jesus Christ and “what I have found in Him for myself.”

Some, related the Christian mullah, believed and accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour. Others merely shook their heads, saying, “The Sadr ul Hofaz has gone crazy.” From this expression he was called “the crazy memorizer.” Everybody who knew him

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

was proud of his memorizing ability and of the title which the Shah had conferred upon him, but when he told them that he had accepted Jesus as his Saviour they merely passed it off by saying, "The memorizer has gone crazy."

"But this does not bother me. The one thing that I want to do is to tell the Moslems about Christ," said the Christian mullah, as he conversed at length with the missionary.

Crowds gathered about the "crazy mullah" and he preached Christ to them. The missionary often wondered why it was that he had been able to continue his work thus over a period of years, for usually when a Moslem accepts Christ it is the signal for a tirade of persecution to be directed against him. Many times among the fanatical sects of the desert in Arabia this persecution means death, but the Christian mullah was allowed to testify freely in the country where he had attracted great fame as "the highest memorizer."

In old Persia the Gospel story is still being told. The tides of the Persian Empire from its earlier days have swept in and out, leaving here and there the broken relics of what once was the world's most famed empire. Through the Christian centuries, since Mohammedanism raced through the nation like wildfire, there have been Christians who have narrated the simple story of Christ. Many of them have lost their lives because of their testimony.

Recently, just before the Second World War, Dictator Reza Shah Pahlevi closed the Christian primary schools; then the middle schools and colleges likewise were closed. He told the missionaries, according to John Elder, laboring in that country, "Your hospital will go next." As the missionaries looked upon these conditions, they said, "We will be out of Iran in five years."

Then came World War II and occupation by England and Russia, which led to the abdication of Reza Shah. This was followed by the German threat, and people said, "The Germans will be here in thirty days." But Missionary Elder said, "You are probably right, but-" The victories for the Allies changed this. This was paced by the Communist menace, and the Russian armies were on the outskirts of Teheran for many months. The radio blared forth its warning that unless parliament became communistic the capital would be stormed. The army marched into Azerbaijan, but after a short battle the Communists fled.

This wrought a great victory for the Christians, for while they were not permitted to open their schools immediately, they were allowed to carry on their church activities, their evangelistic itineration, and their presses sent forth a stream of Christian literature.

"Everywhere church services are crowded. Through about a dozen colporteurs more than twenty thousand Scripture portions in fifty-six languages are distributed annually," avows John Elder, writing in *The Presbyterian*.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

The Russians in Moscow have said in their press that the missionary organizations, particularly the Presbyterian, are but spies for the United States, and have woven their webs around many Iranian villages and towns.

Apart from the sermons delivered in churches, relates the Soviet presses, the Presbyterian officials travel freely through the country under the guise of religious teachings. They are dispensing political propoganda. They praise the majesty and charity of the United States and preach the necessity of using American goods and taking advantage of American loans.

“They have their own hospitals and the paradox is that the number of missionaries in these hospitals is two to three times as great as the number of doctors. Sermons and preaching are the principal means of securing patients. These missionaries have cars and even airplanes at their disposal. One can see with half an eye that they are agents of the American espionage department and are commissioned to colonize Iran.”

Despite this the churches are filled to overflowing, and the story of the Master is once more being heard by the Iranians. The ancient land of Persia has many secret Christian believers, and not a few who testify freely to the fact that they are Christians whose lives have been transformed by the Gospel of Christ.

SOURCE: Pr. G. F. Zoekler, missionary to Iran, in THE PRESBYTERIAN, Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia, Pa.

## Two...

### VICTORIES OF PRAYER IN EGYPT

Egypt has been the battleground of Christians and of the followers of God since the days of Abraham. The fate of the Hebrews fluctuated through the centuries as they came in combat with the Egyptians.

Abraham was well received by Pharaoh. Jacob's sons were sent by their father to buy corn from that land, only to be persecuted by the Pharaoh's highest premier. In time Joseph revealed himself to his brethren. Joseph long before had been sold by the same brethren to a caravan which brought him to Egypt. From that time on many were the persecutions suffered by the sons of Jacob and of Joseph, and the children of God during the long years of their Egyptian bondage.

Once Israel was happily situated in Palestine, the land of promise, the tides of empire flowed back and forth. Egypt stood against those who proclaimed the old story found in the early part of the Bible. During the centuries, after Christ and Calvary, hundreds of Christian believers flocked to Egypt. They centered in Alexandria, on the shores of the

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Mediterranean. Here great churches flourished. Here also arose the Christian sect known as the Copts.

There have always been Christian witnesses in Egypt; but when Islam swept Egypt the fate of the Christian believer was oft times in the balance, for over his head swung the sword of persecution, and even of death. However, in these our days, God has raised up many Christian witnesses who labor in this land which was old when recorded history began. Katrina Neff, who with her husband, Thaddeus, has spent many years as a missionary in Egypt, tells of recent prayer victories.

The burden of their prayer in 1948 was for a floodtide of spiritual power to strike Egypt with a wonderful revival. They had organized many prayer partners in the United States, and elsewhere around the world. In their Christmas letter sent to these friends in 1948, Katrina Neff said:

“We are asking now for your united prayers that there might be such an awakening among God’s people in Egypt that a great revival will break out, an old-fashioned revival as has never been experienced in all of Egypt. Of course God is with us. He is helping us in many ways, and the people are being saved by the one, twos and threes. But we are burdened for more souls. Pray earnestly that the people may see their lost condition, repent and turn to Christ for the Water of Life which He has promised every soul who seeks until he finds. Pray that these believers who are saved may be eager to tell the story of Christ and His love to others, who likewise may be saved and satisfied. The Christians of our various congregations are praying three times daily this petition, ‘Lord, send a revival in Egypt, and begin this revival in my heart.’”

As this request was sent out in 1948, scores around the world lifted their voices to God in prayer for a revival. Daily the Christians prayed in Egypt that God would visit them with a spiritual awakening. 1948 passed, 1949 came.

At last, during the months of March and April, in 1949, a Pr, and Mrs. Donohew labored with the Christian congregations in Alexandria and elsewhere. Night after night they gave forth Spirit-filled messages that brought conviction to hundreds of souls.

“About 400 souls accepted Christ as their Saviour during these meetings. They knelt at the altar of prayer and, many times in tears, they called earnestly upon God to forgive them their sins. In some villages where we had time for only one afternoon service, when the altar call was given, without hesitancy many people pushed forward and knelt on the mat in front of the pulpit and called upon God to forgive them their sins. Physically they could move but a little on account of crowded conditions. The poor women, who were unsaved and eager to have their sins forgiven, had to be instructed in the room where they sat, since customs in the villages in large crowds will not permit women to pass and kneel at the altar of prayer in a room where men and boys sit.”

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Mrs. Neff relates unusual answers to prayer which took place during the recent World War. Her daughter was teaching music in a school in Alexandria in 1938. She was married in May of 1939 to a young Christian Austrian. When the war started in 1939 the lad had a passport which permitted him to go to Germany if he so desired. Missionary Neff advised him to start at once for the United States instead. A German officer told the parents of the Austrian that if he should leave for the United States, he would be captured on the way and sent to Germany where he would be held as a prisoner until the close of the war. In the end "he would be taken to Germany to be tried, condemned as a deserter and shot."

Here was a dark picture, and the Christians could not believe that such would be the fate of this young man.

"Through earnest intercessory prayer in regard to the matter God revealed to my husband and me that the only safe and wise thing for our daughter and husband to do was to get started for the United States as quickly as possible. At the same time the assurance came from heaven that they would make the trip safely if they left at once. Oh, how we thanked God for this assurance of victory."

On September 7, 1939, just one week from the day that war was declared, the young woman and her husband sailed from Alexandria, Egypt, on the steamship President Pope of the American Dollar Lines. A few nights later Mrs. Neff had a vision or dream in which she saw her daughter weeping most bitterly, while a look of sorrow covered the face of her son-in-law.

"I awoke very much alarmed, knowing full well that they were having difficulty. Immediately, in the dark shadows of the night, I reminded God of His promises and began to pray they would reach the United States safely. Just as quickly faith and reassurance filled my heart and dispelled all doubts of their safe arrival. God, who has all power in heaven and earth, had overruled every difficulty, and I knew they would duly reach their destination in safety. Of this I was assured."

Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Neff received a letter from her daughter telling of the serious problems faced as the ship reached Marseilles, France. The daughter said that as the boat arrived, an officer called the son-in-law's name, Guggenaster, stating that he had received orders to arrest him. When the missionaries and other Christian friends on board pled for the young man, the officer replied, "I have a duty to perform and I have been sent aboard this ship to arrest Mr. Guggenaster. However, I have listened to your story and will take this letter and his passport and talk to the admiral. (The letter referred to had been written by missionary Neff, explaining the situation and the intent of his son-in-law.) At five o'clock I'll return to the ship and let you know what the conditions are."

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

The Guggenasters went to their cabin where they prayed from noon until five o'clock. They read their Bible, and as they finished their prayers, there was a rap on the door.

"There stood the same French officer with a smile on his face, who handed our son-in-law his passport and letter and said, 'You can go on to the United States as a free man.'"

Thus God overruled and this young Christian was able to continue to his destination of the United States.

Katrina Neff relates other answers to prayer which took place in Egypt. Among these she tells of her son-in-law's sister, Isabelle, who was dying in a French hospital in Alexandria. As Katrina and Thaddeus Neff visited the poor, emaciated and almost lifeless girl, they prayed that God would spare her life. They requested prayer for her healing in church services. During the afternoon, while praying for the young lady, a friend who had visited the hospital in Alexandria with them said:

"There is no use to pray for this girl, for she is too far gone and may already be dead."

"God is able to raise the dead," said Mrs. Neff, "and I must pray rather than eat when there is such a burden upon my heart to call upon God."

During the afternoon, when Mrs. Neff prayed, the assurance of answered petition warmed her heart, and as her faith took hold, she said, "The girl is not dead, but God has healed her."

On going to the hospital shortly thereafter they entered the room where the girl had been, only to find a vacant bed. Then Mrs. Neff asked, "Where is Isabelle?"

A nurse led them into another room where the girl was. Isabelle, who in the morning was verging on death, and could not speak in an audible voice, told how during the day God had laid His hand upon her, rebuked the fever and healed her.

Katrina Neff is certain that the hand of God is upon her and her husband, for in a miraculous manner in 1942 their lives were spared to serve God in Egypt many years longer. In the summer of 1942, Mrs. Neff relates how with other Americans they were evacuated to Gura Camp, some ten miles from Asmara, the capital of Eritrea. At the camp they were informed by the American Consul that they must be repatriated to the United States. Pr. and Mrs. Neff felt that God would have them return to Egypt rather than go back to their homeland.

"In Gura Camp one night about midnight a truck backed up to the door where we were and ordered us to pack our luggage. They told us we were to start for Port Massawa, where we would board a ship for the United States. We prayed all the way to Massawa that God would overrule so that we would not have to go to the United States at this time. We felt strongly impressed that we were not to return to the States now. When we reached Massawa at daybreak, the Port captain walked through the bus and said to



## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

the Americans, 'You folks are all going to America, and you will soon be safe in the good, old U.S.A.'"

Mrs. Neff spoke up, "Yes, but my husband and I do not feel that we should go now. I would like to know on what kind of a ship we will be carried in war days, for many ships are being sunk and never reach their destination."

The Port captain replied that the ship they would travel on would not be the Queen Mary by any means, but it would be all right, and "you are going on that ship." The Neffs had no choice in the matter. The captain said he did not want any arguing.

Meanwhile Mrs. Neff sat quietly asking God to intervene. As they were waiting for the ship to arrive, Pr. Thaddeus Neff asked the captain if he could have Mrs. Neff's shoes repaired, for she had broken off a heel.

The captain became angry and retorted, to the amazement of all, "You and your wife are not going on that ship." He stormed, according to Mrs. Neff, in a loud voice, and continued to use the same tone of voice for some time, when suddenly he subdued it, adding, "See that your baggage is not taken out of the bus and put aboard that ship."

"There was a deep settled peace in our hearts that made us believe that God was overruling in the matter so that we would not have to go on the ship. In a private military car we were taken back to Massawa, where we enjoyed a delightful vacation. During the end of August of 1942 the Lord overruled and led us in a miraculous manner back to Egypt, when we had been told by the military authorities that it would be impossible to get into Egypt while the critical condition lasted in that country."

Mrs. Neff appends a note to her letter to the author, in which she relates the fate of the ship.

"The very sad part about that ship upon which we would have traveled to the United States, but was spared from boarding at the last moment, was, she never reached the U.S.A. at all. All those friends and good Americans who boarded her were never heard of again. God still had work for us to do in Egypt."

SOURCE: Mrs. Katrina Neff, 27 Rue Ahamed Kamha Bey, Camp de Ce.rar, Alexandria, Egypt, in a private letter to the author.

## **THREE . . .**

### **THE GREATEST TREASURE IN BAGHDAD**

The name Baghdad, Iraq, conjures up stories of intrigue and romance. This fabulous old city is centered in the country made famous by the book, Arabian Nights. Baghdad's history goes back to the time of Abraham in Ur of Chaldee. The city lies on the bank of the Biblically famous Tigris River, and is not far from the more famous Euphrates which

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

flows through the stories of the Bible. Baghdad reminds us of Bedouin sheikh, fast-riding Arabians, the tent of the herder and the date garden of the planter located in a desert oasis.

Iraq was formerly known as the land of Mesopotamia and lies now cut like a large piece of desert pie out of the center of the Middle East. To the west and the north lie Syria and Trans-Jordan; to the south is Saudi Arabia and to the east is Iran or Persia. A northern tip edges Turkey, and at the mouth of the combined Euphrates and Tigris rivers Iraq touches the Persian Gulf. Herein are stories to make a thousand novels of fast-running horses, sheikh's desert trek, and tribes of Bedouins who trail the land of their birth, as their ancestors did during the many centuries since the time of Abraham. If only the cities and mounds of Iraq could tell the stories of the tramp of civilization, the rise and fall of empires which they have witnessed during recorded history, what thrilling reading this would make.

While Iraq saw empires rise and fall, she likewise has witnessed the unfoldment of the Bible. The dust of nations lies hidden under mounds where yet the spades of archeologists have still to unearth the story of defeated civilizations. But the Word of God, beginning before Abraham's day and continuing to narrate the recorded story of the children of God, stands as a firmer bulwark against the onrushing tides of time than any other power or authority in the world today.

In Baghdad, if you would find a certain old Indian Christian, he would tell you the Bible is Iraq's greatest treasure. If one should offer him date gardens which abound in the oasis of the desert, fast Arabian horses, holdings of the sheikhs, he would say, shaking his head, that the Bible outshines them all. Here is his story as told by Charles Bellingham, of the American Bible Society in Baghdad.

One day an aged Indian knocked at the door of the American Bible Society's depot in Baghdad during the height of the summer. Colporteur Bellingham noticed he was shy about entering, so he held the screen door for him, and saw how exhausted the wrinkled old man was from the heat. Bellingham estimated that he was somewhere in the seventies. He quickly offered him a chair. After the aged Indian had been sitting under a fan for some moments of silence, he regained his breath and took from the bosom of his flowing robes a much-worn Gospel of St John in the Arabic.

"The covers, which had come apart, he had tied together with a tape, and almost every page was loose. They were curled, and in some instances torn from constant fingering," says the colporteur.

With the Tigris flowing near by, and the noise of Baghdad's streets coming in through the windows, the colporteur's imagination swept the desert which surrounded this ancient city, and he fashioned a picture of that little Book being used by the Indian until it was now soiled and frayed.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

He could see him sitting in the eventide under a tent, or possibly by the cooling waters of the Tigris or Euphrates, or in some oasis as the night came on. Carefully he would handle that frayed portion of John's Gospel as he read it. He could see the marks where the toil-stained thumbs had blackened the edges of the Gospel. Finally the old Indian handed the book to the missionary.

"Handling it with great care he put the little volume in tidy shape, and then rising to beg us to handle it with care too, he held out both hands and gave it into our keeping. At the same time he requested another copy of the Gospel just as cheaply as the Society could supply it to him. Naturally we told him that we would gladly give him another free of charge in place of his worn copy, but this he would not accept. He insisted upon paying for it," says the colporteur.

In Iranian speech he told the story of that precious Book which he had received eight months previously from one of the Bible Society's colporteurs then working through Iran. After some time he said:

"This is the first portion of the Scriptures I have ever had. It is interesting and becomes more so the oftener I read it. It has been in my possession some months already, and as I was reading it one afternoon while sitting alone, the light dawned upon me. Salvation and the joy of the Lord came out of the pages of the little volume into my heart, and how I love the life it tells about."

He went on to say that for several days now he had been searching for the Bible House in Baghdad. When he handed the frayed-edged Gospel to the missionary, Bellingham says, "We wrapped the well-worn Gospel very carefully and placed it in a drawer where we told him it would be safe, and he could have it at any time he called. His gratitude for this little service he could not express, but we knew by the light of his face what he felt. He told the story of how precious the Book had been to him."

"The Word of God is the greatest treasure I have ever possessed in my life," said this Indian Christian, who through reading the Gospel of St. John had accepted the Pearl of Great Price, and in the ancient land of Mesopotamia, now under the modern garb of Iraq, read the Book and possessed the treasure which the world could not take away.

When Mr. Bellingham offered him a complete New Testament, since he had never had one of his own, the old Iraqi very reluctantly shook his head and said, "I paid for this little Gospel, and it has brought me life's greatest joy, for it is my own. I would like very much to possess a whole New Testament, but can only do that when I am able to buy it myself."

Said the missionary, "I will loan you one." But this offer was declined. Then Charles Bellingham made the suggestion that he would pay for the New Testament personally, and that the Indian could read it and pay the money back in installments whenever he could afford to.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

“This he considered carefully, and at last giving his consent to the suggestion we ended the sale and he went away with a glow on his face and a joy in his heart, the proud owner of a New Testament.”

Since then he has made three calls at the Bible depot during five months, and at each visit paid an installment on the precious Word of God.

“And each time he has requested a look at the first treasured Gospel of John,” adds the colporteur.

Who he is the missionary does not know, for the old man does not encourage inquiries as to his identity, what he does, or where he goes. Missionary Bellingham says,

“We are content and encouraged. We have a use-worn Gospel of St. John in the drawer of the depot at Baghdad as a testimony of the Word of God having been sown by a colporteur in Iraq’s scorching desert and returned to the Bible Society bearing a hundredfold.”

-SOURCE: Charles Bellingham, American Bible Society Depository, Baghdad, Iraq, and American Bible Society, 450 Park Avenue, New York 22, N.Y.

## **FOUR...**

### **THE ASSIOUT MIRACLE OF PRAYER**

The Nile River has etched its story deep in the centuries. When the race was young the Nile was the famous granary for that early world.

When Abraham needed food he drove his flocks to the borders of the Nile valley. Centuries later, as Jacob’s followers required corn he sent his sons to the Nile to obtain it. The river has traced the story of civilization’s development through the centuries. Yearly, as the Nile overflowed, it brought life and foodstuffs to the Egyptian populace, and whether that populace lived on the river’s banks in the days of King Tut, or in the days of the World War II, the Nile has always made history. There are few sections of the world as well known, few rivers have touched history with as great a power.

The children of Israel lifted their cry to God for deliverance in the land of Goshen, and God worked a miracle through Moses to deliver them.

No less miraculous was the power of God in answering the prayer of Lillian Thrasher during the last decade. For thirty-one years Lillian had tested God and proved His promises to be true. He had said that He would be a “father of the fatherless.” And Lillian, known as the

“Nile Mother” of the Assiout Orphanage in the Egyptian city of the same name, began testing God’s promises. During the early days of September, 1941, after Great Britain

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

had been at war for two years, the orphanage was poverty stricken. The clothes of the four hundred and fifty children were in tatters. Food had long been rationed, and now there was no food even to ration, and not a single dollar in the treasury.

In desperation Monday afternoon Mother Thrasher sent k word to each of the missionaries assisting her, asking that they pray. In a note sent to Florence Christie, Lillian said:

“Dear Miss Christie: Do you think this evening you could make a very special call for the needs, after supper perhaps? I sent a note to Miss Clayton asking her to do the same at her prayer meeting today. After supper the girls can pray as long and as hard as the Lord puts it on them. We have nothing. The need is very great, but our God is greater. ‘Ask and it shall be given.’ “ Signed, Lillian.

Miss Christie, in recording the event and the following miraculous answer to prayer, said, “And did we pray? Four hundred and fifty orphan girls in the girls’ building alone who had an hour before received their scant rations in the dining room, now humbly cried to ‘the father of the fatherless’ for bread and beans and clothing. Some with their little fists would pound the tiles before them or the wooden beds by which they knelt. Others, though not so demonstrative, would with tears streaming down their cheeks silently pray.

“I heard little Figa pray above the voices of others. Figa was not a beautiful child. Her head was shaved because of an ugly scalp disease, but she knew the Lord. Her arms stretched heavenward, tears streaming down her cheeks, she was saying, ‘Dear Lord, you have said that when our mothers and fathers forsake us, then you would take us up.’ Many prayed until two A.M. As I noticed them fall asleep I carried them to their beds.

“Tuesday found school impossible, for with the prayer burden which was upon the hearts of the four hundred and fifty orphan girls, including eighty widows, there was little thought of lessons. Prayer continued throughout Tuesday and much of Tuesday night. The burden was heavy upon all. Eighty widows gathered in the church for prayer. There were no songs, no testimonies, no sermon, everybody prayed. The petitions that ascended to high heaven joined the great river of faith that through the centuries had gone up from the land of Egypt to the God of the skies.”

Early Wednesday morning Lillian Thrasher received an urgent appeal to come to Cairo immediately. She took the midnight train and arrived on Thursday. Throughout the trip the question in her mind was, “What can this mean?”

She was invited to lunch with the American ambassador, Honorable Alexander Kirk, in his home, and at the luncheon the ambassador revealed startling news.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

“The Red Cross ship, the Kasandra Louloudis, which was intended for the Greek refugees, was nearing the Port of Tiraeus, Greece, when Greece capitulated to the Axis armies. The ship was radioed, and instead of landing at the Greek port it landed at Alexandria, Egypt, where it is now awaiting further orders. The ship bears articles of clothing. There are thousands of women and girls’ dresses of all sizes. Thousands of men and boy’s trousers and shirts, as well as hundreds of sweaters, baby layettes, towels and washcloths, blankets, scarfs, hundreds of kegs of powdered milk, huge sacks of rice, and scores of sacks of beans and flour.”

Miss Thrasher remembered that two of the items which the four hundred and fifty orphan girls called upon God to supply were beans and bread. The ambassador then asked, “Miss Thrasher, can you use any of these things in your orphanage where you have received so many refugees from the bombed-out areas?”

Miss Christie says, “Surely Lillian Thrasher had a camp meeting in her soul.”

That afternoon the Red Cross official, Ambassador Kirk and Miss Thrasher drove to the desert to see the supplies from the ship. Lillian later told Miss Christie that the boxes and crates were piled on the sand, and she could not see the end of them as they spread toward the horizon. The ambassador ordered a convoy of trucks to take a large load of supplies to the orphanage. Trainloads were sent later. This was an avalanche of answered prayers.

“The trucks arrived Friday morning. Classes had been resumed, but the children did not remain in the classrooms, for they heard the trucks rumble over the old, wooden bridge and left their classes to run after them. Boxes, crates, bags and kegs were deposited in the road beside Mother Thrasher’s cottage. The excitement ran high, for Mother Thrasher had sent a note, ‘Do not open anything until Mama returns.’ We waited. The next day at noon she arrived. The family was given permission to greet her. Words of warm welcome and greeting reached her in volume as she stepped from the car.”

On Monday the need was great. On Monday night volumes of prayer from four hundred and fifty throats were lifted to God. And now on Saturday morning here was the tangible evidence, in terms of truckloads of foodstuffs, that God is able to answer prayer.

Aunty Clayton, an English missionary, now dead, and Miss Christie lunched with Mother Thrasher, but their appetites had vanished, for their hearts were so jubilant in the Lord that they had little need of food. They had that to eat of which the world knows not. When lunch was over they stepped out onto the balcony, and there stretched before them was the orphanage family. They had not gone home, but rather stood in long lines with their graduated heights, boys, girls, widows, the blind, even the children and the toddlers.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

“I was disturbed because the girls were among them in all the dust and dirt,” says Miss Christie about the event. “I had charge of the girls’ bathing, 450 baths had to be taken. Necks and ears to be inspected late in the afternoon, 450 necks and 900 ears.”

Miss Thrasher said that she would distribute the clothing that afternoon, and what a distribution it was. Each girl received two dresses, the boys trousers and shirts, and the widows all the garments they needed.

The next day the girls marched to church wearing their new dresses, bright blues, yellows and greens and plaids, rainbow pastel colors.

Miss Christie says, “Truly the greatest dress parade I have ever seen took place that afternoon, a riot of colors. The girls were talking at once. They were bragging about the wonderful things God had given them.”

The boys were especially happy because sweaters had been given out, and though this was warm September, they put the sweaters on. Assiout is near the Equator and warm at this time. Miss Christie indicates that “hot” better describes the condition. With considerable difficulty the missionary persuaded the boys to wait to wear their sweaters until the cooler weather of January.

“They cried, rather choosing to wear all their blessings!” says the missionary.

What a glorious church service it was on the following Sunday morning. Less than a week after that volume of prayer had been so desperately sent skyward, here were the children, orphans, widows, and all, wearing lovely, sparkling new garments. Their stomachs were full of the food which they had prayed down, even though it came by way of a Greek vessel plying the Mediterranean waters to the Port of Alexandria. The merciful heavenly Father had provided all their needs. The American ambassador paid the freight charges which amounted to almost one thousand dollars for the orphanage did not have a dollar in the treasury.

Miss Christie concludes the story of this marvelous answer to prayer by saying, “When God answers prayer, He does not even charge for the freight.”

SOURCE: Florence Christie, Assiout Orphanage, Assiout, Egypt, as told in THE FELLOWSHIP NEWS.

## **FIVE ...**

### **JAMEEL, THE CAMEL BOY**

Jameel was a Bedouin lad who lived in the Syrian desert. His home was a black tent which had been woven by his mother from the heavy wool of goats and camels. This had been stretched in the desert where the family dwelt, according to Arab customs. While the father lived as the Bedouins before him, his brother, Hamoud, was more

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

prosperous and owned a camel caravan which made regular trips through the desert to and from Damascus, Jerusalem and elsewhere.

The scene was such as one could have found at any century of history since the beginning of time in Syria. Along the same road notables of the Bible had centuries ago trod the dusty trail. Damascus was made famous by the visit of Paul, when due to persecution he was let down over the wall in a basket, and thus escaped the ire of the inhabitants. Earlier on the same road to Damascus Paul saw the vision of the Master, from whence he dated his conversion.

Jameel, the Bedouin lad, lived in this fabled area. While the family had no camels, he had often ridden donkeys. He longed to ride one of his Uncle Hamoud's camels. One day his father called him.

"Jameel, Uncle Hamoud is sending a camel caravan through from Damascus, laden with all the treasuries of the desert and of Syria, and he has asked if you might join him, for he needs another camel boy."

Jameel exclaimed, "Oh, father, do you really mean it? I have always wanted to ride a camel."

Jameel went to the highest sand dune and scanned the horizon for hours, looking for the caravan. Finally he saw it silhouetted against the evening skies. Quickly he told his father, who ordered servants to prepare meat and rice for the guests. This was to be a grand feast. As the camels drew near Jameel looked at them, and saw that they appeared to be proud and wise, though old. He watched as they knelt to have their loads removed for the night. He was fascinated as he saw that each one had a string of blue beads across his nose.

When Jameel asked what the meaning of this was, the servants informed him, "We use those beads to ward off the evil eye."

There was little sleep for Jameel that night, for he was excited about the prospect of the long journey with the caravan. Finally he fell asleep to dream that he was riding a swaying hump-backed animal.

When Jameel awoke the camel men were astir. There was great confusion as they gathered to water their beasts. As the camels drank deeply at the fountain, Jameel remembered that by drinking thus the camel could store enough water in the great interior reservoir up in the hump to last as long as a week. When it became necessary the camel could regurgitate that stomach reservoir and supply his water needs.

At last time came for Jameel to climb up on the back of a kneeling animal. He clinched the broad saddle tightly as the beast lurched to its feet. Finally the caravan started, and as they stepped into line with that easy, swinging cadence that only the camel has, Jameel sat in the saddle dreaming of far-off lands as little boys have done from time



## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

immemorial. He listened to the soft, quiet pad of the feet as they struck the sands on the trail.

Gradually the rock ridges came into view, and here and there were patches of grass and shrubs upon which sheep and goats were grazing. After crossing a dry river bed they came to a watering place. As the sun was setting, the caravan reached a village where the camel men decided to spend the night. Jameel was sent to buy bread. He welcomed the opportunity to stretch his legs, which had been cramped all day in the camel's saddle.

Great was Jameel's amazement when he stepped into the shop where sellers were clanking their cups. The air was filled with the noise of marketing; and the jostling of the fat-tailed sheep and the sleepy donkeys as they plodded along the streets awakened the interest of the desert Bedouin. As he turned to leave the market with the wafflelike loaves of bread in his arms, a lady, fair and attractive, caught his attention. Her hair was light, her eyes blue, and she wore a dress different from any that Jameel had ever seen. This was the first time he had met an American woman.

With a smile broadening across her face she said, "Saida."

Jameel thought, "Oh, she speaks Arabic like I do."

"Saidaya sitt." (May your day be happy, lady) Jameel spoke in response.

The missionary said, "I have come a long way from America to tell the people about the Lord Jesus Christ. Would you like to hear about Him?"

Jameel had never heard about Jesus, except as somebody mentioned His name from the Koran, the sacred book of the Moslems, to which faith the lad and his Bedouin relatives belonged.

He told the woman that he would. The missionary spoke about Jesus Christ, His power to touch the heart of even a camel boy. She told how the Master had come down to live with men and had even taken on the form of man, that He might know humanity's problems, and how He died on the Cross for the Arabs' sins.

"People who curse, lie and steal, cannot go to Heaven," said the blue-eyed missionary, as Jameel stood entranced, "but if they ask the Lord Jesus He will take all of those things out of their hearts and write their names in the:" Book of Life."

Jameel remembered how he had kicked his donkey, beaten his ears with sticks, thrown stones at him, and cursed; him using Allah's name.

The week before he had stolen sixty piasters from his father, and then, when confronted with the theft, he had denied it. He gambled for eggs. There was a great sense, of guilt which rose up in his heart, and he felt that his name would never be written in that wonderful Book of Life, of which the missionary spoke.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Strange, my father prays five times a day with his face toward Mecca, Jameel thought as he dwelt upon the words of this fair-skinned lady, and yet I have never heard him say that his name was written in heaven.

The missionary quoted the passage of promise, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Thinking upon this wonderful promise of sin-cleansing and of the writing of his name in the Book of Life, Jameel asked, "Will you ask Him to write my name down in that Book?"

The missionary said that she would pray for his name to be, written down. The lad inquired, "Can I really see it?" When the missionary told him that he could not see it now, but that when he got to heaven he could, Jameel said, "I've got to hurry back to some friends, for the men are waiting, but I will ask Him, because I want my name written in heaven."

It was getting dark and the men were wondering why Jameel had taken so long to bring the bread. After he came, they sat around the blazing thornwood fire and ate their evening meal, carrying on the usual camel-caravan conversation under the Syrian skies, but Jameel's heart was not at the campfire. He was thinking of the Book of Life about which the missionary had told him. He looked up to those skies so brilliantly studded with stars on that Arabian night, and he knew that beyond them there must be a place of hope.

During the months to come, as Jameel rode in the caravan for his uncle, or visited in the Bedouin tents of parents and relatives, wherever he was, in that land of sand and history, his heart was fixed upon one thought, the Book of Life. He could not escape the long fingers of the missionary's words which she quoted from the Scriptures. He knew that he must confess his sins, be forgiven, and accept Christ as his Personal Saviour; then his name would be written down in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Glorious were the results when Jameel confessed Christ as his Personal Saviour without the tutorship of a missionary, but under the inspiration and anointing of the Holy Spirit. The joy of angels' songs burst into his soul, and the camel boy knew that his name was written down in that Book.

A number of years later the same missionary was confronted by a fine, stalwart young Arab, dressed in the flowing robes of the Bedouin. As she looked at him the young man asked:

"Do you remember me? I am the camel boy you spoke to at the market-place when you told me about the Lamb's Book of Life. Your words made a deep impression on me. As I rode along with the caravan I did as you told me. I asked the Lord Jesus to write my name in His Book, and then a wonderful peace came into my heart. Although I have not

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

seen that Book yet, still I know my name is written there, and I am telling others too how they can have their names written in Heaven.”

He went on to say that he often thought of this fair-faced, blue-eyed missionary and the wonderful story that she had told him. Her words had first planted his feet upon the path that led to Calvary and redemption. He wondered many times if he would meet her again, he so greatly longed to thank her for telling about the Lord Jesus and the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Mrs. George Carmichael, in relating this experience taken from her work in Palestine, the land made sacred by the Master, says, “Many are the camel boys like Jameel, who are awaiting someone to tell them the glorious story of redemption that they too may hear and know that their names are written down in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”

-SOURCE: Mrs. George Carmichael, Palestine, Israel; also, THE MISSIONARY CHALLENGE, Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Missouri.

### **Six . . .**

## **ABBA MUSA BOWS**

Islam has marched through the centuries with a sword in her hand. Mohammed was born in the seventh century after Christ, in the ancient land of Arabia, which today is the sacred center of Moslemism throughout the world. Early in his life Mohammed was shocked by the idolatry of his people, the Arabians, and determined to follow one God. He presented his claim of being the last and the greatest of the prophets, Jesus being the next in precedence, but he was finally severely persecuted and driven from Mecca, escaping to the city of Medina. Here the Koran, the holy book of the Moslems, was born in the mind of Mohammed, and here Mohammedanism as a religion found its foothold.

After Mohammed’s death in 632, A.D., his followers spread the new religion at the point of the sword. They rushed eastward across Asia, to the west into North Africa, and north through Palestine, Turkey and Europe. Gradually they pushed their strongholds deeper into the religions of the world. Every Moslem became a zealous missionary. In the course of time, from North Africa, they pressed southward across the vast desert into the pagan tribes, until today the territory north of the Equator is predominately Mohammedan. Kaano, in Northern Nigeria, some 2000 miles south of the Mediterranean, had long been a Moslem center.

For many years Moslemism provided an impasse for Christianity. This was true of Kaano, and the great Sudan which stretches across Africa. Here lies one of the vast closed regions of the world. When in 1893 God called three young men to carry the Gospel to the Western Sudan, two of these youths laid down their lives in Nigeria, West Africa, then known as the “white man’s grave.” The third member of that party, Roland

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Bingham, returned home broken in health, without having reached Kaano, his objective, and the great Islam center of West Africa. With others he prayed that God might open the door. A second effort was also unsuccessful, but a third party managed to gain a foothold in the country and a mission was established still hundreds of miles from Kaano. Since that time, the Sudan Interior Mission has pressed on, evangelizing tribe after tribe, ever pressing northward to the great closed Mohammedan sections of northern Nigeria and beyond. Dr. Bingham lived to see a mission opened in Kaano City in 1933, the very heart of the heretofore impenetrable Islam area of resistance.

In this region lived an ancient family, one of the oldest of Zinder, French West Africa, a hundred miles deeper into Mohammedan territory than Kaano. Into this family at the break of the 20th century a baby was born, and named Abba Musa. His uncle was a well-educated Mohammedan teacher-priest called in the native a malam. Abba Musa's father determined, when the lad was five years of age, that he should become a malam. He was put into the school of an Islam malam from Bornu. This school was a round, mud-walled, thatched-roof hut about eight feet in diameter. As a rule the boys (there were no girls) sat in the shade of a nearby wall to learn their lessons which the teacher had written on their big, wooden slates. Soon Abba Musa was chanting the Arabic alphabet at the top of his voice. Next he was taught to recognize and pronounce every syllabic combination in the Arabic language. Then he learned to put these syllables together to form words.

This to young Abba Musa was a tedious task since Arabic was not his native tongue. He and the other boys in his home life spoke the Hausa tongue. Since the only school that Abba Musa had attended was a Koranic school, it was necessary for him to read Arabic, in which the Koran was written. The Koran is about the size of our New Testament, and dear to Moslems.

Abba Musa did not enjoy this grueling task of memorizing the Koran, so he ran away time after time. His father determined that he should be a malam at all costs. Consequently, he went to the little schoolroom with a big stake and an iron chain. He drove a stake down in the middle of the hut and fastened one end of the chain to the stake and the other end to Abba Musa's ankle. The wealthy father provided his son with all he could eat, and he also had fine clothes to wear. For two years Abba Musa was chained in that schoolroom, and today he bears scars on his ankles from wearing the chains. Strange as it may seem, the treatment had a beneficial effect upon Abba Musa, who gradually developed into a good scholar and a studious lad.

After learning how to pronounce the Arabic words he mastered the Koran, until he had memorized great portions of it. The difficult task of learning the meaning of the Arabic words was reserved for more advanced students. Thus a zealous pupil may memorize the whole Koran with out understanding a single word. Many do this and are revered by

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

the people as learned malams, though they do not understand a word of their holy book.

“Neither Abba Musa nor his father were satisfied with such patent hypocrisy,” writes Everette Morrow, missionary to Dahomey, French West Africa, “and they determined that he should continue his studies in a famous Islamic university located near their ancestral home. There he set about the task of converting him to Islam. This required long talks, controversies and arguments, but gradually, in answering the arguments of Abba Musa, the missionary was able to teach the Moslem about Christianity.

Abba Musa told the missionary every detail of his father’s pilgrimage, and narrated how his father had bowed down to kiss the Kaaba, or the Black Stone, and in kissing it, “felt that it was more or less rank idolatry.” While his father was faithful in saying his five prayers daily, in his heart he felt it was not necessary to face Mecca in doing so. After conversing with the missionary Abba Musa discovered that he could talk directly to God as easily as he could by facing Mecca in his prayers.

The Sudan Interior Mission purchased a large house from the Frenchman, whereon the leading malam of the city issued an order that no Mohammedan was to enter the house or compound. However, Abba Musa disregarded this order, for as missionaries came and went Abba Musa added a little to his uncertain living by teaching Hausa to most of them. Several times missionaries would be awakened long before dawn by Abba Musa, in his drunken condition, calling them to the veranda and asking them to play the phonograph for him.

In 1933 Missionary Rice gave Abba Musa a book containing the first nine chapters of the Koran. Below the text of each page were two columns of references, one from the Koran and the other references to Christianity and the Bible. Abba Musa discovered in his study of this book that the Cross was the center of the Christian religion. For several years he laboriously searched for the truth by comparing the Christian Scriptures with the Koran.

Not the preaching of the missionaries, he testifies, but the Word of God itself spoke to his heart, and at length brought “the light that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world.”

“Apparently Abba Musa believed secretly for several years before he began to make any kind of a public confession,” writes Missionary Morrow. “In the summer of 1933 I went out to visit him on his farm about ten miles from Zinder. He showed me that this farm which he had recently inherited upon the death of his father had originally been a large, rectangular clearing. As the eldest son, he had divided the inheritance, and had purposely allotted to his younger brothers tracts from the four corners of the rectangular plot so that which was left for himself lay stretched out before us in the form of a cross. ‘You see,’ he said, ‘I have laid out my farm in the form of a cross.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Missionary Morrow asked, somewhat astonished, "Why have you laid out your farm in the form of a cross?"

Came the answer from the Mohammedan, "Because I love the Lord of the Cross."

Thereupon he secretly avowed that he was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the missionary said, "I am surely glad that you love the Lord of the Cross. Now why do you not tell others about the Lord who gave Himself for them? Why not tell your wife and your friends?"

The missionary discovered that this was one thing that Abba Musa was not ready to do at the present moment. Soon Abba Musa related to Missionary Morrow a dream or vision which he had. In telling about it, he said:

"At first it was a bad dream. I saw a figure approaching all shrouded in black. Somehow I knew that this was Mohammed. My heart was filled with a terrible fear and I tried to get away from him, when suddenly I was awakened to find my body covered with a cold sweat. I was so frightened that I did not want to go back to sleep, but soon I became drowsy and dropped off to sleep.

"Then the vision was repeated. But this time it was a good dream. The room seemed to be filled with light, and through the light a figure approached, clothed in shining white garments. This shining One said to me, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.' These are the words of the prophet Jesus, aren't they? I am sure I have read them in the Gospel."

Six years later Abba Musa was ready to make a private confession of his faith in Christ as His Saviour. This was made in the seclusion of the missionary office, as Morrow and Abba Musa talked about the things of God. When the missionary asked, "Do you believe, Abba Musa, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" The Mohammedan replied, "I believe everything that the New Testament says about Jesus. I am trusting in the promises of God as recorded in the New Testament for the salvation of my soul."

By the end of that year the people in the villages near Abba Musa's farm said, "Of course he is a Christian. Does he not confound the malams with his arguments?"

This was the first intimation the missionaries had that Abba Musa was giving a public witness to the power of the Cross in his life. Not long thereafter he spent a great deal of time preparing a booklet in Arabic and Aljemi, which is Hausa written with Arabic characters. This was based upon the reference Koran, the book which Abba Musa said was responsible for his conversion.

The following year God greatly manifested himself to Abba Musa in answer to prayer. In the summer of 1940 crops were threatened with severe droughts. When Abba Musa realized that unless rain came he would lose all he had, he called upon God one evening

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

to send rain. He prayed for hours, and finally that night showers fell. But strange to say, most of the rain was upon Abba Musa's farm.

"His own crops were saved while many of his neighbors had to replant," says Missionary Morrow.

"At another time a huge storm of locusts appeared on the horizon. Usually when this occurs everyone turns out, run back and forth across their farms, beat drums, old tin cans, basins, anything that would make a noise, and shout to the top of their voices, to keep the locusts from settling on their farms. As Abba Musa watched the yellow cloud roll toward him his heart sank. All of his family had gone to town, and he alone was on the farm. In his extremity he ran into his hut and cried out to God to protect his crops. Soon he heard the familiar rustle of myriads of insect wings, so he got up and went outside. He could see the locusts settling down on the farms all around his own, but none of them came onto his farm."

On another occasion, when Abba Musa's son went to the community well to draw water, he found that the larger and stronger men had already emptied it. It was about midday and all were hungry and thirsty, yet there was no water to drink, and none with which to cook. Abba Musa went into his hut, and upon his bed he "wept and cried out to God in prayer, and I had not been there a half an hour when the rain began to come down in torrents, and the water in the ditches and furrows was gushing past my door. God had chased up some clouds."

Abba Musa's testimony scattered far and wide. He contended with the religious teachers of Islam, and due to the fact that he had mastered the Word of God, and knew the Author of the Book, he was able to confound them in public arguments.

Soon he began addressing the crowds at the mission, where a public address system was used. As he spoke the message was broadcast up and down the streets of the city where many heard the Gospel of Christ. In time persecution broke out.

"Once a group of malams gathered outside the mission compound gate to pronounce upon him and the missionaries curses and imprecations which he well knew possessed a subtle satanic power. For a time he felt he could not; continue to broadcast or even to go out into the town, but the missionaries prayed much for and with him, and he was soon victorious over the deterring power, and resumed with new confidence his fearless public testimony."

So great were the problems faced that often he cried out to God, saying, "Oh God, if you see me going back into darkness, kill me, kill me, I would rather be dead than, to go back into darkness."

In the land of Abba Musa there are yet 60,000,000 Mohammedans who have not bowed before the Cross of Calvary as this malam did. While many of these are not in the Middle

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

East, still that portion of Africa, northern and far eastern, which edges the Middle East, stands as a challenge to those who would carry the Gospel of the Cross to this land wherein the shackles of Islam are strong. The challenge is for the Cross of Calvary to be held aloft by new recruits who would tell the story of other Mohammedans that they too may become witnessing Abba Musas.

-SOURCE: ISLAM BOWS, by Edward W. Morrow, Published by the Sudan Interior Mission, 212 St. George St., Toronto, Ontario, and 164 W. 74th St. New York City, N. Y.

### SEVEN . . .

#### **ASAAD SHIDIAK, THE SYRIAN MARTYR**

Asaad Shidiak had seen the light of the Gospel. Great power was moving in Syria at that time. In about 1825 so great was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem that a veritable Pentecost swept throughout Palestine and Syria. Scores accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Among these was Asaad Shidiak, secretary of the Maronite Patriarch.

In Syria is the sect of the Maronites, generally regarded as descendants from Maro and his followers, who settled in Lebanon in the seventh century. They maintained their independence against Mohammedanism, but in the twelfth century, when the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem was established, they submitted to the Roman Church.

When Asaad Shidiak, secretary to the Maronite Patriarch, accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, the Sultan issued a command or firman to all Western Asia prohibiting the circulation of the Bible upon penalty of death. Maronite converts who accepted the Word of God or submitted to the Gospel of Christ were forced to face death like the martyrs of the first century.

Asaad Shidiak became the tutor of an early missionary by the name of Jonas King, a compatriot of another missionary, Pliny Fisk, who shortly arrived in Jerusalem. Jonas King employed the Maronite secretary to copy a letter to Fisk, and while attempting to answer the letter in his own thinking, as he reached the last page of his reply, like a flash the truth of the Gospel struck him and he saw that he had been arguing against his own reason and conscience and opposing the higher operation of the Holy Spirit. Being intellectually honest he surrendered himself and his convictions to Jesus Christ, and thereupon accepted Him as his personal Saviour.

When Asaad Shidiak did this, the Patriarch tried to persuade him of his error, writing patriarchal epistles, and at length sending a mandatory message. When this failed, the Patriarch promised Asaad official promotion, for he sought to bribe his conscience, to compromise his convictions. After this was tried in vain the Patriarch threatened excommunication with all the rigors and terrors of the church's indignation.



## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Finding his efforts ineffectual in persuading Asaad Shidiak to return to the fold of Romanism from his new view of Christianity, the Patriarch finally annulled Shidiak's marriage contract. Against the beguilement of a woman's love Shidiak proved himself a steadfast follower of Jesus.

In time twenty of his relatives conspired against him, and at length delivered him to the Patriarch who cast him into prison. Loaded with chains, the convert was thrown into a dark cell, where daily he underwent cruel beatings.

His fellow Syrians visited him only to revile, spit in his face, and mock, as centuries earlier they had scoffed the Master. His own relatives joined in the persecution. None sought his release.

Once they led the convert Asaad Shidiak out of his dungeon and asked him to kiss the virgin in token of recantation of his error. The alternative was kissing a vessel of burning coals.

Said Asaad, "I accept the burning coals rather than kiss the virgin and deny my Saviour."

Speaking thus he pressed the coals to his lips, and with a burned mouth he was returned to his cell. Great was the joy and the glory of the Lord in his soul. Though he suffered intensely, spiritually there was an abundance of refreshing power that lifted his heart to the realms of heavenly bliss.

Proclaimed the Maronite Patriarch, "If he will not recant and chooses the burning of coals, I command that a wall be built around him, leaving only a small opening through which he may breathe, and through which food may be passed to him in sufficient quantity barely to keep him alive. And thus I command the sufferings of the starving man to be prolonged."

This was carried out. The wall was built around Asaad Shidiak, who refused to turn from the Christ in whom he had found redemption. Food was passed through the small aperture in tiny quantities, enough to keep a flicker of life in his wasted body, though not to restore him to health. At length the Christian became a skeleton, but his mind was invincible in the Lord. He would not deny his faith. The Spirit of God had bound him with cords of divine love to the Christ of Calvary, who had been crucified on the Cross.

Finally they killed the body of Asaad Shidiak, who became the Maronite martyr. Though they might fell his mortal habitat, still they could not destroy his spirit. And thus he became a witness to the redeeming power of Jesus Christ, and though he had sealed his testimony with his martyred blood, multitudes followed in his footsteps. For once more in Syria the blood of the Christian had become the seed of the church.

What are you doing for Christ?

## **EIGHT ...**

### **ALYA, THE HEALED LEPER**

Leprosy is as old as the Bible. Throughout the long centuries since the beginning of history there have been lepers in the Middle East. The curse is as ancient as humanity. In the days of Jesus it was no uncommon sight to see lepers standing by the side of the road, who when approached would cry out, "Unclean, unclean!" Today there are still lepers in Palestine, as well as throughout all of the Near East and Asia. In many places nothing whatsoever is done to alleviate the tragedy of this dread disease.

The lepers are driven into caves and live on what meager fare they are able to obtain. Often they travel in bands. Sometimes they are sought by soldiers and put to the sword. Theirs, through the long line of time, has been a tragic fate. They have received less love than most sections of humanity.

Our story begins about the turn of this century on the outskirts of Jerusalem, when a little Moslem girl was born into a poor home. The child grew to young girlhood as a strong person. One day, when she was about twelve years old, while she was out in the field attending the family flock of sheep, she noticed that her hands and feet were numb. Soon she began to lose control of them. As she told her parents about it they wondered if their daughter, unwanted as she had been in the Arabic home, was a leper?

At length indubitable signs of leprosy appeared upon her body, and the people of the little village outflanking the Holy City knew that Alya was a leper. She was pronounced unclean by the tribesmen and turned out of the village.

In her distress this thirteen-year-old Moslem girl knew not which way to turn. She heard that near the east wall of the Holy City was a small village where a number of lepers lived together. At length she made her way to this village which could barely be called a leper colony.

Here during the next five years the tragedy of leprosy was reenacted. The flesh from her fingers and toes dropped off. Flesh from her face and other parts of her body slowly yet inexorably disappeared.

Alya lived as a hopeless leper, awaiting the time when she should die of the disease. She watched her fingers one by one disappear, and her arms at length became stumps, her feet also the same. These aching stumps were used to walk upon, if her mode of transporting herself from one place to another could be called walking.

One day the members of the colony decided that Alya should marry a leper man who also was one of the band. The girl, then about seventeen, did not want to have the marriage performed, so she refused. The more she refused the greater was the opprobrium heaped upon her. At length the men beat her and finally put her in stocks.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Her brother, who was a Moslem priest in the village where she was born, visited his afflicted sister at times. One day he remembered the story from the Koran about one of the prophets of old, called Isa, who is none other than Jesus of our Bible. Said the leper priest:

“In His day he performed many miracles and healed lepers. We Moslems believe that Isa was a great miracle working prophet, but that He was superseded by Mohammed, the greatest and final of all prophets. I wish that Isa could be here. He would have compassion on you and heal you.”

Young Alya, a living skeleton, exclaimed, “Oh, that I had lived in the days of Isa!”

While Alya was yet lying in the stocks where she had been placed because of her refusal to marry the leper, a missionary visited the outcast villagers. When this kind American missionary looked upon the pitiful sight of the girl, now in the advanced stages of leprosy, lying in the stocks, her clothes frayed and almost gone, her face pitted, her hands and feet but stumps, she asked Alya, “Why are you in this pitiful way?”

Alya said, “I refused to marry a leper of the colony because I thought it was wrong to do so.”

Then the missionary told the poor Moslem girl the grandest story that she had ever heard. She said, “Long ago Jesus, the Saviour of the world, lived in Palestine. He walked the road where you now are. He came in and out of Jerusalem. He performed many miracles, and healed lepers. Alya, do you believe that Jesus can heal you?”

As the missionary continued to tell the glorious story of the Saviour, Who came to the world to save, as well as to heal, Alya at length began to drink in the thought of the touch of Jesus upon her afflicted body.

Finally the missionary said, “I want to take you home with me. Are you willing to go?”

The leper band permitted little Alya, now not much more than bones around which leprous skin was wrapped, to go to Jerusalem and live with the missionary.

At the missionary’s home, she was given a black medicine, just what it was she did not know. Then another missionary came and prayed for her. Laying her hands upon her, she called upon Jesus Christ to heal her, saying:

“Jesus, as Thou didst heal the lepers in Palestine long ago, wilt Thou now lay Thy hand upon poor Alya and lift her from this bed of affliction and heal her and make her clean?”

These prayers continued for about three months, during which time Alya faithfully took the medicine. At length an American doctor visited the missionary home.

“Doctor, I have a young girl here, a leper whom I wish you would examine,” said the missionary, taking the doctor to the girl.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

The doctor took blood from Alya's veins and then left. A few months later, after the doctor had arrived in America, a letter came to the missionary home which was eagerly opened.

"There is no trace of leprosy in Alya's blood," said the doctor's letter.

Finally the blessed truth struck Alya, and she cried out, "I have been healed! Jesus, the Great Physician, has healed me of the disease!"

Alya and missionary alike knew that the medicine could not heal her in such a short time, especially since she was in the most advanced stages of the disease.

The missionary reminded Alya of her promise when she was first taken into the home, saying, "If I am healed I will accept Jesus Christ as my Saviour." Together the healed leper and the missionary knelt in old Jerusalem and the regenerative miracle of salvation matched the miracle of healing in Alya's soul.

The healing took place over forty years ago. Since then Alya has served the Lord as a faithful and diligent Christian. She learned how to walk on her stubbed legs, and for many years made her living buying eggs in her little village, and transporting them on donkey back to Jerusalem where she sold them. She was a member of the Christian and Missionary Alliance church in Jerusalem, where she was faithful in attendance. God greatly blessed this healed leper, and for the more than forty years that she lived, not once was there a return of the disease. The miracle of healing was complete.

Whenever she visited the missionaries to whom she sold eggs in the Holy City, she requested that they hold a short Bible study and prayer-meeting. These were times of great fellowship centered around the Word of God. As Alya lifted her voice in prayer she thanked God that long ago He had healed her, and she winged her petition to the throne that other lepers might hear the glad story and be healed. She prayed for a revival, for salvation, for the souls of her Moslem relatives who long ago had cast her out.

-SOURCE: Ralph Fried, Jerusalem, Israel; and The Christian and Missionary Alliance, 260 W. 44th St., New York City.

## NINE . . .

### **SARIFA, THE UNWANTED BABY**

Sarifa was born in a Moslem but in Arabia. This was a tiny place barely large enough for the family to occupy. Sarifa's mother, Maya, was sick one day and sent for the neighboring missionary, Ethel Thorns, to visit her. When the servant of God entered the small room there was barely light enough to see, but she found Maya lying on a quilt on

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

the floor. Near by was a flat basket top, from which the grandmother picked up a little, black bundle.

“This is our worthless little orphan,” said the grandmother in a loud, squeaky voice. Then she quietly added as she handed the bundle to the missionary, “May God spare her life. Take her if you wish.”

Missionary Thorns was unable to care for the baby at the moment, but as the grandmother put the rough, compact bundle into her arms Ethel breathed a prayer, “May God bless her.”

Missionary Thorns found Sarifa to be a dear little girl. She had not been wanted, she was not longed for, and was not loved. No willing hands were ready to pick her up at any moment and rock her all day. Her beautiful olive skin, smooth and soft as velvet, was smeared on face and arms with lampblack. She wore a short, coarse, unfitted garment pinned for closing, and unhemmed, for Missionary Thorns says, “A finished baby’s garment might tempt providence.” Her arms were bound to her body and her legs tied together by a long piece of coarse, black cheesecloth. This went around the baby’s shoulders like a shawl, crossed over the chest, and then back to secure her arms to her sides, then over her abdomen, down over her thighs, and around and around her legs.

The blackened face looked out at the missionary from a tiny cap tied under the chin with a string. Around the baby’s neck was a cord from which hung charms. Here was a tiny cloth parcel with verses on paper sewn into it, the mounted tooth of a fox, a blue button, a black and white bead, each of which items were full of disease germs and handy for the baby to suck.

Mother Maya told the missionary that the baby had been sick, and she had used charms to ward off further disease.

“Out of curiosity I picked up the cloth from the baby’s basket top that was sheet, mattress and bedpad. I found there equipment to keep the devils away—a sharp knife, a piece of brimstone, matches, and a black string.”

The missionary told Maya that she too was a mother, but had not used charms. She had trusted God to take care of her children, and they were safe in the missionary family at that time.

“Put your trust in God and not in charms,” continued Mrs. Thorns, “He loves us as Jesus taught us. Now discard all of these charms which are the marks of an unbeliever. Even give them to me and let us clean up your precious baby girl to look as God made her.”

Maya shook her, saying, “Maybe there is some good in them. We are very afraid, we Arab mothers, when only a few of our babies live.”

As the missionary left the Arab hut she breathed a prayer that God would touch the heart of Maya, and in time little Sarifa might have a Christian home in which to be loved.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

After three years had passed, Maya rushed into the women's reading class at the mission one morning and said, "Please, Khatoun, please bring the doctor and come to my house. Sarifa is in pain, burned. She was backing away from me and fell into a large jiddar (fifteen quarts) of boiling milk. Can you bring the doctor from the clinic? I will go to my baby now."

For hours the missionary and the doctor worked over little Sarifa. Her clothes were cut away, and as the string of charms interfered with the dressing it had to go, too. Half of Sarifa's body was burned. The doctor gave her such patient, loving care that he could have done no more had Sarifa been his own little baby. The mother co-operated as she helped with the painful treatments. On the fourth day Sarifa was so improved that the doctor knew she would get well.

Along with the medications, and while the child was being treated, doctor, missionary and nurses sent up a prayer that the Lord would touch her body. At length they knew their prayers had been heard. In a few more days the missionary said good-bye to the little patient in the clinic. As Maya was leaving with Sarifa she walked to the door, and taking one of the doctor's hands and one of the missionary's in her own, she said in a quiet voice, "Thank you for all you have done. God, through you, has spared us our little girl. She's yours. It is He who takes care of her."

"I felt a lumpy object in my hand, and looking down I saw the discarded charms," said Mrs. Thorns after Maya had left.

Thus another unwanted girl baby had been won to the cause of missions.

The lot of girls and women in Arabia borders tragedy. Wherever the Moslem religion has gone the women are treated worse than beasts. In the Moslem idea of heaven there is no place for women. They can be divorced merely by the husband pronouncing the words of divorcement over them. Many a happy young girl has left a Moslem home to be married to an older man who already has three other wives. She becomes slave or servant in that household. Seldom does she see her husband. She is loved not, nor is she cared for by older and jealous wives. If Christianity has done nothing else than save or bring the hope of the Gospel to these unwanted and depressed women and girls, the work is noteworthy.

Would you like to meet a few of the Arab women and study them for a moment as they are patients in the hospital at Kuwait? Possibly Kuwait is a new name and its location unfamiliar to you. The principality by that name is jammed in between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, on the upper end of the Persian Gulf. It neighbors Iran on the other side of the Gulf. In the capital city bearing the same name as the principality is an American hospital, operated by Christian doctors and missionaries serving under the Reformed Church in America. Jeanette Boersma, nurse in the hospital, introduces us to a few of her women patients.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

At the time Jeanette was writing, there was an aged blind mother in the hospital whose daughter was caring for her. The daughter, some twenty-eight years of age, is a so-called descendant of Mohammed. Her husband pronounced the words of divorce over her a year ago for no particular reason. She left him two lovely daughters. These girls the mother will never see again. Her heart aches for them, her hopes are shattered, and while she has gone to live with her parents, after they leave this earth she will be entirely alone.

There is also in the hospital a small five-year-old boy who was badly burned. He has two younger sisters whom Jeanette calls "darling." When Kariem came to the hospital in this serious condition, the parents agreed that it would be better for his two sisters to die than to have the little boy pass away, for, writes Missionary Boersma, "they do not love the girls at all. Their only interest lies in the son, because he is a boy. Girls do not count."

Often mothers will bring their little girls to the morning clinic to be treated. Many of these are beautiful children. But the mother will say, "Their father does not want them. He tells me to throw them away."

Zahara worked in the hospital for some time. She was a lovely young woman of twenty-two, who had been married to a cousin, and to whom a boy had been born the previous year. When the baby was four months old her husband, who could not find work in the community where they lived, went to a neighboring city to find work. Since the husband left her, Zahara has not heard from him at all. Neither has he sent any money for the son's support. It is reported that the husband has another wife in the city where he is now living. Zahara is supported by her father, who has three wives, many children, and another married daughter to care for as well.

Missionary Boersma tells of being invited into the home of a clinic patient, in which were two sisters who came regularly to have their eyes treated. While visiting she learned that these girls were married to old men. They came from a family of five girls and two boys. The parents, to get rid of the girls, hurriedly married them off, with no thought of the girls' future, to old men who had other wives. One of the girls was already divorced because her eyes were affected with trachoma. The second sees her husband occasionally as he comes to town. She is with her parents, while the husband is out in the country some distance away. She has borne a child to that husband and is left to care for her alone. The husband may or may not send her any money for support.

"Occasionally our women patients are left without food or money. Their husbands will return to their homes in the country, not caring whether or not their wives are provided for. If it is a case of being on a bed or on the floor it is always the man who takes the bed, leaving the floor for the women. According to the Arab custom the men and women do not eat together. The women prepare the food, the men eat first, and that which remains is for the women. One time a very sick woman came from afar for

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

treatment in our hospital. The men of the family came with her. She was securely placed in bed, and then the men returned to their homes, never again to see the wife and daughter or to inquire about her. When Rabia was well, after a three-weeks' stay, she returned the long distance with only her mother to accompany her."

Missionary Boersma relates many stories of these unhappy, fear-filled Moslem women, who live in constant dread of their lives, for they can be either divorced or forsaken by their husbands at will.

"It is perfectly legal and right for the husband, according to Islam, to divorce his wife any time he desires by saying three times, 'I divorce you,'" writes the missionary. "It is legal for him to have four wives and as many concubines as he can support. Because of this liberty women are often their husband's servants. Their life is a life of bondage."

SOURCE: Reformed Church in America, Board of Foreign Missions, 156 5th Ave., New York, N. Y. Also Jeanette Boersma, in *Neglected Arabia*, published by the Arabian Mission, 156 5th Ave., New York, N. Y.

## TEN...

### THE MIRACLE OF THE BOOK AT SEISTAN

Missionary William McE. Miller was riding in an empty truck on a desert highway of eastern Iran, leading from the far north to the Persian Gulf. They were near the city of Zahedan, their destination, and terminus of the railroad crossing Baluchistan, when suddenly his companion, a Gospel bookseller, began to reminisce.

"That is the road to Seistan," said the traveling companion, pointing to a blurred track across the desert which cut from the main Zahedan road and led eastward to the nearby border of Afghanistan. "I wish we could go to Seistan and see the Sadar."

As the truck came to the desert trail that led to Seistan, Missionary Miller was flooded with memories of a trip which he had made twenty years before from Meshed, in the far north of Iran, where it borders the Soviet nation of Turkmen. This first visit was not via a truck. Rather, Missionary Miller first journeyed there in an old, covered wagon to which four desert-bred horses were hitched. This was a journey of six weeks in the dead of winter. Arriving at Seistan he quartered at the deserted Russian Consulate which a missionary doctor used as a hospital. The building was crowded with poor, dirty folks from Iran, Baluchistan and Afghanistan who gathered daily in the yard to be treated by the kind American physician.

While on that deputation to Seistan, doing the work of his beloved Master, the missionary heard the roaring of the "one hundred and twenty day wind," as it is called, which filled the air with clouds of dust and gave no rest day and night.



## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

“I thought of my fruitless efforts to evangelize the Mohammedans of Seistan, of my attempts to sell Scripture portions to the ignorant and bigoted people in the dirty bazaar, and of my bitter hours of discouragement over my failure to find any sincere inquirers. That had been one of the most difficult experiences of my contact with the Moslems, and I felt thankful that it was passed and that I didn’t have to go to Seistan again in a covered wagon.”

As the truck rolled along, the bookseller called the missionary’s mind back to the present. He was saying, “It is too bad we can’t see the Sadar, for you really ought to meet him. Do you remember what I told you about him? He is a Christian and openly confesses his faith before the Mohammedan people of Seistan. Several years ago I went to his town to sell Scriptures, and he invited me to his home for dinner and asked a number of sadars, also chieftains of the Afghan border, and he requested them to buy my books.”

The bookseller went on to tell how the Sadar of Seistan had helped to make peace between Iran and the warlike chieftains of Baluchistan who were fighting the armies of the Shah of Iran. He told the people that the reason he did not like to fight the other chiefs was that he had accepted the teachings of Jesus Christ who commanded men to love one another.

“Can’t we go to Seistan on our return journey and visit our brother?” asked the bookseller once more.

“I would be glad to visit Seistan again,” replied Missionary Miller, “especially since your friend the Sadar is there. But our time is short and it isn’t easy to find transportation to a remote region like that. How fine it would be if the Sadar should come to Zahedan while we are there.”

“If he knew we were coming I am sure he would ride the seventy miles to Zahedan to see us,” returned the bookseller, a warmth of expression covering his countenance, “for he is a very fine Christian brother.”

Missionary and bookseller spent three days in Zahedan, and the time passed very rapidly. They daily went to the bazaar with armloads of Christian books in various languages, which they offered for sale to crowds of men who filled the dirty streets. Here they met long-haired Sikh merchants who rode down from India. There, likewise jostling among the crowds, were Afghan camel drivers, and Baluch tribesmen with their big turbans and dirty white pantaloons, who crowded into the bazaar. The Iranian customs officials from Teheran, capital of Iran, were here in the crowds, who considered their assignment to Zahedan nothing less than banishment from Persian civilization.

“Each evening we met with a small group of Christian brothers and sisters in the little church which was maintained by an Indian missionary doctor and his wife,” writes the

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

missionary. "Several times the bookseller and I spoke of the Sadar and wished he were with us in these meetings, but he never appeared."

Finally the time came for missionary and bookseller to retrace their steps along the eastern highway that cut the Iranian country. Before they left they held a farewell communion service with the little church, expecting to depart immediately on the seven hundred mile journey northward to Meshed. One of the communicants, an English lady from India who did not know Persian, said to the missionary at the close of the service, "How grateful I am. This is the first communion I have had for a long, long time. If only my husband could have been here."

The missionary answered, "If he would like to have the communion then we will stay another day and I will have a special service in English tonight."

The following morning Dr. Miller went to the British Consulate, the camp and the officers' mess to invite all English-speaking people to the service, returning at noon to the doctor's house. He was greeted by the bookseller with good news.

"The Sadar has just come to Zahedan. He was here to see you this morning and will come again at 3 o'clock this afternoon."

Then the missionary understood why he was led to delay their departure and thanked God that he would have the privilege of meeting this Christian Sadar.

At the appointed hour the Sadar walked into the garden. Missionary Miller was greatly surprised when he saw that his visitor was a clean-shaven, neatly-dressed man, "who might have passed for a merchant from Bombay, or a government official from Teheran." He had expected to see a typical Baluch chieftain in baggy white pantaloons, with a big white turban wrapped around his head, and a thick, black beard covering his face. The chieftain shook the missionary's hand warmly as though he were greeting an old friend with whom he had camped many days.

"I am delighted to see you, my brother," said Missionary Miller, "for I was unable to go to Seistan to meet you. And now God has brought you to Zahedan just in time. If you had come a day later you would have missed me."

"Thank God," replied the chieftain, "I had no idea you were here until I arrived this morning at the home of the Iranian governor where I am a guest. The governor told me the good news of your coming, and now at last my eyes have been made bright by looking at your face."

The missionary's curiosity was aroused by this warm greeting, and he said, "Pardon my curiosity, but will you please tell me when you became a Christian and how you heard of Christ and His salvation?"

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

The Sadar replied, "You remember, do you not, that there was an English missionary in Seistan for several years? Thirteen years ago I was baptized by him, but I was a Christian long before that."

The missionary recalled facts about the Christian workers who had come to Seistan and Zahedan years before, and answered, "It was too bad they had to leave. But you did not tell me from whom you first heard the message of Christ."

"I heard the message of Christ from no one," replied the Sadar, a smile wreathing his countenance. "I heard it from reading the Bible."

When the missionary asked the Sadar from whom he had received the Bible, quietly the chieftain said, "From you, yourself."

"Do you mean to say that you saw me when I was in Seistan twenty years ago?" asked Missionary Miller in amazement.

"Yes, I was then only a youth. I came to your room and bought a Persian Bible from you. We had no conversation except you told me that this Book was God's Word and I should treat it with respect. I took it home and read it and was convinced that its teachings were true. So I became a Christian. You left Seistan and I saw no other Christians for a long time. Then after seven years I was baptized by the English missionary."

Mr. Miller asked the Sadar when he had last taken Holy Communion, and he replied, "I have had the communion only once when I was baptized."

"We talked a long while, as brothers separated from one another will do when they finally meet at last," relates the missionary. "At length the Sadar rose to go back to the governor's home, promising to come the next day to receive communion and tell us good-bye."

That night the English lady and her husband and son came to the place of service. "The Lord was present and gave His blessing." Early the next morning the Sadar knelt with the missionary and the Christian workers in the doctor's sitting room and received his second communion.

While he was returning to Meshed by the long and winding highway, the missionary's mind was filled with the tenacious remembrance of a passage he had carried with him in his earlier work in that country: "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." He recalled the labor of that terrible summer in Seistan, and thanked God that his Gospel sowing had not been in vain.

"I had to wait twenty years to see the fruit of that sowing, but here in the desert among the briars and thorns of Mohammedan fanaticism, far from any mission station, the seed had fallen into a bit of good soil, and tended by the Lord Himself, was producing a good harvest. Truly His Word will not return to Him void. He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied—if we faint not."

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Coming to the Seistan road, the bookseller asked, "Aren't you glad you saw the Sadar?" To which the missionary replied, "Indeed I am. Now I know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Those early days of seed sowing, difficult times of near f persecution, when it seemed as if all efforts were in vain, now brought a rich harvest to the kingdom of God.

SOURCE: William McE. Miller, in *One World A Building*, published by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 156 5th Ave., New York City. (Dr. Wm. McE. Miller, Presbyterian Mission, Teheran, Iran.)

## **ELEVEN . . .**

### **HRANOUSH FACES MARTYRDOM**

Hranoush Krikorian faced the opportunity of literally dying for Christ. She knows what it is to stand the test of being willing to lay down her life for her faith in Christ at the point of a bloody Turkish sword. To Hranoush, martyrdom at times appeared a grand opportunity to glorify God. She was not unaccustomed to martyrs, for her father, Pr. Krikor Yardumian, died at the swordpoint in a filthy Turkish prison.

Pr. Yardumian laid down his life for Jesus Who died to save him. He was an Armenian minister in Turkey, doing evangelistic work throughout the land. Many had been the scenes of glory as Turkish Moslems accepted Christ as their Saviour. However, in the bloody persecution and martyrdom when the Turks literally wiped the Armenian nation off the face of the earth and massacred millions for their faith in Jesus Christ, this Christian minister was persecuted and at length lay down his life for his Saviour.

Friends later told his family that the last they saw of him was when, with chains around his hands and neck, he was being led away to the scene of martyrdom. Only God knows what transpired in the minister's soul when he laid down his life for Jesus Christ.

Hranoush was born in Yosgad, Turkey, at the dawn of the 20th century. She grew up in the home of a Christian minister who spent his time in carrying the story of salvation to fellow Armenians and Moslem Turks. When World War I broke out, Hranoush was in a Christian boarding school, and was ready to be graduated at the coming commencement exercises. Tides of Turkish persecution rose against the Christians. Christian men by the thousands were slaughtered for their faith in Jesus Christ, until the soil of Armenia ran red with the blood of Christians.

Hranoush watched this martyrdom as it swept closer and closer, finally to engulf her own father. Daily the great hordes of the army went through the Christian homes seizing the little children and placing them in Turkish orphanages where they would be brought up or trained as Moslems.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Thousands of older women and girls were sent on deportation treks, which meant that they were herded together by a cruel Turkish officer and driven along roads out into the deserts where they were left to perish.

Hranoush said, "Dr. Miller, as those death deportation groups marched along, two and three thousands in a group, a commonly forty or fifty would be found dead every morning. They were seized from their homes with nothing whatsoever except what they had on. If they were lucky enough to have a little money with them, well and good. If they could grab a blanket or a coat as they started on those long deportation marches which meant their death, that was fine. But most of them had nothing. And when the cold night came, or the rains fell, when food ran out, they lay down and died. They were martyrs to their faith."

Many of the younger girls received offers to become Moslems and thus escape death. Among them was a preacher who whispered, with fear in his heart, "Just tell a tiny, little lie and say you're a Moslem, yet remain a Christian, and thus save your life." Not so was the fate of Pr. Krikor Yardumian, for rather than deny his Saviour in even a tiny little lie, he laid down his life upon the altar of martyrdom, as has been stated.

The day came when the cruel Turks rushed to the school where Hranoush was about to graduate. The younger children were sent to orphanages. Some of the girls were deported to military hospitals. Such was the fate of Hranoush's sister, Puzantoohi. Many of the more beautiful ones were offered the hand of a Turk in marriage. The young Turks who had been trained in the United States, England, Germany or France, wanted the better-educated Christian women to add to their harems. The Koran, you recall, allows a Moslem at least four wives, and as many concubines as he can support. Many of these beautiful Christian girls were offered life in a Turk's harem as a wife or a concubine, worse than death at the point of a sword.

On that fateful morning when the Turks rushed to Hranoush's school, after taking the younger children and disposing of them as they would, they herded together the twenty-five teachers, including seventeen-year-old Hranoush. They drove them to prison, a dark, vile hole, where they were kept separate from the other prisoners. Three times they were taken out of that cell, on three consecutive days, and driven before the governor and the consul, where they were made this offer:

"Become a Moslem and we will make teachers out of you, care for you, pay you well. Remain a Christian and face death. What is your choice?"

Day after day Hranoush and the others were given this decision to make. Day by day the twenty-five faithful Christian young people marched before the grave governor, faced him, and every time said, "We will not deny Christ."

Hranoush, in describing those tragical scenes of more than thirty years before, said, "My heart was filled with the spirit of martyrdom. At times I thought it would be sweet to lay

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

down my life for Jesus. I faced the Turk with joy in my soul, for I felt the presence of the Master with me. There came one day into my mind and soul that glorious passage, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Never once was I tempted to accept Mohammedanism and deny my Saviour.

“Many young Christian girls and older ones denied Christ, became Moslems, joined harems, married Turks, and a few of the Christian girls later, whose lives were spared, as they worked in hospitals and orphanages among the Turkish young men, fell in love with them, married them and became one of their three or four wives. But never once was I for one moment tempted to deny my Saviour, for like the writer of old, though I be slain for Christ, yet I determined to trust Him.”

When the Turkish governor saw that here were twenty-five Christian girls and women who would not deny their Christ, they placed officers in charge of them, and drove them out on the highways, to deport them. Where to? one asks. To death along the highway, in the deserts, on the mountainside, in the cruel forests where dwelt the fierce Kurds. They were driven, deported, not to a place but to death.

Dr. Samuel Krikorian, whom Hranoush was later to marry, says he remembers two or three thousand women who were driven in such a deportation group into the Iraqi desert, where, if not forcibly captured by the sheikhs, they died from starvation, the rigors of the desert, or accepted marriage into the harem of an Arab.

Thirty days and thirty nights Hranoush and her fellow Christians, among which number was her mother whose life God graciously spared, were driven along the open road by the Turks. Thirty nights they pillowed their heads on their arms, or on the cruel stones of the roadside. Thirty nights the sky above them, studded with the stars which became the promises of God to be with them always, was their only canopy. Hranoush said:

“When they came to the school I had no money. Some of the teachers had a hundred pounds with them, expecting to be seized at any time. I had no coat. Some of the group had thin coats. I had nothing but the dress which I wore, and in that condition I walked out on the road of deportation. It was cold, chilly at night. One night when we were in the heavy timbers near the mountains where the Kurds live, it rained, not just a shower but a downpour, a cloudburst. It seemed like the heavens opened and all the waters in the skies above, gathered together through the centuries, poured down upon us, our only shelter being the trees under which the twenty-five of us rested.

“The Turkish guards huddled together in the rain. The night seemed to be endless, but always there was in my mind the Scripture, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

I pillowed my head upon it. I wrapped it around me as a blanket to keep me warm. I awakened at night cold and shivering to hug it and that determination to my breast. In the morning when I awakened the passage was with me, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. When the sun came out, how grand it appeared, for my clothes dried.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Then the Turkish officers said:

“It is a good thing it rained last night, for the Kurds who live in these mountains have been sweeping out of them on their wild, fast-racing horses and seizing the women from the deportation groups. Had it not rained last night there would have been Kurds riding to carry you off by force.”

Hranoush thanked God for the miracle of the rain. These girls had prayed that God would spare their lives and deliver them if it be to His glory. But if it was not for His glory, to a person they had determined to die for their faith.

At the end of thirty days the deportation group arrived at the city of Aintab. When Hranoush Krikorian came to this point in her story, Samuel, her husband, broke in, “I was born in Aintab.” Hranoush recited how, as the group came into the city, she saw many Armenians on the streets, and thanked God that the persecution, the martyrdom, the massacre, had not been so serious there. She remembered that her father had taken a religious magazine published in Aintab which was edited by a Krikorian. Though she did not know it at the time, the editor was her future husband’s uncle.

While she was in Aintab Hranoush recalled the words of a missionary whom she had met when six years of age. One morning when she had started to school she saw a man in the distance whom she knew to be a missionary coming toward their home. She ran to meet him, and when asked where her father, the evangelist, lived, she pointed to her home. Placing his hands upon her head the man said, “I am sure you will grow up to be a Christian and God will use you in His work.”

And now in Aintab on the deportation trek, she felt that God had miraculously spared her life for some particular purpose. This feeling continued with her in the events that were to take place shortly. During the day a young Armenian came to the group in Aintab and said that she was to go with him. Hranoush at the moment hesitated, not knowing just what to do. She had grown up in a minister’s home and been sheltered from the outside world, and recognized none of the dangers or evils that life held. So, unthinking, she decided that this would be at least a way out for her. God thus far had protected her.

During the day, while she was looking in the distance, she saw the towers of buildings which she recognized to be those of a Christian mission. At night, when she was staying in the home of this wealthy young Armenian, she felt ill at ease, and early the next morning, without telling the family what she was doing, she slipped from the house, and asked God to direct her toward the mission, which she knew was located in the city. When she started out she walked as rapidly as possible. Upon looking back she saw a woman following her at some distance. This caused her to quicken her pace, and the faster Hranoush walked the faster the woman came, until at length they were running.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Finally Hranoush approached a dead-end street, where she turned and faced the pursuing woman. Said the kindly lady, "Don't be afraid, I am a Bible woman and I want to help you."

The Bible woman told her that a near-by Christian family had learned of the girl's being taken to the home of the wealthy Armenians, who were only nominal Christians. The father was impressed that he should send the Bible woman to find the girl and offer shelter. During the night he dreamed that he saw a girl who looked like Hranoush, and when he told the Bible woman that she was to go to find Hranoush, the woman asked him what she looked like. The Christian man to the best of his ability redrew the image he had seen in his dream.

When the Bible woman took Hranoush back to this home where the father was truly a Christian, the man said, "That is the girl I saw in my dream," and he offered Hranoush shelter. He was a wealthy Armenian.

"There were many wealthy Armenians, particularly professional men, doctors, lawyers and such like, who were of value to the Turkish empire at that time, and to the armies, and their families were spared deportation. Such was the family where I found shelter," relates Hranoush.

Shortly thereafter, through the instrumentality of this kind friend, she went to Beirut where God opened a place of service in an orphanage. It was not long after this that the Allies won World War I, and the Turks were forced to submit to the terms of the allied nations. Thereupon the Near East Relief was set up, which, cooperating with the Red Cross, established many orphanages wherein young children from the massacred Armenian families were gathered and a livelihood as well as an education furnished.

At the close of the war Hranoush sought for her family. After the Near East Relief had located her Mother while she was teaching in an orphanage, she and her mother gave the organization what information they possessed concerning their family. At length they found the younger sister serving as a nurse in a Turkish military hospital.

The younger brother, who when seized was three and a half years old, was discovered in a Turkish orphanage some three or four years later. Here the boy had been brought up as a Moslem, and when he was re-united with his family he prayed the usual Moslem prayers five times a day and was in reality a Turk. Though he was young when placed in the Turkish orphanage, he still had lingering memories about his name and his family. It was not long until he well-fitted himself into the Christian group once again. The older brother was located in the Turkish army and re-united with the family. Thus God brought the family together once again.

The hand of God, after He had so graciously spared Hranoush's life, was laid heavily upon her. She often thought of the passage which had given her comfort, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. One day while she was teaching in the Turkish orphanage



## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

God impressed upon her, "I want you to be a living sacrifice on my altar." From the time she was six years old and the missionary placed his hand upon her head and spoke the kindly words, Hranoush felt there was some particular field in God's service in which she must be busy. Now He indicated that He wanted her to be a living and not a dead sacrifice upon His altar.

While in Beirut one Sunday morning Hranoush attended Christian church where a young man recently from America, now laboring in Jerusalem, was present. The minister introduced the visitor as Samuel Krikorian and asked him to lead in prayer. Sometime during the service Hranoush thought, "I would like to have him for my brother." Shortly thereafter Hranoush and Samuel met, and the miracle of love took place. In 1924 they were united in marriage.

From that time on Hranoush and her husband, Samuel Krikorian, have labored in the Holy City where God has graciously blessed and honored their work. God gave them a Christian school, a church, many converts who now live as Christian groups throughout the cities of Palestine, and particularly at Amman, Trans-Jordan. God likewise gave Hranoush a beautiful family, Paul, Ida, Samuel and Grace, ranging from ten to twenty-two years of age.

"These have been blessed years of Christian service," says Hranoush in looking back over the life which God so mercifully opened to her. "Many times in our Jerusalem work I am struck with the thought of the sacrifice we must make. But then I remember that God called me to be a living sacrifice, and I have placed my life upon the altar of Christian service to labor where and as God would have me."

God not only blessed Hranoush in opening a field of service, but He graciously blessed her brothers and sisters. The older brother is now a dentist in Jerusalem, the younger a dentist in Amman, capital of Trans-Jordan, and is the dentist for King Abdullah of that nation. The sister, Puzantoohi, is a teacher in a Christian school at Zerqa, Trans-Jordan, some fifteen miles from Amman. Here God is using her among the many Arab refugees from Palestine.

And now Hranoush and her husband Samuel are awaiting the time to return to the Holy City again where they shall take up their labors as they laid them down when the battle for Jerusalem was the fiercest and it was necessary for them and their family to furlough to America.

SOURCE: A Private interview with Hranoush Krikorian in Pasadena, Calif., Address, Jerusalem, Israel.

## TWELVE . . .

### THE PLIGHT OF MIDDLE EAST REFUGEES

Grave problems face the Middle East, none however of more serious and immediate of import than the hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled the havoc of the Palestinian War. For the most part these are Moslems, but among them are Armenian Christians and other nationals who have accepted the Gospel of Christ.

This was brought forcibly to attention in a private conference with Dr. Samuel Krikorian recently. He has spent the last twenty-seven years as a missionary in Jerusalem, was born in Aintab, Turkey, and outside of the few years spent in the United States for his college training, has lived all of his life in some section of the Middle East. He has traveled extensively in Egypt, Trans-Jordan, Iraq, the Republic of Lebanon, Syria, and in Turkey. From a wide experience he recognizes the gravity of these problems. He was in Jerusalem during most of the recent war, being evacuated only at the last possible moment when the Arab and the Israeli armies clashed in the Holy City. Dr. Krikorian describes the actual conditions which are now existent.

These refugees are by-products of war. As the army of Israeli approached an Arab village in Palestine, rather than face capture everybody who could travel, took what few belongings they were able to carry and fled the scene on foot, donkey-back, automobile, airplane, or however else they were able to go. Most were poor, but among them were many wealthy people who left behind everything accumulated through a lifetime. Consequently, when the Israeli armies captured the city many of the finest homes, stores and factories fell to them as loot.

Dr. Krikorian avows that more than a quarter of a million Jewish immigrants, among the displaced persons of war-torn nations, were settled in the conquered territory. This means that Arabs, Moslems and Christians, who fled the destructive army of Israel who now live as refugees in the surrounding nations of the Middle East left behind everything they owned.

For instance, in Gaza, Southern Palestine, are thousands of homeless refugees living in tents, huts, caves, hovels. They sit en masse waiting patiently for somebody to dole them a handful of food. The famous Friends Relief Committee is working among these groups. Refugees in Gaza are clamoring for a home, a place they may call their own.

Though according to prophecy Israel shall occupy Palestine in time, still the problem of these refugee Moslems, and Arabic and Armenian Christians must be faced by the Church.

Dr. Edwin Moll, representing the National Lutheran Council in the Holy City, recently made a trip to Beirut, Republic of Lebanon, where he visited an Arab refugee camp. He

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

took into his arms a dying baby who was perishing from hunger. Its tiny body was but bones with a parchment-like skin drawn tightly over them. The child's cheeks were sunken, the eyes dull-glazed, the face that of an aged, emaciated man. In the small camp were eighty families, many of them with children in the same condition. Tens of thousands were in neighboring camps. Among these the children were the first to sicken, due to the ravages of starvation and disease.

In inspecting another refugee camp near Jerusalem he made the trip during the driving winter rain, and beheld some 60,000 people huddled together like cattle, most of them having for their only shelter a tattered burlap tent or the olive trees. Here and there the dying wail of a baby, the moan of an aged Arab woman, or the cry of a child in search of food, broke the stillness of the night.

"Multiply that present Holy Land scene many, many times," says Dr. Moll. "There are 450,000 to 750,000 Arab refugees, for the most part simple, unlettered Moslem villagers, tillers of the soil like their ancestors for the past 1300 years, who now have fled in terror before the advancing Jews. Their homeland and their possessions are being taken away from them by brute force. Without arguing the vexatious Palestine problem, I simply confront you with this question, 'What do these Moslems now think of Christianity?'"

Various organizations are reaching out the hand of Christian fellowship and help. What the Near East Relief did for the remaining Armenians whose folk had been massacred in World War I, the Church must now do, plus the agencies of relief organized by the Red Cross. Archdeacon Maciness, of the Church Missionary Society under the Church of England, gives the following picture of what their workers are trying to do.

In Nablus a Miss Rickard is distributing blankets. The hospital under the society there is flourishing, but the schools are dismissed and occupied by refugees. In TransJordan Miss Coate is organizing relief for five hundred refugees in tents at Zerqa, while Miss Morris distributes milk and soup for mothers and babes in Esalt, Trans-Jordan. In Nazareth Miss Wyatt carries on the orphanage with a reduced number of boarders, but increased cost, for poverty makes life near-impossible for the refugees.

The Gaza Hospital, cut off from the rest of the mission, suffered severe damages from bombardment during the war. Arab congregations have faced financial disaster. The people are scattered and their sources of income lost. Some feel bitter, but many of them express their faith in the words of Najib Cubain, who writes:

"I can tell you that the work of the Church will not suffer, because our sufficiency is not of man but of God."

Pr. S. Lyman MacCullum, agent of the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society located in Istanbul, Turkey, recently made a trip to Syria where he had the privilege of distributing Gospels to refugees. His fellow-travelers were Dr. John Crose,

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

field secretary of the Church of God Mission Board, and Mr. Elia Sahuni, of the American Presbyterian Mission.

They visited a refugee camp near the ancient city of Sidon, where some 40,000 Arabic refugees live under all possible conditions of destitution. While these men were going from tent to tent, and hearing the people clamor for food, they were approached by various ones asking for a Bible, a New Testament, or a Gospel. One man came to Bible colporteur MacCallum and said:

“Mister, I am a Christian and a half. I am due a full New Testament, not just a Gospel.”

The missionary later discovered that he was not a Christian, but a Druse, who long had wanted to read the New Testament. In a very short time four hundred Gospels were distributed in the camp.

“All who have known the great personal joy and comfort of the grace of God can imagine the thrill we found in working together with the Bible Societies’ splendid staff and colporteurs in this blessed ministry,” adds Dr. Crose. “We were nobly assisted by some of the pastors and spiritual workers in Palestine who themselves are refugees, and who can genuinely sympathize with their fellow exiles.”

Dr. Samuel Krikorian describes in a very graphic manner the fate of many of the Armenian Christians whom the Holy Spirit has used him to win to the Lord in his Palestinian work. When the Jewish Army and the Arab forces fought in the Holy City, many of these converts realized that they must flee for their lives. Large numbers who had worshipped with Dr. Krikorian in the Church of the Nazarene in the Holy City fled to Amman, TransJordan. Here Dr. Krikorian’s brother-in-law is the dentist to King Abdullah. In time Dr. Krikorian started a mission in Amman, as well as in the near-by Zerka, or Zerqa, fifteen miles from the capital, where a church and school were opened.

God had begun preparing a noble teacher of the Middle East for the task of conducting the school more than thirty years ago. She had come up out of great persecution. Her father was martyred, her friends were murdered, thousands from her community were deported by the Turks. In 1915, 1916 and 1917 many of them died by the roadside. The heavenly Father in a marvelous manner protected this teacher, named Puzantoohi Yardumian. Coming from Yosgad, Turkey, or that part of the Middle East formerly known as Armenia, this young lady was taken from her family, and instead of being martyred as so many were, or forced to marry into a Moslem harem, became a nurse in the Turkish army. After the Allies won World War I Miss Yardumian was trained by American missionaries to become a teacher. God blessed her graciously, and as the years passed fitted her into His work.

When the school was opened in Zerqa Miss Yardumian again found her place in God’s work. Among her students are Christians, Armenians and others who have been won to the Lord, as well as a number of Moslem boys and girls from the city.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

When the tragedy of the refugees was enacted, thousands flocked to Amman, where they were for the time being safe, for Abdullah, king of Trans-Jordan, has annexed the part of Palestine that fell to the Arabs to his nation.

Consequently, he more or less helps to provide for these refugees. He does what he can, but for the larger part the refugees live here as elsewhere-out in the open and in tents. Where caves in rock formations can be found, they huddle together in them. Theirs is a life of animal existence.

In these groups are doctors, lawyers, teachers, professional men, agriculturists, poor Moslems, and for the most part all of them united by the common tie that they are Moslems. They had been driven from their homes. They have nowhere to lay their heads, except as kind friends or nature pillow them for the night.

The school presided over by Miss Yardumian, as overseen by Pr. Wm. Russell, missionary from America, opened its doors to the refugees. Classes were soon dismissed, and the church and the school became home for the fugitives. As God enables, these faithful missionaries are helping to provide for the needs of these desolate people.

Could the American Christians see the panorama of suffering and heartache which lies before Miss Yardumian each day, there would be greater volumes of prayer ascending to the skies, asking God to have mercy on the poor refugee Moslems and the Christians who have been cast out of their Palestinian homes. Thousands of tons of foodstuffs and cast-off clothing are being sent to these refugees by the churches of America, England, and other parts of the Christian world. Outstretched hands of dying babies, uplifted voices of frail mothers, aged Arab sheikh, poor and formerly rich, alike call for the hands of Christian sympathy, not only to grasp theirs, but to place therein food, clothing and shelter. What shall be the response of the Christian Church?

Dr. Samuel Krikorian, to describe the tragedy of this scene, told the story of a wealthy banker who worked for the Ottoman Bank in Jerusalem. This man had prospered through the years, and had literally built a palace outside the Holy City. Beautiful gardens surrounded his home. When the Jewish army approached the city the wealthy banker was forced to flee Palestine with the clothes he had on his back, and as he fled to Amman he had not one thing to take with him. Had it not been that his bank had a branch in Trans-Jordan he would have been as the other refugees, starving by degrees. In writing a friend in America, he said:

“Never complain again about how hard your positions are, as long as you have food, shelter and clothing.”

What can be the outlook for these unless the Church of Christ arises to this great grave emergency?

-SOURCE: Dr. Samuel Krikorian, Palestine, Israel; F. Lyman MacCallum, 50 Rizatasa Caddesi, Istanbul, Turkey; personal letters from Puzantoochi Yardumian, Amman, Trans-Jordan; Dr. Edwin Moll, Lutheran Woman's Work.

## **THIRTEEN ...**

### **NIKO FOUAD, TRANS-JORDAN PILGRIM TO THE HEAVENLY CITY**

Palestine and the Middle East are lands of pilgrimages. The devout orthodox Jew throughout the world looks longingly toward the Eretz Yisrael, (the land of Israel) hoping that someday his unworthy feet may trod the sacred soil of the Holy City. When he reaches the shores of Palestine the goal of his pilgrimage is Jerusalem, most sacred city in all the world to Jewish hearts. Here in old Jerusalem, through a labyrinth of crooked streets, he winds his way to the Wailing Wall. This is a remnant of the ancient temple. Here he prays and weeps over the destruction of the temple and the magnificence of Israel now long departed.

Since the Israeli-Arab War part of the Holy Land is now in the hands of Israel, and with the rebirth of the State of Israel the Jewish pilgrim comes now with hope fired within his veins that someday the glory of Israel may again be rebuilt in the land of his fathers.

The Holy Land is also the scene of pilgrimages of nominal Christians from countries near and far. The Greek Orthodox Catholic, Syrian Maronites, Armenians, Assyrians, whose history goes back to the time of Abraham in Ur of Chaldee, the Egyptian Copts, and Nestorian Christians-all from the Middle East-flock in an unending stream to the Biblical scenes made sacred by the footfall of the Master. Outstanding among the points of visitation is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the old city of Jerusalem. Here religious fervor reaches its height during the Easter season, particularly on the day of the feast of the Holy Fire.

The church is packed long before daylight, thousands crowding as close as possible to the enclosure in the center, reputed to contain the tomb of Christ. The spellbound mob fix their eyes on a small hole from which a flame of fire suddenly issues. This is said to be sent down from heaven, and the nearest pilgrim lights his candle by it. Like lightning the fire spreads from candle to candle until in a short time, all have lighted their candles and hold them high as a precious treasure. The weary pilgrim, after these events are past, returns home, but the "holy fire," now departed, leaves his soul desolate and dark.

The hope of every Moslem is to visit the city of Mecca in Arabia, made sacred by the life of Mohammed, father of Islam. Here the Moslems long to kiss the Black Stone known as the Kaaba Stone, which resides in a small cube-shaped building in the Great Mosque at Mecca, deep in the heart of Arabia. This stone is said to have turned black with the tears

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

of the repentant sinners, or, according to another tradition, by the sins of those who have touched it. The most sacred shrine of the Mohomedan is the Kaaba building, and the most sacred article is this Black Stone. The desire of a quarter of a billion Mohammedans today is sometime within their lives to drag their weary feet across the desert sands of Arabia and kiss the Kaaba. Thousands of Moslem pilgrims yearly tread the dusty roads of Arabia hoping to end the pilgrimage to Mecca. Many of them fail in attaining this objective, because they die enroute.

Missionary Ralph Fried, of Palestine, describes meeting two such Moslem pilgrims, father and son, who were on the famous pilgrim route south of Damascus. They hoped to reach Jerusalem, and thence on southward to wend their way to the Kaaba Mosque in Mecca.

“From their features I knew that they were not Arabs,” writes the missionary, “but came from somewhere in Central Asia. Since most pilgrims know a bit of Arabic (their holy book the Koran is written in Arabic only) I engaged in conversation with them, and was thrilled to discover that they were from Afghanistan. Two long years they had been on their way, and still had the great Arabian Desert to traverse. I gave a simple word of testimony and they went on. Did they ever reach Mecca? Who knows?”

“Many perish in the desert sand. But if they did reach Mecca, prostrated themselves before the sacred rock called the Kaaba, returned again to their native land, and henceforth for the rest of their lives enjoyed the great honor of being called ‘haji,’ (pilgrim) what then? They knew nothing of the true Rock, Christ Jesus, as life’s sure foundation, and they have to go out into eternity with no anchor for their souls, and perish.”

In contrast to these pilgrims the missionary met Moshe, a zealous Jewish pilgrim from his native Poland, who had come to Palestine to take part in rebuilding the barren land of his forefathers. God, in His infinite mercy, one day attracted the lad’s attention to the Alliance Reading room. As he walked by the building he desired to step inside and rest for a moment, not realizing what the structure was. Never had he been in a Christian church or mission, and he was attracted not only by the Word of God which he found in the reading room, but by the love and kindness of those ministering to him. Until that moment he had no conception of what true Christians were. He thought of them only as those who in the name of Christ were massacring the Jews in his native home.

In Moshe the Lord found a hungry heart, “and one happy day, in less than three-weeks’ time, he was on his knees confessing his sins and accepting the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. Moshe became a true Pilgrim.”

Ghattas, an Arab lad, lived in the primitive Arab village of Jecai, in one of Syria’s more remote regions. One day a missionary reached the village with the message of salvation, and Ghattas was fired with a religious fanaticism to persecute them. At length he

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

succeeded in breaking up the first little gathering of those who would hear the Word of God. Because of this he felt very happy.

“We did not sleep much that night wondering why the Lord would permit such a victory for Satan after so wonderfully granting us this opportunity. It was daybreak when we heard a knock on the door. Ghattas stood there with deep conviction for his wickedness, asking for our forgiveness. That night we had another meeting and Ghattas was there, crowded as close to us in that little dark room as he could, drinking in the precious Word of God. He too became a true Pilgrim,” says Missionary Fried.

Let us go now across the desert from the Holy City some eighty miles to Amman. The desert city, ordinarily populated with some 25,000 Trans-Jordan Arabs and other nationals, has now swelled to 100,000 by the numerous refugees who have fled from Palestine after the Jewish Arab War. Some fifteen miles from the capital city lies Zerqa. This is a desert city of some 10,000 people. It is surrounded by the typical desert scenes. In the more distant live the Bedouin and Trans-Jordan Arab as his ancestors have since the days of Abraham.

He is nomadic by nature, and drives his herds of sheep and camels wherever pasture can be found, and here he sets up his huge black camel or goat hair tent, which is the center of his life. Here and there in the roacs, where water can be found, are verdant irrigated fields and gardens. Here tropical fruits and vegetables and citrus abound. Back at Zerqa Dr. Samuel Krikorian some few years ago established a preaching center for the Church of the Nazarene.

Here he opened a school which was placed under the charge of his wife’s sister, and to which in the process of time came two little girls from the home of Niko Fouad. Niko, so the missionary and teacher discovered later, was a tradesman, running a small shop where he sold the usual Trans-Jordan foods and other supplies to his Arab neighbors. Niko was a fervent Moslem. Five times daily he prayed facing southward toward the holy city of Mecca. It was within his heart as a burning desire that someday his feet should strike the pilgrim’s highway which would lead him to the Great Mosque at Mecca, that there he might kiss the Kaaba Stone.

This, however, was only a dream, for Niko had a family. His little shop was his only means of sustenance. He was not, as some of his neighbors from the desert, a land owner whose irrigated crops and roacs date palm fields could supply sufficient money for him to make the pilgrimage. He must earn his pittance day by day. Yet the dream of being a pilgrim held strong in his soul.

Daily Niko’s children returned home from the school and told about the wonderful message which the teacher had been telling them. Now Niko, as a Moslem and a proud father of two children, wanted them to have the best education possible. He knew that the Moslem schools would not furnish an education to match what the missionary af-



## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

forded in the little rented stone building which served in the weektime as a school, and on Sunday as a church. Consequently, he was willing for his children to hear these words of the strange religion. And yet, as all Moslems are promised heaven as a reward for killing a Christian, as a fanatic Moslem he had the desire thus to gain heaven.

In time Niko Fouad felt his heart strangely drawn toward this new teaching of Christianity. The children told him of the heavenly city which the teacher had read to them about from the Christian's sacred book, the Bible. He knew of the city which the Koran promised the Moslem. Here men in all their carnal iniquitous delight could live the life of a sheikh surrounded by the sensual pleasures which oft times in this world were denied one. But the Pilgrimage City to which the teacher and the preacher pointed the children was one for pure-hearted individuals who had been transformed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Niko had heard of Jesus, for his own sacred book spoke of Him as a prophet, the greatest next to Mohammed, the highest prophet of all of the world. In time Niko determined to learn the truth about the Christians, so he found his way to the little mission. Here he heard glorious words, words that said he could make a pilgrimage to the Celestial City, should he only yield his heart and his life to Jesus. In time, under the faithful ministry of the Holy Spirit anointing the preached Word of the missionary, Niko stepped out of the congregation, knelt at the altar, and following the instruction of the missionary, committed his life to Jesus Christ. The Master came in, and Niko knew that he had been born again.

On further instruction from the missionary Niko learned the deeper meaning of the Christian life and pilgrimage. And now, should you attend the church in Zerqa, on a night when testimonies are given, you would hear Niko testify somewhat as follows:

"I want to thank God for sending the Christian missionaries to our Trans-Jordan city, for here when I had dreamed of making the Moslem pilgrimage to Mecca, I heard of the Holy City, and I am a Pilgrim in this world. Someday I hope to end my pilgrimage in heaven, the city toward which all Christian pilgrims are going."

-SOURCE: Christian and Missionary Alliance, 260 W. 44th St., New York 18, New York. Dr. Samuel Krikorian, Jerusalem, Israel.

## **FOURTEEN . . .**

### **AN ENTIRE NIGHT OF PRAYER ON MOUNT OLIVE**

The Mount of Olives is sacred to the heart of every Christian. It was from this place that the Master ascended into heaven, and here the angels promised that He should return to this world again. Through the Christian centuries Mount Olive has been a lodestone to which the heart of the Christian is drawn. It is more especially sacred to Dr. Samuel

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Krikorian, because on its heights he spent a memorable night of prayer late in November, 1921. God had been preparing Samuel Krikorian for that night of prayer for many years.

Samuel was born in Aintab, Turkey, of a goodly Christian heritage. His grandfather, Pastor Krikore Harootunian, for many years was the oldest and one of the most revered ministers of Armenia and Turkey. One of Samuel's uncles edited a religious periodical in Aintab. His aunt, Rebecca Krikorian, taught for years in various Christian schools in Turkey and other Middle Eastern nations. She was a friend of Charles Spurgeon and Francis E. Willard, and God granted her a gracious life in America. One of his uncles was massacred by a savage Turk who disemboweled him, filled the cavity with oil, and then burned the body to ashes. Samuel's brother, Dr. Puzant C. Krikorian, heads the Christian Medical Center in Beirut, Lebanon, and also is president of the Christian Endeavor for Syria and Lebanon.

God has graciously spared the life of Samuel Krikorian. At least twice during his lifetime he was a fit target for martyrdom. When but a child in Aintab, he lived through the terrible massacre of the Christian Armenians by the fierce Moslem Turks toward the end of the 19th century. Those were days of serious persecution and tragedy, and thousands of Armenians were slaughtered by the Turks for their faith in Jesus Christ. Many of Samuel's near neighbors and relatives accepted martyrdom rather than become Moslems.

"Had I not graciously been permitted by the Lord to come to America on August 9, 1909, I doubtless would have become a martyr in the terrible massacre of my fellow Armenians in the early days of World War I, when hundreds of thousands faced the sword and were put to death, rather than become a Moslem," says Dr. Krikorian in a recent interview with the author.

The scenes of the massacre during the war are too terrible to repeat. In many cases the Turks gave the Christian an opportunity to renounce his religion and become a Moslem. Many times severe persecution was undergone by the Christian before he received his crown of life through martyrdom. The mustaches of the men were plucked out. The tormentors crushed the hands and the feet in a press and pulled out the nails with pinchers. The wounds were seared with red-hot irons until many went mad. The faces of these Christians were pierced with needles, and salt was poured into the wounds. Oft times eggs were taken out of boiling water and held until they cooled under the armpits of the Christians. Believers were hung from the roofs of buildings and beaten all day long. Many times they were forced to stand for a week or longer in water. They were also hung head downward in water. The soles of their feet were oft times held in fire until the flesh dropped off. Their tongues were pulled out, and red-hot irons were stuck into their eyes.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Babies were torn asunder or sold for a few pennies. Their brains were beaten out with stones. Many of them were tied together to form a long line; and a Turkish soldier stood at one end and tried to see how many he could kill by firing a single shot. They did the same with old people, fathers, mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers. These Christians accepted death rather than deny their Saviour.

“My wife faced martyrdom,” said Dr. Krikorian. “She even begged to be allowed to die for Christ. But Jesus in a marvelous manner spared her life, to become daily a living sacrifice in the Holy Land.”

After graduating from Pasadena College in 1918, Dr. Krikorian spoke throughout the United States in the interest of the Near East Relief which was organized by the government and the Red Cross. He raised thousands of dollars to care for the Christian refugees who were left in the wake of the terrible massacre during the war.

Shortly thereafter God placed it upon his heart to return to Jerusalem and begin his Christian ministry. The heavenly Father had a great work for Dr. Krikorian to perform in that land. And now trained, he was ready to return, that he might take up the burden of service which had been laid down by famous ministers from his immediate family.

Arriving in Jerusalem in 1921, he met Dr. H. F. Reynolds, then senior general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene. They had come to Jerusalem to locate a headquarters for their Christian mission, which was to flourish under the leadership and guidance of the young minister. They were faced on arrival with the decision of the British Government, then in charge of Palestine after the victorious conquest of the Holy Land by General Allenby, which said that no permits were being issued to open new missions. When they presented their request to other missionaries they were told, “You will not receive a permit, because the British Government is denying all such requests, and there is no reason why you shall be permitted to open a mission at this time.”

Samuel Krikorian, then a young man, filled with the fervency of the Spirit of God, called to his own people to labor in the Middle East in the service of the King, faced a moment of great decision. He knew from the human standpoint that all possibilities of beginning his life’s work were then closed. But he recognized that there was a higher power than the British Government. There was a British governor in Jerusalem, but there was also a Governor of the Universe. And while he presented his appeal to the British governor, he likewise laid his case at the throne of the Governor of the Universe, his own heavenly Father.

Late in November, while Dr. Reynolds and Samuel Krikorian were in their hotel rooms, they decided that something must be done about the denial of the permit. They had taken their written request to the governor, and had been promised an answer on the following day. But they knew that humanly the answer would be a denial.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

“About 10 o’clock that memorable night Dr. Reynolds and I decided to go to the Mount of Olives and spend the night in prayer. Our hearts had been strangely moved to make this decision. We knew that God was able. Many had been the victories of prayer accomplished during the centuries of Bible history in the sacred spot of the Holy City where we then were. And we knew that God Almighty was no respecter of times, occasions, centuries or personalities, and whether it be the prayer of Joshua, of David, of Elijah, of the great prophets, or of the Master himself, or of Samuel Krikorian and H. F. Reynolds, in the twentieth century, God would answer the heartfelt cry of his child.”

Consequently, the two ministers left the hotel for the Mount of Olives. They went down the crooked, narrow David Street, and then turned into the Via Dolorosa, made memorable as the street up which the Master carried His Cross on the way to the Crucifixion. They passed the temple area, their minds filled with the drama which had been enacted upon that spot since the beginning of Bible history. They talked about the sacred scenes, the glorious times of victory which the Bible recorded that had transpired in the very places where their feet were then treading. Leaving this area they went out of Stephen’s Gate to the east and passed over the Brook Kidron, coming at length to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Here the somber scenes from the life of the Master flooded their minds. They saw Him on that night of prayer and agony. They remembered the disciples that could not watch with Him as he drank the cup of decision. They recalled His night of prayer, the triumph of victory which shone upon His face as He rejoined His disciples. It was here they remembered that He won the victory for the souls of mankind and for their own transgressions. Once out of the Garden of Gethsemane they came to the Mount of Olives. As they walked up the slope to the top of the mount, they stopped near the Chapel of Ascension, on the western side. Here under an old olive tree, the roots of which doubtless were alive in the days when Jesus stood upon the sacred scene and returned therefrom to heaven, they called upon God all night.

“Dear heavenly Father,” prayed Samuel Krikorian, “as Thou didst hear the prayer of Elijah on neighboring Mount Carmel, yonder to the north, and answered with fire, we here on the Mount of Olives to the south call upon the same God to answer our petition and give us the desire of our hearts. We pray that Thou wilt incline the heart of the governor to grant us the permit to open our mission work.”

Samuel and Dr. Reynolds reminded God of the many promises that Jesus had made as He walked the roads of Palestine, as He taught by the beautiful Sea of Galilee, as He plucked the lilies of the valley, the anemones which burst upon the hillsides of the Holy Land in the springtime, as He ate with His disciples and multiplied the few fish and loaves until there was enough and much left over to feed five thousand. They reminded the Father that in these very scenes Jesus, who had healed the lepers, had answered the heart-cry of others and raised the dead to life again, that this same Jesus had promised

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

that if two or three agree as touching anything that they shall ask, it should be accomplished. And now as they prayed they called upon God to answer.

“Along about sunrise, when the first rays of the sun kissed with light and beauty the distant hills of Moab, and then settled down with a sheen upon the Holy City, God gave us the assurance that He had heard our cry. We felt that the answer was already upon its way. There was light, there was glory, there was a shout in our hearts, and we magnified the name of the Lord as we retraced our steps back through the sacred scenes to the hotel.”

Once washing up and preparing themselves for the interview, they went to the office of the British governor.

After formalities were over, the governor said, “Gentlemen, our committee has considered your application, and has decided to give the Church of the Nazarene a permit to open work in Palestine.”

While it seemed the gates were closed humanly, they were opened at the call of prayer.

From that time on a gracious work has been carried on under the directorship of Dr. Krikorian. God gave them a beautiful location across the street from King David Hotel, neighboring the Y.M.C.A. in the new Jerusalem. Here through the years they have conducted a school, as well as church services. Many Armenians have been converted. Several Arab Moslems have yielded themselves to the Lord, and with Jerusalem as a center, these Christians have taken the story of salvation to Jaffa, to Haifa, to Nazareth, to other sections of Palestine, to Syria, to Damascus, to Beirut, and now to Amman, the capital city of Trans-Jordan, and Zerqa.

Here Moslem Arabs have been won to the Lord. Here e many have heard the story of redemption through Jesus Christ, and have yielded themselves unto the Master.

All these victories founted from a night of prayer amid the scenes made sacred by the Master.

SOURCE: Dr. Samuel Krikorian, Jerusalem, Israel, in an interview with the author.

## **FIFTEEN . . .**

### **THE EMPTY GRAVE ON THE PERSIAN PLAIN**

Mary Lewis Shedd, in company with Pr. J. C. Crothers of the Presbyterian Mission and a Syrian physician of Maragha, traveled in an open wagon for five days from Tabriz, in northwest Persia, not far from the borders of Russia, Turkey, and the present nation of Iraq. They were retracing a tragic trail which Mary Lewis had taken a year before. Reaching the village of Sain Kala, they rode throughout the morning, with Persian guards furnished by the governor.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Mary Lewis was in search of a grave which had been a high point in her life during the past year, for therein lay buried the mortal remains of her husband, Dr. William Shedd, one of the world's outstanding heralds of the Cross.

Mrs. Shedd and the others pushed on until noon when the Moslem driver refused to go any farther, for they had come to the end of the wagon road. Finally he was persuaded to continue. It was three in the afternoon before Mrs. Shedd could find any sign that would enable her to retrace the journey of the tragic year before. Coming to a tree overshadowed by a great rocky hillside, Mary Lewis recalled that when she had reached that place on the trek of the previous year, she was alone. Turning back they searched the plains diligently, and about sunset they found the grave which inadvertently they had passed earlier that morning.

Suddenly a year of aching silence slipped from Mrs. Shedd's shoulders as she hurried up a little bank of the hill to the cross-hewn rock that marked the grave. The grave was absolutely empty! During the year since Dr. Shedd had been buried there wild beasts had ravished that grave. The only remains were a few scattered bones. In Mrs. Shedd's anguish she turned her face skyward, and suddenly a Voice whispered:

"Why do you look among the dead for him who is alive?"

Gathering up the relics of Dr. Shedd's mortality, they placed them in a casket, and in the darkness started once more toward Tabriz. As they stopped along the road they were hospitably received in Persian homes. At Maragha the priest of the Old Armenian Church called his elders together and asked for a public service. They covered the casket with flowers, and a great procession formed. In the sermon the old priest claimed that Dr. Shedd was a sacrifice for his people, as well as for the Christian Syrians among whom he had labored more or less constantly since his birth in Urumia, Persia, in 1865.

In Tabriz the casket with Dr. Shedd's remains was placed in a grave in the Christian cemetery. At the public service in the cemetery more than two thousand came to pay tributes of affection to this man who had been with many of their homeless wanderers as they died along the mountain trails of Turkey, and on the scattered plains and highlands of Persia, and the desert and valleys of Mesopotamia.

This was the end of a magnificent trail upon which God Himself had placed the feet of William Ambrose Shedd. Dr. Shedd's parents, Dr. and Mrs. John Haskell Shedd, had gone to Persia, locating at Urumia, on the western side of the lake by the same name, where six years later their son William was born. Living here for several years of his early life, William returned to America with his parents for schooling. When he was seventeen he made the trip back to Persia. Feeling the need of further training to equip him for the serious task of investing his life among the Persians, William returned to Princeton University, where his training was marked with brilliancy.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Again he retraced his steps to Persia, where with serious intent he devoted his life to the cause of Christ. He worked more especially among the Old Nestorians, who were largely of Syrian extraction. The Nestorian Church has a long history of many centuries, being one of the earliest groups of organized Christians. They had fallen into evil days, and the glow of their testimony was formal. Hence the Presbyterian Mission was organized among them to quicken their spiritual life, and to give them the true meaning of the evangelical gospel of redemption.

Here John Haskell, as assisted by William Shedd, his son, and other missionaries, labored diligently, until in time John Haskell Shedd laid down his burden, having achieved fame as a pioneer in Persia. William carried on, following the fate of the Syrian Christians, the Armenians likewise as well as those converted from Moslemism, as they were persecuted by the Turks, the Russians, and the wild Kurds from the mountains. In time Dr. Shedd was instrumental in organizing the Evangelical Church of Persia, especially among the converts of the Syrian Nestorians.

Here many years before a flourishing mission station had been established. Here were included training schools, a mission center, and all the things that go to make up a prosperous evangelical work. Dr. Shedd's fame spread until World War I swept Turkey, Persia and Russia into the maw of destruction. This brought about serious persecution of the Christians by the Moslem Turks, at times the Kurds, and other groups of Moslems. It was an attendant of the great Armenian massacre by the Turks during 1915-17. Hundreds of thousands of Christians were martyred by the savage Turks.

This persecution continued to sweep eastward until it reached Urumia and engulfed the mission where Dr. Shedd was the leading worker. Hundreds of refugees rushed to the mission compound, and thousands camped roundabout as the victorious Turkish armies broke down the resistance which was locally organized among the Christians, and among the Persians present, as assisted by a small Russian force. The Turks, as they rushed forward, sent thousands fleeing from their swords eastward into Urumia. At length the mission and all refugees migrated southward along the edge of the lake, and thence into the desert and to Tabriz.

The destruction, death and agony of that march has seldom if ever been equaled in the annals of Christianity. Eighty thousand fled from the Turks, among whom were Dr. and Mrs. Shedd. They hastily gathered what few belongings they could into a small cart and joined a group of refugees. They had heard stories of Turkish savagery and hate. They knew the sharp sword and the gun of the Turks. Many had seen this savagery operate, for the Syrian patriarch had been slaughtered mercilessly by those guns a few days before. They knew how the Armenians in eastern and south Turkey had already been put to the sword, and as the tide of fear arose. Dr. Shedd felt there was nothing to be done but to join the great hordes, in the hope that he might help alleviate the suffering of the people.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Mrs. Shedd, in her book, *The Measure of a Man*, a biography of Dr. Shedd, describes the scenes along the way. Their hearts were many times torn as they came to a baby sitting on a hillock all alone, too weak to stand, deserted by parents, or lost by loved ones in the mad scramble. She describes the old, the young, the maimed, the starving, the dying, as they lay down in the sand, or pillowed their heads on a rock, and breathed their last. As the Shedd's were able, they assisted in burying them, and scattered cheer and comfort, if the meager fare that was afforded them could be called comfort, here and there.

At length, when the Turkish armies came to the rear guard of that fleeing horde, Dr. Shedd mounted a road-weary horse and rode back to the ridge, where he helped organize resistance against the Turks. During this time he fought side by side with the men, bringing spiritual comfort to the dying. At last, on a fateful day in August, 1918, Dr. Shedd came back to the wagon late one evening with a serious illness upon him. Cholera had already struck the fleeing Christians, and Dr. Jesse Yonan gave Dr. Shedd calomel. Though very ill, there was no time for the missionary to lie down and rest. Darkness came quickly, and the Christian soldier traveled along, jolted in the wagon over the bad roads, until the road became unsafe and too rough to travel. There was nothing to do but wait until morning.

There were only a few drops of oil in the lantern, and under its dim glow Mrs. Shedd saw that her husband was gravely ill. Sending two men over the dangerous road in search of a doctor, she crouched beside her husband in the cart, trying to ease the pain brought on by the convulsions. As he grew weaker and weaker, Mrs. Shedd feared that the end was near. Shortly, after midnight the missionary faintly whispered, "I never was so tired in all my life." The British doctor arrived soon thereafter and gave him a hypodermic, but the man of God did not regain consciousness, and his end came early in the morning.

Camped around Mrs. Shedd at that death in a cart on a Persian plain were 50,000 terror-stricken fugitives, many of them having struggled on during the night. Behind were the fighters assisting the British, who by this time had sent reinforcements to the fleeing group. Shortly after death came--a little farther along the trail, with a small adz, and as Mrs. Shedd describes it, "our fingers we dug a shallow grave, and with a canvas from the cart as a shroud, we laid him there." The British doctor read the burial service, and a cross was cut on the rock beside the grave.

Mrs. Shedd says that it seemed impossible to go off and leave him in that unfriendly land, but there could be no tarrying. Mrs. Shedd fled on toward Tabriz, where she found refuge.

After the armistice was signed in November, she awaited the time when she should go back to that cold, barren grave on the Persian plain, only to find it desolate.



## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Though she had laid the form of her loved one in the cold earth, still the spirit of Dr. William Shedd marched triumphantly on, for the work that he had done not only in his mission labors, but for thousands of refugees, lived constantly in the hearts of Moslem, Syrian, and Armenian alike, who dwelt in the high plains of northwestern Iran.

Source: Katherine Shedd Marquardt (a niece of Dr. William Shedd), Chateau de Fleur, Hollywood, California.

## SIXTEEN . . .

### CHRISTMAS IN RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

Dr. and Mrs. Paul Harrison have lived as romantic a life as any missionaries the world around. They have served God in Saudi Arabia under the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church in America. Thus they have followed in the footsteps of Dr. Samuel Zwemer, famous missionary and authority on Islam, who pioneered the work of the Arabian Mission late in the 19th century. The work of Dr. Paul Harrison, surgeon and physician, reads like pages from the Arabian Nights.

Dr. Harrison was located in various hospitals in Arabia throughout the long term of his medical service. At present he and Mrs. Harrison are retired, and in coming to America he was one of the featured speakers in missionary conferences throughout the United States. Here his gracious personality and the thrilling stories taken from his life's work in Arabia drew large audiences.

On December 12, 1942, Dr. and Mrs. Harrison set out from Ojeir, which is the port of Hassa, Arabia. This port is near the Peninsula of Satar, deep in the Persian Gulf. The point toward which they were traveling was the city of Hofuf, where they were to treat the daughter of the Arabian Ameer, or prince. Their trail led through the desert for many miles, and at eventide when the caravan camped, Dr. Harrison presented his credentials to the local sheikh and asked permission to proceed.

At the village of Najg they were met by a daleel, or guide, for every car that crosses over the sands of this desert must have a guide. The man was a dark little fellow carrying a large musket, who stepped to the front door of the car as though he expected Mrs. Harrison to offer him her seat.

"Our path lay to the west where the sands stretched out to meet the sky. With loud chugging the engine started. Our bulging truck became a craft embarking on a sea of sand. Great, golden waves loomed ahead and we rode over them like a ship in a storm. Nothing could be heard over the wheezing of the engine and the wrenching of the truck. The strain began to tell. We lost our momentum. Finally, in a trough of light sand we slowed to a stop." In the distance a green line marked the beginning of the oasis. An

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

hour later the caravan had arrived among the date gardens of El Hassa, the name of the great oasis section fed by a series of natural springs.

The group was headed for Hofuf, as we have stated a large town on the western edge of the gardens. The trees were casting long shadows, and in the distance they could see the jagged outlines of a walled city silhouetted against the sky. Skirting the old moat that followed the walls, they came to a large north gate set under twin turrets.

“Visions of bygone days came before my eyes,” writes Anna Harrison. “I pictured Turkish passas looking out from the small windows, horrified at the sight of the Bedouin hordes laying seige against their walls. Instead a young guard in khaki uniform rose to his feet and beckoned us to stop. Asking our names he wrote them on a small piece of paper held in his hand. Then with a click of his leather shoes he saluted us. The Ameer, he said, was expecting us. Would we proceed to the small gate ahead and then turn to the right? We had arrived.”

The first medical work was a tonsilectomy on the Ameer’s only daughter. This required considerable strategy on the part of Anna Harrison and her attendant, Gamesha, who had spent many years in a woman’s hospital. Gamesha and Anna went to prepare the patient, who was attended by two slave women, all three of them heavily veiled, which made an unpromising picture. This called for the utmost diplomacy.

“Modesty had to be preserved at any cost. Gamesha dismissed the slaves and got the girl on the table, but the veil was being held tight over her face. Gamesha had not had her years in the woman’s hospital for nothing. Even as she assented to the tearful demands of the patient, she slowly pried up the black veil and slipped the white mask underneath. Down went the drops of chloroform. ‘Count,’ she ordered. ‘Whaid-ethnain-thalatha.’ The girl’s voice began to trail off into a thin moan. The veil was removed. In came the doctor and his assistants.”

After the operation the Ameer came to visit his daughter, on demand of the child. Anna says that no one else in the whole realm would dare to speak to him that way. Only to this one girl was the privilege given, for the name of the Ameer is one to make every Bedouin tremble. He is so feared that even in the open desert a man dare not commit a crime against him. His judgments are swift and terrible and have brought law and order into every corner.

He appeared suddenly in the doorway, which caused consternation among the unveiled slave women. He said quietly to his daughter, “Be a woman, do not cry.” Then he turned quickly and disappeared.

Anna Harrison gives a picture of the difficulties of, as she expresses it, “being a woman in the land of Saudi Arabia.” She found it easier to wear their clothes than to “furnish the people the spectacle of her own,” for at that late date in her life, “I do not want to be called immodest.”

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

A long ample gown was better fitted for sitting on the floor than the short American dresses she customarily wore. Even her unskilled genuflections went by unnoticed, and she could shift her limbs as she liked while sitting on the floor.

“But Oh, the sheer quantity of my clothes! I can manage as long as I sit still, but when I walk I am undone. Even my head is swathed and bound. Not an inch of my neck can be exposed to the light of day. My sleeves are down to my hands and both are hidden under various folds and drapes. If I so much as put my head out of the door, I must veil my face and put on my local visht. It is a tremendous cloak of coarse sheep’s wool and hangs from my head to the ground. In it I cannot decide whether I feel like a circus tent or the grandstand.”

A few days before Christmas an order came from the king in Riyadh commanding Dr. Harrison’s presence. When the king’s order came there was nothing to do but to pack the doctor’s boxes and go. King’s orders, Anna says, are never questioned in that land. The caravan consisted of a large truck and a sedan. The sedan was a relic of better days. It could not be started except by being pushed, yet it was considered fit to make a three hundred mile trek across the desert! The truck, which carried the heavy hospital boxes, drums of gasoline, cans of oil, casks of water, besides a dozen or more passengers, had no spare tire. When they were still hours from the capital and the king’s court, there was a blowout which caused consternation.

They camped two nights in the desert. Here Anna, in looking across the great regions, felt that she was as one who had been suddenly taken from the pages of ancient Arabian history. Her companions were the various Arabs who had come along to assist in making the journey. Among these was Sa’ad, who sat on the front seat of the truck like a falcon. When the road was bad he did much directing with his stiff jerky fingers. He never seemed uncertain about the course. He had been sent along as the guide, whose duty it was to make certain that the king’s caravan should arrive in good order.

“An artist would have loved to paint Sa’ad’s face. Every feature stood out strong and true. From under his shaggy brows his eyes shone like pools of dark fire. His cheeks were deeply lined and thin. Below his large mouth a scraggly beard was beginning to grow. When we stopped at a well, Sa’ad showed his character. We were late and were out of water. This was a very small well, but it was the only source of water for miles around. Bedouins and camels were already crowding in when we pulled up. Our men were in a hurry and they demanded their rights as the king’s caravan. But the Bedouins as well were in no mood to give up their places. Anger flared up. Then I saw Sa’ad walk over to them. His voice showed no trace of concern as he spoke to them. There was utter courtesy in his manner and his words were slow. In a few minutes we got our water and moved on.”

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

On arriving Dr. Harrison went immediately to see the king, while the others unpacked the medical supplies and put them in the town's only dispensary.

"Could it be that here in the capital the only provision for medical needs is a dirt-floored, dust-covered mud house, from which drugs were grudgingly dispensed to those who had the courage to go there? Paul and the boys are beginning to treat people there tomorrow. Already the Bedouins are asking when they can come in," says Anna, in relating the experiences of her arrival. The following day was Christmas. Anna describes that day thus:

"Christmas in Riyadh--without a Christmas carol or a Christmas child. I have often wondered what it would be like-a land that did not know Christmas. And now I know. It is what I expected-a land that does not know how to heal the sick or cleanse the leper, nor preach good tidings to the poor. We have read again Luke's matchless story of the Nativity. We have been thanking God for the holy Child-for our own dear children, and for His love. And now we shall close today with a prayer for this land. May the angels sing again over these eastern hills. May the shepherds hear again and be glad. May wise men go again in search of their King. May the Spirit of the eternal Son of God be born again in all of us."

While Dr. Harrison was busy with his surgery and with dispensing the various medications that he had brought along, Anna lived the life of a typical Arab woman. She went twice to the palace for dinner, the first time being invited by one of the Syrian concubines. This girl had been brought to the palace when very young and had been promoted to being the most responsible woman there. She supervised the sewing women, the cooks and stewards who worked to keep the king's own court moving and the guests entertained. Anna was greeted by the Syrian concubine with an air of one who had learned to take things without concern.

"We ate from a large mat filled with fish, meat and vegetables. There were fruits also, pomegranates from Tayif, oranges from Jaffa, and olives from Syria. With us ate the palace midwife from Damascus, and several of the lesser foreign women. The next day one of the Arab wives led me down to the veranda to eat with her. There were various aunts and cousins about the mat. They all were very shy because of me. I tried to think of a joke to tell to break the strain of embarrassment, but none would come.

"It was a meal without taste or style, but not without a singular effect. Something in it did not agree with me. The next day I was confined to my room and missed attending the Friday mejlis, when the king always pays an official visit to the gathering of his womenfolk."

By January 3, 1944, the medicines which Dr. Harrison had brought to the capital had run out, and he asked the king for permission to return to Hassa, where he was quartered. While waiting for the permission Anna spent her time making friends among the Arab

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

women of the city. Among these she met the wife of a prominent man from Hassa, needing an operation on her back. Anna says that this was one of the most attractive women that she had ever met. She sat and looked at the Arab girl, full of wonder that in this land where women have no normal channels in which to express their feminine charms, there could be such a person.

In a small upper room where she received her visitor, the Arab girl pointed to the pretty silk curtains that covered the walls and the windows and asked Anna how she liked them. In her boudoir the Arabian lady, as she swept past the long mirror, took a glimpse of herself and was evidently pleased at what she saw.

“Leaning against the silk cushions she pulls out her silver compact and brushes fresh kohl on her eyelids. As we sip red tea she talks about herself. She is the sister of the Ameer of Hassa. There was a large family, for there were four wives and they all bore children. She, herself, had no children although she has been married twice. The king’s eldest son took her first as one of his wives, but he soon divorced her. She was not sorry for he paid no attention to her. Her present husband is much better and is courteous to her. He never gets angry with her. She hopes he will never divorce her.”

At length the return journey back to Hassa was made across the long and sand-filled desert, and Anna was at home where for the time being Dr. Harrison was operating a small clinical hospital. Friday was set aside as women’s day, and Anna relates a typical day’s work for Dr. Harrison by describing the patients who came to see him. In the operating room, called so only because this was where the doctor worked, the general public was excluded. “Each woman was allowed but one protecting male, and some, I am proud to say, came in alone,” adds Anna.

At one end of the room, under a wheezing lantern, Dr. Harrison and his wife worked at the operating table. At the other end Abdul Nebi, a native doctor, operated on eyes. His patients had nothing to lie on except the floor. The first operation that Dr. Harrison performed, with the assistance of Anna, was removing a large tumor from a girl’s back. While it was a simple thing to do, Anna says, “I shudder to think of what stories will be told about it tomorrow.” For in describing the operation performed on the Ameer’s daughter some of the natives said that Dr. Harrison had “cut the girl’s head off completely and sewed it back on again.”

Then came a thin village girl, with a hand twice its normal size from pus. How the small frame endured such pain, Anna says she did not know. It was, “the keenest pleasure to put her to sleep and see Paul clean that hand.”

In the end Anna helped Abdul Nebi with his eye operations. There seemed to be no end to the red, distorted lids. The last woman was holding a baby in her arms.

While at Hassa, Anna and the others spent their evenings rolling bandages and sterilizing sponges, preparing for the work on the following day. Oft times Anna and

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Gamesha called upon the women in the seclusion of their Hassa homes. She found half of these mud houses harboring tuberculosis. In one particular place, but a hovel, Anna saw a young, beautiful wife sitting in a room so dark that "it could be called nothing better than a dungeon." This girl told Anna of her longing for the desert where she was born and lived until her marriage. When Anna diagnosed the case as tuberculosis she suggested that the girl go to the desert for the summer.

"At that she burst into a thin, hard laughter. That garden, did I not know that she had never so much as seen it? Her husband did not let her go outside of the house."

Doctor and Mrs. Harrison were invited to the home of one of the older merchants, a man who had traveled as far as Basra and Bombay. He met his guests at the great wooden door and shook hands with them in the easy manner of one accustomed to foreigners. Still talking, he led them across the tiny courtyard filled with scurrying slave girls, and motioned them to a carpeted lower room. Here, as they talked, entered a slight figure, hidden in the folds of trailing silk, who glided to a cushion near Anna. She seated herself so that her back was toward the men, and showered greetings upon Mrs. Harrison. Long before Dr. Harrison's stethoscope told the story, Anna knew that the trouble from which this girl was suffering was tuberculosis.

"Dinner was spread for us on a large, round mat, covered with well-cooked meat and vegetables circled about a tray of rice. It made a pleasant sight. Our host began to cut apart the roasted fowl and put the best pieces in front of Paul. Facing me sat my shy hostess, urging more on me than I could possibly eat. Then bending over with her face to mine, she asked me if I realized that this was a special favor granted by her husband--her being allowed to eat with us this way. It was because he knew the heart of the doctor-friend was pure that he did it. I could only smile my answer of so great a tribute to my husband."

One day Anna received two unexpected callers. The Ameer had been gazelle hunting, which afforded freedom for one of these visitors, the Ameer's slave, who had been brought in by Hassan, an attendant of Dr. Harrison. With a catch in his voice, the young slave said, "I am a Baluchi." Hassan, who also was a Baluchi, told in his own dramatic way the story of this attractive youth. The young slave's face was marred by an ugly scar deep on his right cheek, which he tried to cover by pulling his mustache over it. The scar, he said, came from the night when the slave herders trapped him. "But," he added, his voice tremulous with pride, "he had killed four of the men before they finally took him."

The lad said to Mrs. Harrison, "My heart burns like those coals. It will not forget its freedom."

"I sat there alone trying to shut my eyes to the torture I had witnessed. Slaves I had seen everywhere. Every large establishment was full of them, but they were usually happy

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

and well-fed. They had long since accepted their fate. Their masters treated them as charges and were seldom cruel. But here was something different. This boy had grown up free among his brave and warlike people. His blood would always burn in his body. His spirit would never bend. Slavery in any form is ugly. Here in Arabia it takes a simple form. It is physical. Men steal little children, trap youths and girls and sell them to work as servants. The West binds hearts and minds, until there is no shred of freedom left, and life itself is torture.”

By January 30, 1944, all of the drugs and supplies that Dr. Harrison had brought to Hassa were exhausted. He asked the Ameer’s permission to close the clinic and return to his own hospital work. But the Ameer wanted him to stay on even without medicine. It was difficult for the Ameer to realize that it was impossible for Dr. Harrison to perform the magic of his surgical ability without anaesthetics and medications. When time came to leave, many friends whom Anna and Dr. Harrison had made in the village arrived to bid them farewell. The Ameer’s wife brought a gown as a present, with the assurance that she would pray for Anna’s return the following year. The Bedouin wife held her hand during the last moments as she told Anna good-bye. An old grandmother in the Hejazi family told her that she loved her as though she was her own daughter. The Ameer’s sister wept at their going, and Fida took Anna on a farewell tour of the slave quarters.

“I was touched beyond words by their friendliness, and if the numberless cups of coffee that I drank do not ruin me I shall remember all with unadulterated pleasure. And so we shall go back with these people in our hearts and minds. Our horizons had been widened, our sympathies deepened, our hopes increased. God has always used human channels for the working of His Holy Spirit. May He use these days of new friendships and lowly deeds. Mankind belongs to God, and an eternal glory has been shed upon the human race for the love Christ bore it.”

Source: Desert Diary, by Anna Monteith Harrison, Published by Board of Foreign Missions, Reformed Church in America, 156 5th Ave., New York City.

## **SEVENTEEN ...**

### **THE SHEIKH OF QATAR OPENS A HOSPITAL**

Saudi Arabia has been opened to the Gospel at the point of the surgeon's knife. The Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church has operated hospitals in different locales in the Middle East for a half century. Great have been the blessings accruing there-from. Dr. Paul Harrison, among others, has become famous in Arabia for the grand work of healing bodies as the Great Physician healed souls. Others have labored with him. Among these is Dr. Harold Storm, who has worked in the various hospitals under the Arabian Mission.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

At the beginning of our story Dr. Storm and his wife were serving in the hospital at Bahrain, on an island of the same name, located in the Persian Gulf. The year previous the Sheikh of Qatar had opened a hospital at Doha, which had been operated for only six months, when due to the lack of a doctor it was closed.

“It had to be closed after its very successful premiere because there were not enough doctors in the Arabian Mission to man an extra mission hospital. There were not enough doctors to allow the Arabian Mission to penetrate Arabia. After more than fifty years of prayer, sweat and blood, the Christian Church had been invited to serve in Arabia. But our church is found wanting-in men,” says Edwin M. Luidens, a new recruit of the Arabian Mission.

On January 11, 1949, the mission decided to open the Qatar Hospital once more, even though it might only be for a short time. Dr. Harold Storm and his wife, a pioneer doctor-nurse team, were ready to try again. Edwin Luidens was to accompany them on his first missionary tour.

“We boarded a sixty-foot sailboat called ‘Boom,’ and with the help of an auxiliary engine pushed out into the Persian Gulf with a load of medicines, two Arab hospital assistants, and two carpenters who were going to help equip the staff quarters at the new hospital. That afternoon we sailed southward along the coast of Bahrain Island until we finally came in sight of the mainland of Arabia. A bright moon came up at sunset. By 7:30 in the evening we had rolled up in our blankets and were sound asleep on the aft deck near the helmsman,” writes Missionary Luidens.

The next morning Doha, the chief port of Qatar located on a peninsula jutting out from the mainland into the Persian Gulf, came into view. Only the minaret of the Friday Mosque and the remains of the former Turkish fort broke the skyline. As the sailboat approached the harbor the missionaries could see a square building on the sea front, set apart from the others more particularly by its windows. This is the hospital to which the whole desert sent its sick for half a year. This is the base from which the medicines of modern science have been dispensed to thousands of Arabs. They have learned that a country without a hospital is of no use. Then, because there was no doctor to man it, the hospital had to be closed.

“As we arrived at the dock curious children realized that Dr. Storm had come back again. ‘The doctor has come. The hospital will be open again.’ They ran off with the news. By sunset all of the town knew that the Qatar Hospital was open for business.”

The sand had been blowing into the corners of the building for half a year. This was swept away. The gleaming surgical instruments were rusty. These were polished. Medicines had spoiled or evaporated, which were replaced. The advance station of the Arabian Missionary Qatar Hospital was being opened for business.



## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

“But none of us,” adds Edwin Luidens, “could resurrect the Arabs who had died because the hospital had been closed for a half year.”

Now that the Qatar Hospital is open again for business, it may become the center of Christian hospitalization in that section of Arabia-if a Christian doctor can be found to carry on its activities. Some twenty thousand Arabs, men, women and children who get colds and headaches, hernias, smallpox, cholera, rheumatism, arthritis, tuberculosis and cancer like the rest of the world, must depend on black magic and herbs for every ailment of their body “if the Reformed Church in America does not find and send one of its sons and daughters to minister to them, or if another Christian doctor is not found to carry on this work.”

Edwin Luidens says, “Open for business-the business of the kingdom of Christ. But open for business if--”

On this particular visit it was possible for the young minister to remain only four days. He could have stayed a year, but there was no one to replace him at Bahrain. Dr. Storm remained two weeks, and then turned the work over to an Indian doctor. He could have stayed likewise, but the two hospitals under his charge were left without supervision in Bahrain. Arabia is ready for an advance if Christian ministers, teachers, doctors and nurses can be found to man that advance.

“One minister, if he comes to Arabia,” writes Edwin Luidens, “will preach the Gospel literally to thousands of people who never would have the Good News without him. One teacher will teach hundreds of boys and girls who would have no education at all without him. One doctor will operate upon thousands of people who will receive absolutely no medical care without him. One nurse will minister to a whole hospital filled with patients who would be unattended without her. The business of the Kingdom of Christ in Arabia is waiting for these ‘ones.’”

Do they need a doctor in Arabia? Merrill Callaway, a Baptist missionary in Bahrain, answers that question by giving a pen picture of a tragedy that took place early one Sunday morning.

The day after Rhamadan in Arabia, and other Moslem countries, is Eed el Fitr, or the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast. This is a time of rejoicing, for after a month of eating only at night, the people resume their normal lives. Great throngs kneel and touch their foreheads to the ground, pray and listen to a mullah preach. It is the custom for the Bahrain missionaries to call upon the high sheikhs that day. On such a visitation, as they left the home of a rich Moslem, Dr. Harold Storm said, “Merrill, not so long ago eighty people were killed in the courtyard of this house.” And then the doctor related the story.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

The rich Moslem wanted to give alms, so he broadcasted to those thereabout that the zikat was about to be dispensed. Usually when a rich Moslem does this, each individual receives a small coin.

Shortly after sunrise all the streets in the eastern section of the city were filled with a mass of hurrying, blackrobed, black-veiled men and women bent on getting at least one of the coins, and hopeful of more if they could get away with a little hila, stratagem.

“The sunni, owner of the house, eventually appeared. A jingle of moneybags was heard. Pandemonium broke loose. Hundreds tried at the same time to get through the small passage-way into the courtyard. Shrieks filled the air. Servants tried to drive back the crowd with sticks and pieces of iron. When the outer door was shut to prevent others from trying to force their way in, panic seized those inside. There was no way of escape. Some fell to the ground and were trodden on by others. Some tried to escape by climbing over the wall. They slipped and fell beneath. It was a massacre,” writes Missionary Callaway.

During worship at the mission that Sunday morning, a hospital worker rushed in with an urgent message to the doctor, who on arriving at the Moslem house found 150 bodies stretched out in the courtyard. The dead and the alive were indistinguishable. Following the iron-bound custom of the veil, every face was covered with pieces of old cloth and clothing, and each body had been drenched with water in a desperate attempt to revive those suffering from shock. The total dead numbered 83. Forty victims were hospitalized, and others were treated at home.

The Christian doctor met a wealthy Arab merchant’s wife on the hospital veranda. She said, “Sir, I have been watching you doing all these things for these poor people. There is truly a great difference between your religion and ours. Your religion makes you want to help people and show love to them, but ours-” The woman stopped, for she could not go any further. She realized that the Christian religion was the hope of Arabia, as well as of all the world.

The challenge is for consecrated Christian youth who will train themselves to be doctors and nurses, and dedicate their lives to the Lord for medical service in Arabia.

SOURCE: Edwin Luidens, in a pamphlet entitled, *Open For Business*, published by the Board of Foreign Missions, Reformed Church in America, 156 5th Ave., New York City; also Merrill Callaway, in *The Commission*, published by Foreign Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, 2037 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va.

## **EIGHTEEN . . .**

### **PRAYER DELIVERS IBRAHIM SHEHDA MALOOF FROM DEATH**

A price had been set upon the head of Ibrahim Maloof. This price did not read “Dead or Alive”—merely dead. Those who hated Ibrahim Maloof wanted him dead. And to make sure that the task would be accomplished they offered fifty gold pounds to Toufic Soos, a notorious brigand in the mountain of Syria.

The trail that led to this dramatic offer of fifty gold pounds by the Maronite Catholic Bishop was long and devious, but at every step of it the hand of God could be seen.

Ibrahim’s father originally lived in Zahle, a large village on the eastern slope of the Lebanon mountains in Syria. In 1860 when the Lebanon natives perpetrated the treacherous and bloody massacre of the Christians, Ibrahim’s father fled for his life to the mountainous region of southern Allouite, a section of Syria where most of the inhabitants are members of the Greek Orthodox faith. He sought refuge in the village of Khureibie, where in 1882 his only son, whom he named Ibrahim, was born.

In the course of time Ibrahim’s path led out of this native village to the Boy’s School in the Biblically famous Sidon. This gratuity came because a Christian missionary saw great prospects in Ibrahim.

In time the lad moved on up to the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, later known as the American University of Beirut. Here his faith in Jesus Christ was shaken due to the teachings of one of his professors, and he left the college without trust in God.

The next step in Ibrahim’s life was his appointment as an instructor in the National College of Horns, a large town between Damascus and Aleppo. Here he met and married Martha Atiyeh, principal of the Girls’ School, and the daughter of a Protestant minister. When World War I broke out the Turks immediately occupied the college in Horns, which sent young Maloof fleeing to his native mountain village of Khureibie, as his father before him. He was later mustered into the Turkish army, but because of illness he never served.

After the British conquered Turkey and took over the Near East, Mr. Maloof joined the army as an interpreter, in time being discharged at the seaport of Tripoli. Here he set up business as a private banker and assisted a large number of refugees. However, due to the sickness of his son, he felt that he should devote full time to Gospel work. Various missionaries touched his life, and Ibrahim caught the meaning of a renewed faith. He consecrated himself fully to the service of God.

During the depression in the early 1930’s Ibrahim was forced to find employment with the Iraq Petroleum Company, then laying a pipeline from Kirkuk, Iraq, to Tripoli,

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

Lebanon. This was a task of considerable responsibility, he having under him three thousand day laborers. God graciously blessed the minister as he not only looked after the business, but as he gathered up the remnants of food left from the meals and distributed them to the poor who trailed the workmen. Maloof conducted Gospel services at this time, not only for the workmen, but for these camp followers.

At the end of the construction job he was dismissed with honor and again resumed full-time work for God. The mission under which Ibrahim labored was presented with an opening to preach the Gospel in the heart of the Maronite Catholic district at the Lebanon village of Sebeil. Here God so graciously blessed his ministrations that he aroused the ire of the Catholics. In time the bishop became furious, and according to the old feudal custom offered fifty gold pounds to Toufic Soos, a notorious bandit then ravaging the region, to kill the minister.

Friends urged Pr. Maloof to cease his travelings far and wide, saying that in time Toufic Soos would meet and kill him.

But Maloof took this problem to the Lord in prayer. He told God how he had consecrated his life to Him, and though this might mean death, the consecration still held. As time went on Ibrahim continued preaching up and down the mountainous region, until one day the minister faced the bandit.

“One day while returning down the mountain in one of those old, open-topped cars,” writes Dr. Lester Crose, mission secretary of the Church of God in Lebanon, “they were stopped on the road by Toufic Soos. The driver and other passengers greeted him by name. Pr. Maloof thought his time was up. The brigand jumped on to the running board, and holding on to the top of the car, ordered the driver to proceed. As the car gained speed, the wind blew back Toufic’s coat and Ibrahim could see two revolvers and a short sword.

“When they came to a dense olive orchard the driver was ordered to stop, and Mr. Maloof thought that now was the time, for in this out-of-the-way place he would be ordered to descend from the car and the driver would be commanded to continue, and he would be taken into the orchard and shot. He prayed earnestly to God for deliverance. The brigand jumped to the ground when the car had come to a stop, and after an exchange of greetings the auto was waved on with Mr. Maloof in it.”

The God who had delivered the three Hebrew children from the fiery furnace, and Daniel from the lions’ den, now no less miraculously delivered Ibrahim Maloof from Toufic Soos, who had been offered fifty gold pounds to murder him.

The work of Ibrahim Maloof in the mountainous regions of Syria and elsewhere has been greatly prospered by the Lord. Poor and rich alike among the Syrians welcome him, for they recognize that here is a man whose life has been miraculously spared by

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

the hand of God. The heavenly Father has given Ibrahim Maloof a gracious work of redemption throughout Syria.

His oldest son, Adeeb, a graduate of the University of Beirut, is now a medical doctor, and is serving in Beirut as one of the health department doctors. This position has done much to lift the prestige of the Maloof family. His second son, Wadia, having worked with the British while they were occupying Syria and Lebanon during World War II, is now serving in an excellent position in the British legation in Beirut.

SOURCE: Dr. Lester. A Crose, c/o American Mission, Beirut, Republic of Lebanon, in a personal letter to the author.

### **NINETEEN . . .**

#### **HASAN READS THE BOOK**

What a thrilling morning Hasan had had. He had been so very anxious to see the famous American doctor from Tabriz, who had come to the sleepy little town where he lived. His father had agreed to take him along when he went to make a friendly call, and Hasan had seen everything.

True, the doctor had been much too busy to talk to them, for the courtyard of the house had been converted into a hospital, and was full of sick people waiting their turns.

But a kindly gentleman, whom Hasan did not know was a Christian minister, had welcomed Hasan and his father and had given them tea and explained why he and the doctor had come to spend a few months in their village. Hasan's father became very friendly with this gentleman.

"Those are very good people. I wish they would stay always so that you and your brothers might learn from them how to live," said Hasan's father, as they walked home.

"Look, my dear father," exclaimed Hasan, who was not particularly listening to what the old gentleman had been saying, but was looking at a book held in his hand. "Did you ever see such a beautiful book? That kind gentleman gave it to me. It is called 'The Shepherd Boy.' What lovely pictures it has."

"That is very nice," replied his father. "Read the book and I am sure it will help you to be a good boy."

Hasan, however, did not have an opportunity to read the book. No sooner had he reached home and told his mother where they had been, than she seized the book and shouted angrily, "You must not read. It belongs to the infidels, and it is unclean! If you read it you will become an infidel. I will burn it up."

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

As Hasan watched the book burn, he cried out, "I don't see why it was unclean. It was the cleanest and prettiest book I ever saw."

"You are only a child. You don't understand," retorted his mother.

Hasan did not realize that since his mother was the sister of the leading Mohammedan priest in the village, she had to show great zeal for the religion of her fathers. He did not realize that the religion of the Moslems of Iran considered non-Moslems unclean, and did not like to touch them. He did not sense that the American doctor and his friend were Christians, and that the strict Moslems of the city were very angry that these foreigners had come to town and were selling tracts and Scriptures and telling the people about Jesus Christ in the meetings they held every Sunday in the courtyard of their little hospital.

But Hasan never forgot what his mother had done to the story book, and that did not make him any more inclined to love and obey her. He was glad his father continued to be friends with the missionaries, and he wished that he were big enough to talk with these good men himself.

After the American missionaries returned to Tabriz, Hasan continued with his schooling. But he was not a very good pupil. Time and again the teacher flogged him and complained to his father of his bad conduct. His mother, however, insisted that Hasan learn to say the Moslem prayers in Arabic, and promised him if he did so God would surely make him pass his final examination. Hasan learned the prayers, but he failed in his examination, and after that he drifted from the religion of his parents.

"Hasan needs discipline. I will send him to Teheran, to the military school," said his father.

Much to his joy Hasan was able to leave the home in which he had never been very happy. Here began a new career as a cadet in the capital. Life in Teheran was much more interesting than in his own town. But as Hasan had no strong principles to hold him steady, and no true friends to guide him, he soon fell into bad habits. His father heard reports of what his son was doing, and often came to see him. He tried to make him live right, but without success.

"Would that my son could have associated with people like the missionaries," thought the father, "for then never would he have learned these evil ways. But now what can I do?"

Finally Hasan graduated and received his commission. He was sent to one of the most undesirable of the border stations on the frontier. The weather was hot, and life was everything but interesting. Lieutenant Hasan and his friends had their drinks and their gambling and women, and they somehow managed to spend their time as well as squander their money.

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

After some time Hasan became tired of this life, and decided to marry a girl whom he had recently met. He had already married four or five times and was using the privilege that Moslem law gives to the husband, to divorce his wife whenever he desired. Thus he had gotten rid of these various wives, as none of them suited his taste. His new wife was different and came from a respectable family. She had nice friends, so life was vitally different for Hasan. But he did not stop his drinking.

One of his wife's friends who often came to visit her was an Indian lady, the wife of a doctor who conducted a Christian hospital in that frontier town. Hasan liked this quiet dignified little lady, and was glad for his young wife to associate with her.

"Here is something I brought you, Lieutenant," said the missionary one day, as she handed Hasan a few small books. "These contain the teachings of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and I want you to read them, for I know they will help you and your wife in your new life together."

Hasan eagerly began reading the little books. He had never seen the Christian Scriptures. But ever since meeting the American missionaries when a boy, he wished to know more about the Christian religion. He had no use for Islam, the religion of his family, for he had never seen any good result from it.

"However, he knew there was a God, and he had always wanted to know God better, but there had been no one to tell him how. Now he had a chance to learn what the Christians believed and he was glad," writes Dr. William Miller, missionary to Iran, in telling the story of Hasan's conversion.

One of the tracts was called "Love." Everything in it was about love, and quoted such Scriptures as "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,"-"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,"-"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,"-"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God," and others.

Hasan, thrilled as he read these words, called to his wife and said "Come here and listen to this book. If you and I do what it says, we will never quarrel."

"As he read on he came to the story of the death of Jesus," continues Dr. Miller, "Who loved simple men so much that He laid down His life for them. Like all Mohammedans Hasan had always heard that Jesus had not been put to death on the Cross. The Koran says that someone else was put to death in His place, and that Jesus was taken by God to heaven. But now as he read the story of the crucifixion Hasan was convinced that it was true, and he was deeply impressed, as are many of those who for the first time read the Gospel account of Christ's suffering."

That night he saw Jesus in his dreams. The Saviour was on the Cross, and seemed to be calling Hasan to Him. Dreams are taken lightly by most Americans, but not so in Iran. Many men and women in this land have been led to become Christians by seeing Jesus

## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

in their dreams. Hasan was profoundly moved by this dream, and when he awoke in the morning he at once related the dream to his wife and said:

“I must get the whole Injil (Gospel) from your friend, and read all about Jesus.”

His wife quietly replied, “You don’t need to ask her for the Injil, for I have one here in my trunk.”

“Where did you get a Christian book?” asked her husband in amazement.

To which the wife replied, “Some years ago an American missionary was stopping here for a short time. He came to call on my father and he presented him with an Injil. I used to read it when I was a child, and I liked it very much. And when I came to your house I brought the book with me. Here it is. Take it and read it.”

Hasan was overjoyed. He took the Gospel from his wife and began to pour over it. It gripped him as no other book had ever done before. He saw himself in its pages. He was the lost sheep. He was the prodigal son. He read Christ’s gracious invitation, “Come unto me- and I will give you rest.” Putting aside the Book, and with tears streaming down his face, he cried, “Oh, Jesus Christ, I come! I yield myself to Thee. Forgive me and save me!”

The miracle of salvation was wrought in Hasan’s life, and living became different for him and his wife. He stopped drinking and all of his other bad habits, and spent his time reading the Bible, and in association with the Christian doctor and his wife, and the little group of believers who worshipped in that Iranian village. In his office he placed a picture of Christ on his desk, and let all of his fellow officers know that he was a Christian. At first a superior officer persecuted him for his faith, but later he showed confidence in Hasan’s integrity by entrusting his own son to him on his journey to another city.

Hasan, who had not seen his father for a long time, obtained leave of absence to return to his old home and visit with his family. However, when an opportunity came to be baptized, he relinquished his leave to visit the family, and went instead to Issahan and asked the pastor of the Protestant church to baptize him.

“Usually candidates for baptism in Iran are kept waiting for some months while they are given a course of training and are thoroughly tested. But Hasan’s sincerity was so evident, and his time so short, that he was baptized at once and returned to his frontier post a member of Christ’s Church.”

Once a colporteur of the Bible Society came to Hasan’s frontier village. He had heard about Hasan but had never seen him. One day, while selling Scriptures on the streets, he saw a young officer coming toward him, and he offered him a book. He was amazed when the stranger put his arms around him and hugged and kissed him, exclaiming, “I



## Nineteen Missionary Stories from the Middle East

am your brother. I am Lieutenant Hasan.” Then Officer Hasan accompanied the colporteur and urged people to buy books from him.

“He did better evangelistic work than any of us,” said the colporteur when he returned to Teheran. “Seeing Lieutenant Hasan in the Bazaar that day gave us new life, for we were very weary and discouraged in our work. But after meeting him we got fresh strength.”

Some time ago Lieutenant Hasan passed through Teheran en route to a new assignment on the other side of Iran, and many Christians had the opportunity to meet him. He testified in a service where his younger brother was present and told the story of his conversion and how he had left off drinking.

“My brother is not pleased because I confess myself a Christian, but I hope that he too will study the Bible and follow Christ,” said the lieutenant in his testimony.

In order to attend a church service in Teheran, he delayed his departure several days, and on Sunday came with his wife and baby to the morning service and told his Christian friends goodbye. “His attractive little wife said that she too believed,” relates Dr. Miller.

A Christian physician in Teheran, a friend of Hasan’s father, had heard the story of the lieutenant’s conversion, but was somewhat dubious of the reports. But after seeing the young man in Teheran, he said, “He has completely changed. When I last saw him he was worldly, but now his face shines like that of an angel.”

“On his way to his new post, Hasan stopped off a day or two to see his father, and told him of his conversion. Later the father came to Teheran and called on his friend, the physician, and talked to him about Hasan. ‘He has really changed,’ said the father, ‘and I am glad he has become a Christian.’ After some months had passed, the father was so deeply impressed by the change that had come over his son, that he also professed faith in Christ, and the mother and the other members in the family became favorably inclined to Christianity.”

Thus the Master’s words came true, “One soweth and another reapeth.” Long ago faithful servants of Christ sowed seed in a little Moslem town. As a result, Hasan and other members of his family, and a number of friends have been converted. “And the end is not yet,” adds Dr. Miller in telling this story.

(Dr. Miller, in writing to the author, says, “This story is based on facts, though I have changed the names.”) SOURCE: Dr. William Miller, Presbyterian Mission, Teheran, Iran.